

CHILDREN
WITH

chickenpox



Children with **chickenpox**

General information:

Chickenpox is a common childhood disease, which is caused by a virus. The disease is most common among 5-9-year-olds, but people of all ages may contract it, from newborn babies to adults.

Chickenpox breaks out in a rash with blisters, which are often itchy. The disease breaks out 7-28 days after infection has taken place. A person with chickenpox will infect others from about three days before the rash appears until dry crusts have formed on all the blisters.

If you have had the disease once you will be immune for life and cannot get chickenpox again.

How is it contracted?

The infection spreads from person to person, either by coming in direct contact with burst blisters or by breathing in small droplets from coughing and sneezing from an infected person.

Symptoms:

- Sometimes fever and generalised malaise before the rash breaks out
- A rash, which usually begins on the face and body, but which may spread to the scalp, arms and legs. It may also spread to the mu-



cous membrane, especially in the mouth and on the genitals

- Initially, small red spots will appear, which turn into blisters within a few hours; they burst quickly and will be covered by a crust. It takes from a few days to a couple of weeks for the crusts to fall off
- New blisters may appear after 3-6 days, but the number of blisters differs from person to person
- The rash is often itchy
- Sometimes chickenpox is accompanied by fever, but often, children do not get very ill from the disease
- When the crusts fall off, they may leave small scars.

Good advice:

- You can dab the skin with a zinc ointment which cools the skin and helps to relieve the itching
- Try to stop the child from scratching the sores because it can cause an infection
- Keep the child's nails short and maintain good hygiene (the child is allowed to have a bath).
- Do not dress the child too warmly, and make sure its room is not too warm.

When to see a doctor?

Contact a doctor if the child:

- if the blisters turn septic
- gets other rashes
- refuses to drink or pee
- is weak or apathetic
- makes you worry and you feel insecure.

Contact your general practitioner first because he/she knows your child better than the doctor on call. You can also get good advice and guidance from your health visitor.

Treatment:

Treatment consists mainly of relieving the symptoms.

- Dab a zinc ointment on the skin
- Antibiotics – ointment, pills or mixture – if the sores become infected.

Childcare:

The child can return to childcare once all the blisters are covered by crusts and the child is generally feeling well.

Parental guidelines

These guidelines have been prepared by a working group set up by the departments of paediatrics in Herning, Randers, Skejby and Viborg.

The intention with these guidelines is to provide parents with advice across the following sectors: health visitors, general practitioners family doctors, doctors on call, and the staff at paediatric admission wards in the Central Denmark Region.

The parental guidelines can be seen and downloaded from the internet on the web site www.fv.rm.dk

You may order additional copies from Rikke Dalsgaard,
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