



**SHREWSBURY CATHEDRAL
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL and
NURSERY
Diocese of Shrewsbury**

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Dear parents/carers,

Re: Chicken Pox

This letter is to provide you with information on Chicken Pox.

What is Chickenpox?

Chickenpox is a common infection that spreads easily. It most often affects children

Signs of Chickenpox:

For most people, chickenpox is a mild illness, the main symptoms include:

- An itchy spotty rash, and fever, runny nose, cough and generally feeling unwell.
- The rash starts as small spots which can occur anywhere on the body, then becomes fluid-containing blisters (vesicles), that then scab over.

How is Chickenpox spread?

Chickenpox is spread through droplets when an infectious person coughs or sneezes, through direct contact with things that have fluid from the blisters on them.

The incubation period (time from becoming infected to when symptoms first appear) is between 1 to 3 weeks. The virus is present at the back of the nose and throat in the first few days and in the fluid of the blisters before they dry up. A person with chickenpox is infectious from 2 days before the rash appears until the blisters are dry and form scabs.

If you have chickenpox, you will need to stay off school, nursery or work until all the spots have formed a scab. This is usually 5 days after the spots first appeared.

Who is at Risk?

- People who are pregnant
- Newborn babies
- People with a weakened immune system

These individuals should seek medical advice as soon as they have contact with someone suspected to have chickenpox.

Self-Care and Chicken Pox

There are things someone can do to treat chickenpox at home without needing to see a GP.

Do

- drink plenty of fluids (try ice lollies if your child is not drinking)
- take paracetamol to help with any pain and discomfort
- cut their child's fingernails and put socks on their hands at night to stop them scratching
- use cooling creams or gels from a pharmacy like calamine lotion
- speak to a pharmacist about using antihistamine medicine to help itching
- bathe in cool water and pat the skin dry (do not rub)
- dress in loose clothes

Don't

- do not use ibuprofen unless told to by a doctor, as it may cause serious skin infections
- do not give aspirin to children under 16 years
- do not scratch the spots, as scratching can cause scarring
- Do not go near newborn babies or anyone who's pregnant or has a weakened immune system, as chickenpox can be dangerous for them.

Complications:

Children who have had chickenpox recently may develop complications if they also catch scarlet fever (group A streptococcal infection). Parents/guardians should remain vigilant for the following symptoms in children who have had chickenpox:

- persistent high temperature
- skin around chickenpox blisters becoming red, hot or painful (signs of infection)
- joint pain and swelling and/or symptoms not improving or getting worse

If you are concerned about the symptoms above, please seek medical advice as soon as possible.

For more information, visit:

Chickenpox: <https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Chickenpox/>

Yours sincerely,

Graeme Hawes

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