

5 THINGS PARENTS & GUARDIANS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CHICKENPOX

1

Chickenpox is not a childhood rite of passage

Chickenpox is a common infectious disease that leaves your child feeling very itchy and miserable.¹ While it's usually mild, for some, it can lead to serious complications such as skin and lung infections.^{1,2} If your child was born on or after 1st October 2024, chickenpox vaccination is now part of their routine childhood vaccinations.³

2

Spot the signs

Chickenpox is an itchy blister-like rash which usually lasts about 5–7 days.¹ The infection is spread in the fluid found in the blisters and from close contact with someone with chickenpox.¹ The illness usually starts with one to two days of fever, aches and pains and feeling out of sorts.^{1,2} That means no school, preschool or childcare until the spots have crusted over.¹



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3

Don't pass it on

Because chickenpox is highly contagious, you should try to prevent spreading it by staying home and avoiding contact with others, particularly those at higher risk of complications, such as pregnant women, newborn babies and people with weakened immune systems.¹

4

Treating and Preventing Chickenpox

If your child has chickenpox, your pharmacist can advise about medicines that may help relieve itching or reduce pain and discomfort. Chickenpox vaccination is free for children born on or after 1st October 2024 and is offered at 12 months of age as part of their routine childhood vaccinations.³ Check your child's immunisation schedule and stay up to date.

5

When to contact your GP

Contact your GP, Practice Nurse or Pharmacist if¹:

- You're exposed to chickenpox while pregnant and have a weakened immune system.
- Your child gets chickenpox when they're less than 1 month old.
- You get chickenpox as an adult. Adults have a higher risk of developing complications.
- Your child is having trouble walking, very weak, and drowsy or hard to wake.
- You see signs of complications.

References

1. HSE. Chickenpox - <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/chickenpox/> (Accessed July 2026)
2. NIAC Guidelines. Chapter 23 Varicella-Zoster - https://www.hiqa.ie/sites/default/files/NIAC/Immunisation_Guidelines/Chapter_23_Varicella_Zoster.pdf (Accessed July 2026)
3. HSE. Chickenpox vaccine - <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/chickenpox/chickenpox-vaccine/> (Accessed July 2026)



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