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CHICKENPOX

Chickenpox (varicella) is a highly contagious viral infection. There is typically between a seven and 21 day incubation period from exposure to the virus until onset of the illness. The classic rash of chickenpox is small red bumps that progress to blisters and then break open, crust, and are extremely itchy. The rash / blisters can occur anywhere on the body, and usually appear in crops. There may be several different crops of the rash on the body in various stages (for example a crop of red bumps, one of blisters, and one of crusted opened blisters). Fever is usually present.

Treatment can include:

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) for fever or pain. Use as directed by your doctor.
- AVOID using aspirin or ibuprofen (Advil / Motrin).
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of liquids.
- Rest.
- If directed by your doctor, you may use benadryl for itching.
- Frequent lukewarm (not hot) baths may also help the itching.
- You can apply calamine lotion to the rash (not near the eyes or in the mouth).
- Keeping your child's fingernails clipped short to minimize scratching.
- Put mittens or gloves on the hands of small children to minimize scratching.

Chickenpox is contagious starting about two days before the rash appears until ALL of the lesions have crusted over. This usually is seven to 10 days. Complications include secondary bacterial skin infections and pneumonia.

Call our office if:

- Your child has lesions that appear infected (painful, more red, oozing pus).
- Your child has any difficulty breathing or a cough.
- Your child has a fever for more than three to four days.
- Your child is getting worse in any way.
- You are concerned that your child is getting dehydrated (for example, dry mouth or lips, no tears when crying, much less active, less urine output).
- Your child acts lethargic or confused, or is very irritable and difficult to console.
- Your child has been on steroids (Orapred, Prednisone, inhaled steroids) in the past three weeks.

For any urgent or emergent medical concerns, please call 911 or go immediately to the nearest emergency department.