

GREENWICH CENTRAL SCHOOL HEALTH OFFICES

Chickenpox (Varicella)

This used to be a common childhood disease, however now that varicella immunization is a requirement it is getting less common. Some children get a mild case of chicken pox, even with immunization. Caution should be observed for adults who have never had the disease (especially women who may be pregnant). Although fairly harmless for healthy children, adults who contract the disease may become seriously ill. The Chickenpox virus is spread by respiratory droplets or by direct contact with the fluid in the Chickenpox pustule. The incubation period is usually from 14 to 16 days, but can be as long as 21 days. Children are most contagious for 1 to 2 days before and shortly after the onset of the rash. Contagiousness, however, can be for as long as 5 days after the onset of lesions. We ask that children be kept at home until the last appearing pustule crusts over. Please keep in mind a child that has been immunized, or had a very mild case of chicken pox in the past, may still develop a mild case of chicken pox.

Symptoms Include:

- Headache and/or muscle aches
- Malaise, feeling of illness
- Low grade fever
- Skin rash: Groups of spots can spread almost anywhere on the body. Spots quickly change to fluid-filled pustules, then to crusts. New crops of spots continue to break out so that at the height of the rash, red spots, pustules and crusts can appear in the same area.

Risks Include:

- Infected persons should be isolated from infants, pregnant women, children taking steroid drugs, people that have a chronic disease, and from any immunosuppressed person. These *at risk* individuals should consult their doctor immediately if they are exposed to Chickenpox.
- Secondary infection – Pustules can become infected from bacteria that normally reside on the skin. This can happen when there is excessive scratching (which may cause scarring).
- Shingles – Subsequent rash caused by the Chickenpox virus that may manifest itself as nerve pain and rash along a nerve pathway.

If your child has a suspected case of Chickenpox, please contact the health office at your child's school.

Please feel free to contact the Health Offices at 692-9542 with any questions:

- Primary Nurse, Lisa D'Acchille, RN at extension 3214
- Middle Grade Nurse, Theresa Seabury, RN at extension 2208
- High School Nurse, Denise Herrick, RN at extension 4222