



# PUBLIC FACT SHEET

## CHICKENPOX

### What is the Chickenpox?

Chickenpox is a disease caused by a virus. In the United States, chickenpox is most common in children between the ages of 1 and 4. By adulthood, more than 95 percent of Americans have had chickenpox.

### How is Chickenpox spread?

Chickenpox may be spread through the following ways:

- Through the air for 1-2 days before the person shows any symptoms
- Once the rash has developed, chickenpox can be spread to others through the fluid in the rash and through the air
- Chickenpox can spread to others who haven't had the disease until the blisters of the rash have dried and become scabs

### What are possible symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- Extreme tiredness or irritability one to two days before the rash appears
- An itchy rash, which most commonly appears on the chest/back, under the armpits, on the upper arms and legs, in the diaper area, inside the mouth and throat and on the head/face
- Fever
- Feeling ill
- Decreased appetite
- Muscle and/or joint pain
- Cough and/or runny nose

### How is Chickenpox diagnosed?

The rash of chickenpox is quite different from other rashes and diagnosis is usually based on an exam by your doctor.

### What is the treatment for Chickenpox?

Treatment for chickenpox usually consists of making the person comfortable and reducing fever.

- Children should not be given aspirin because of its suspected link with Reye syndrome. Instead, use a non-aspirin medication like Tylenol (acetaminophen).
- Apply Calamine lotion to the skin as needed to relieve itching.
- Benadryl can be used for severe itching. It will usually cause the person to be sleepy. Consult your doctor for the correct use and dosage for children.

### For more information on Chickenpox:

Ottawa County Health Department

[www.miOttawa.org](http://www.miOttawa.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/varicella/in-short-adult.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/varicella/in-short-adult.htm)

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