

NOTIFICATION OF CHICKEN POX
(An acute, viral infection)*

Incubation period: (the time between exposure to the disease and the appearance of symptoms) Can be 10 – 21 days, but is usually 13 – 17 days.

Contagious period: (when the disease can be transmitted to another person) Usually 1-2 days before the rash appears (when the infected person coughs or sneezes) until all the blisters have crusted.

Signs and symptoms: Child may have fever, irritability, tiredness, and lack of appetite 1-2 days before the rash appears. A rash of small blisters appears on the trunk, then on the rest of the body. The rash can be extremely itchy. The blisters break easily and form a scab. The fluid in the blisters is highly contagious.

Treatment: For most children, only supportive care is needed. Contact your doctor if you suspect your child has chicken pox. **DO NOT GIVE YOUR CHILD ASPIRIN OR PRODUCTS CONTAINING ASPIRIN (A SALICYCLATE). THIS CAN LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANOTHER DISEASE CALLED REY'S SYNDROME.** Encourage your child not to scratch or rub the blisters for this can lead to a secondary infection.

How this disease is spread: This virus is spread by direct contact with an infected person and occasionally by air-borne nose and throat secretions. It can be spread by direct contact with articles contaminated with the fluid from the blisters or tissues with respiratory secretions.

Control of cases: Children are to be excluded from school for not less than 5 days after the appearance of the rash. All blisters must have scabs before returning to school.

General prevention measures: Wash hands carefully and make sure children do not share eating/drinking utensils, clothing or tissues. A vaccine is now available. For more information consult with your child's doctor.

*Persons at risk include pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems and new born babies.