

Chickenpox (Varicella-Zoster Infections), continued

- Do not give aspirin to children who are ill, as it may increase their risk of contracting Reye syndrome, a serious complication associated with the use of aspirin in someone infected with chickenpox and other viral illnesses (eg, influenza).
- Pregnant women should be referred to their health professional within 24 hours after exposure to chickenpox. Pregnant women who previously have had chickenpox should not have a pregnancy-related problem if exposed to chickenpox. However, pregnant women should be encouraged to confirm their protection with their own health professionals.

Exclude from group setting?

Yes. Chickenpox is a highly communicable illness for which routine exclusion of infected children is warranted.

Readmit to group setting?

- When all blisters have scabs (usually 6 days after start of rash).
- When the child is able to participate and staff determine that they can care for the child without compromising their ability to care for the health and safety of the other children in the group

Comments

- Virus can stay for a lifetime in an inactive form in the body's nerve cells.
- Shingles (herpes zoster) is the condition that occurs if the inactive virus becomes active (see "Shingles (Herpes Zoster)" on page 119).
- Rash from varicella vaccination can occur in 3% to 5% of children 5 to 26 days after vaccination. This condition is mild and usually causes only a few red bumps at or near the injection site. Bumps near the injection site may be covered with a nonporous bandage and clothing and the child may continue to participate. Occasionally, the rash after varicella vaccination may be more widespread. Although this condition is not contagious to others through the respiratory route, it is difficult to tell whether a widespread chickenpox rash is caused by the vaccine or a natural infection. Therefore, any child with a widespread varicella rash must be excluded until all blisters have scabs.
- Rarely, children get chickenpox a second time. These cases usually are very mild with less fever and fewer bumps and blisters than the first time.
- It is possible for children to get chickenpox despite being vaccinated. The vaccine is only about 70% to 85% effective against mild disease (although 95% effective at preventing severe chickenpox). Chickenpox in previously immunized children usually is mild with less fever and fewer bumps and blisters than in unimmunized children.

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