

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 Chicken Pox, 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 disposable paper 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.

Any healthcare staff coming into your room may be wearing a mask and 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. Any private information about you will not be on this sign.

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 and Control Team and they will contact us.

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

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.

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PATIENT
INFORMATION
LEAFLET

Chickenpox



What is Varicella (Chickenpox)?



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

What are the symptoms of Varicella (Chickenpox)?

You may have a temperature and feel generally unwell for one to two days before you get the rash.

The rash starts off as red spots that change into small fluid like blisters that then crust over before healing. The rash usually appears on the head and then the front and back, followed by the arms and legs. Ulcers in the mouth and tonsil areas may be present.

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. Incubation period for Varicella Zoster is usually around 14-16 days.

How Infectious is Chickenpox?

Chickenpox is very infectious. A person with Chickenpox is infectious 1-2 days before the rash appears. A person remains contagious until all of the spots 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. Approximately 5-14% 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 general practitioner 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 Varicella Zoster:

- Secondary Bacterial Infection.
- Pneumonia.
- Neurological complications.