

Chickenpox/Varicella

Chickenpox is a very contagious infection caused by a virus. It is spread from person to person by direct contact or through the air from an infected person's coughing or sneezing. It causes a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness, and fever lasting an average of 4 to 6 days. Most children recover without any problems. Chickenpox can be spread for 1-2 days before the rash starts and until all blisters are crusted or no new lesions appear within a 24-hour period. It takes between 10-21 days after contact with an infected person for someone to develop chickenpox. Chickenpox in vaccinated persons is generally mild, with a shorter duration of illness and fewer than 50 lesions. The rash may be atypical with red bumps and few or no blisters.

Most children now are vaccinated with at least one dose of varicella vaccine but because one dose of the vaccine is 80-85% effective for preventing chickenpox, it is not unusual to see breakthrough disease

Please contact the school if you think your child has chickenpox. He/she should not attend school, day care, parties and/or other gatherings until the blisters become crusted (about 4-6 days after rash appears), or no new lesions appear within a 24-hour period. Keep all chickenpox spots and blisters and other wounds clean and watch for possible signs of infection;

If you or anyone else in your household has a weakened immune system or is pregnant and has never had chickenpox or the vaccine, talk with your doctor immediately.

To enter into public and private elementary and secondary schools, including charters, children under age 18 years are required to have a chicken pox vaccine, along with their other vaccines.

1 dose for children under 13 years is required. A second dose is now recommended.

If you have any further questions or concerns, you can contact HCOE School Nurses at 445-7051 -- or call Health Dept. at 268-2108