

Can chickenpox be prevented?

Yes, vaccination with the recommended two-doses of varicella vaccine prevents chickenpox in most people. Staying away from those infected with chickenpox can also reduce the risk of getting the illness.

Are there any treatments that my doctor can prescribe for chickenpox?

Your doctor will advise you on the types of treatment that are available. Medications such as, antiviral drugs, are recommended for persons who are more likely to develop serious disease, including persons with chronic skin or lung disease, otherwise healthy individuals 13 years of age or older, and persons receiving steroid therapy.

When is it necessary to go to the doctor for treatment?

If you or your child has a fever that lasts longer than 4 days or rises above 102°F call your doctor. You should also call if:

- Any areas of the rash or any part of the body become very red, warm or tender or begin leaking pus,
- If the person with chickenpox seems extremely ill, is difficult to wake up, or appears confused,
- Has difficulty walking,
- Has a stiff neck,
- Is vomiting repeatedly,
- Has difficulty breathing, or
- Has a severe cough.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH)

Local Resources

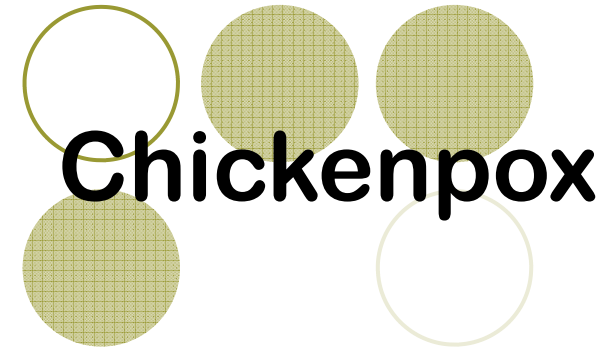
For information on Chickenpox visit our website at:
<http://www.tulsa-health.org/community-health/epidemiology/>
 or write:
 Tulsa Health Department
 Planning & Epidemiology
 5051 S. 129th E. Ave.
 Tulsa, OK 74134
 Other Contact Information:
 Phone: 918/595-4505
 Fax: 918/595-4588
 E-mail: epidemiology@tulsa-health.org

For more information on Chickenpox, visit:

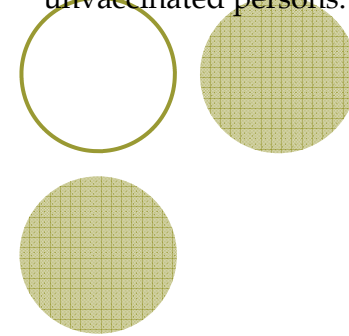
- Oklahoma State Department of Health
 (405) 271-4060
www.health.state.ok.us/program/cdd/infec.html
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 (888) 443-7232
www.cdc.gov

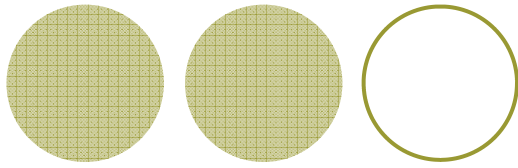


Prepared by Planning & Epidemiology

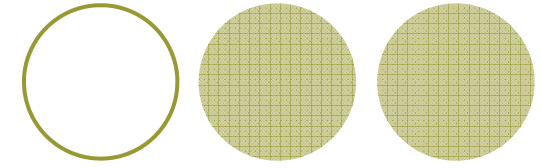


Chickenpox is an infectious disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus, which results in a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness, and fever. The rash appears first on the trunk and face, but can spread over the entire body causing between 250 to 500 itchy blisters in unvaccinated persons.





Chickenpox



How do you get varicella (chickenpox)?

- Chickenpox is highly infectious and spreads from person to person by direct contact or through the air from an infected person's coughing or sneezing, or from aerosolization of virus from skin lesions.
- A person with chickenpox is contagious 1-2 days before the rash appears and until all blisters have formed scabs.
- It takes from 10-21 days after exposure for someone to develop chickenpox.

Can you get chickenpox if you have been vaccinated?

- Yes
- About 15%-20% of people who have received one dose of chickenpox vaccine still get chickenpox if they are exposed, but their disease is usually mild.
- Vaccinated persons who get chickenpox generally have fewer than 50 spots or bumps, which may resemble bug bites more than typical, fluid-filled chickenpox blisters.

What are the symptoms of chickenpox?

In unvaccinated children, chickenpox most commonly causes an illness that lasts about 5 to 10 days. Children usually miss 5 or 6 days of school or childcare due to chickenpox and have symptoms such as:

- High fever,
- Severe itching,
- Uncomfortable rash,
- Dehydration, and
- Headache.



Extensive varicella rash of

In addition, about 1 in 10 unvaccinated children who get the disease will have a complication from chickenpox serious enough to visit a health-care provider. These complications include

- Infected skin lesions or other infections,
- Dehydration from vomiting or diarrhea,
- Pneumonia, and/or
- Encephalitis.

In vaccinated children, chickenpox illness is typically mild, producing no symptoms at all other than a few red bumps. However, about 25 to 30% of vaccinated children who get the disease will develop illness as serious as unvaccinated children.

Can a healthy person who gets varicella die from the disease?

- Yes
- Many of the deaths and complications from chickenpox occur in previously healthy children and adults.
- From 1990 to 1994, before a vaccine was available, about 50 children and 50 adults died from chickenpox every year; most of these persons were healthy or did not have a medical illness that placed them at higher risk of getting severe chickenpox.
- Most of the healthy adults who died from chickenpox contracted the disease from their **unvaccinated** children.

Who is at risk for chickenpox?

Anyone can get chickenpox although, certain groups of people are more likely to have more severe illness with serious complications.

These include:

- Adults,
- Infants,
- Adolescents, and
- People who are immunocompromised.



A person with chickenpox on the 7th day of rash.