Help Stop the Spread

What can I do to stop the spread of Chickenpox while in hospital?

If you or your family have any signs of Chickenpox or been in contact with someone who has Chickenpox, please let the Nurse or Doctor know when you are coming into the Hospital.

If you have Chickenpox you will be placed in a single room with the door kept closed.

It is very important to cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. You should throw the used tissue into the bin straight away and wash your hands or use alcohol hand gel.

If you have to go to another department for treatment such as X-Ray or Theatre you must wear a face-mask before leaving your room.

To stop the spread of chickenpox to other people you should not visit other patients on the ward or visit the public areas in the Hospital.

How can I contact a member of the Infection Prevention & Control Team?
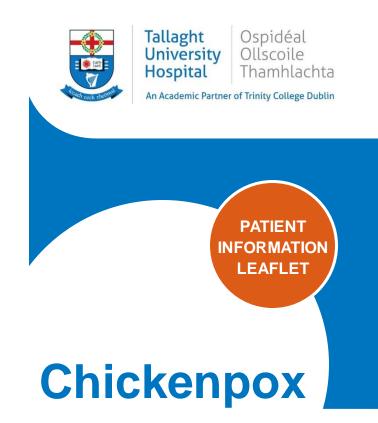
Tell the Clinical Nurse Manager, Doctor or Nurse looking after you if you would like to speak to a member of the Infection Prevention & Control Team and they will contact us.

We have made every possible effort to make sure that all the information provided in this leaflet is true, accurate, complete and up to date at the time of publication

Additional information can be found at :
http://intranet.tuh.ie/departments/IPC/Pages/home.aspx

Reference**:** HPSC
(Health Protection surveillance centre)

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PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Chickenpox

What is Chickenpox (Varicella)?

Chickenpox is an acute infectious disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus. Reactivation of the this virus causes Shingles.

What are the symptoms of Chickenpox?

A temperature and generally feeling unwell for one or two days before you get the rash.

The rash starts off as red spots that change into small fluid like blisters. They will then crust over before healing. The rash usually appears first
on the head and then the front and back, followed by the arms and legs. The spots can become extremely itchy but it is best to not scratch them as they can leave a permanent mark on our skin. You can also get ulcers in the mouth and tonsil areas.

How is it spread?

Chickenpox is carried in the air and is easily spread through coughing or sneezing by a person who has Chickenpox. It can also be spread through direct contact with the rash. The Incubation period for Chickenpox is usually around 14-16 days.

How Infectious is Chickenpox?

Chickenpox is very infectious. A person with Chickenpox is infectious one to two days before the rash appears. You stay contagious until all of the spots/blisters are crusted over (this takes about six days).

How is Chickenpox diagnosed?

Your Doctor will know if you have Chickenpox by examining your rash. You may need other tests, for example blood tests, to make sure you do have Chickenpox.

Chickenpox in adults

Chickenpox can be more serious in adults than in children. Adults with the virus are more likely to be admitted into hospital. Up to 14% of adults with chickenpox develop lung problems, such as pneumonia. If you smoke, your risk of developing lung problems is much greater.

Chickenpox infection in Early Pregnancy:

If you are pregnant and have had Chickenpox before, you and your unborn baby will not get Chickenpox again. If you are still worried, talk to your general practitioner.

If you are pregnant and have never had Chickenpox before you should contact your GP if you have had exposure to Chickenpox.

How is Chickenpox prevented?

A vaccine may be given to some patients who could become very ill with Chickenpox, for example, patients who cannot fight infection. Also healthcare workers who have not had Chickenpox may be vaccinated.

Complications with Chickenpox

- Secondary Bacterial Infecting
- Pneumonia
- Neurological complications

If you are in hospital and have the chickenpox, healthcare staff coming into your room will be wearing a mask and possibly a long sleeve gown.

Red and Blue coloured signs will be put on the outside of your room door reminding staff and visitors to wear a mask/gown if they need to.

Chickenpox is infectious 1-2 days before the rash appears