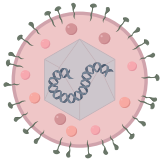


CHICKENPOX SPREADS EASILY

Guidance for School Nurses

When to contact your local health department

- If you identify a student with chickenpox symptoms or you are informed by a parent that their child was recently diagnosed with chickenpox
- If two or more students are experiencing chickenpox symptoms and an outbreak investigation is required
- Visit <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/health-department-locator/> to get in touch with your local health department.



What is Chickenpox?

Chickenpox, also called varicella, is a highly contagious disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus. The same virus also causes shingles (herpes zoster).

What are the symptoms of chickenpox?



Itchy, blister-like rash that typically begins on the chest, back, or face



Fever



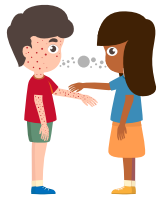
Headache



Feeling tired

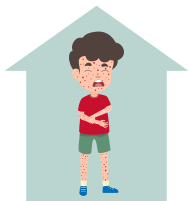


Loss of appetite



How is chickenpox spread?

The virus spreads in the air when a sick person coughs or sneezes, though direct contact with the rash, or by handling items that are soiled by the infected person's chickenpox blisters.



When is someone with chickenpox contagious?

A person can spread chickenpox to others from 2 days before the rash appears until all blisters are dry and have a scab. Vaccinated people may develop lesions that do not crust.

Students with chickenpox should be kept home from school until they are no longer contagious.



What can be done to prevent the spread of chickenpox?

Vaccination is the best way to protect against chickenpox. In Virginia, students are required to receive two doses of chickenpox vaccine prior to entering kindergarten.



How is someone diagnosed with chickenpox?

Students with chickenpox symptoms should see a health care provider immediately. Testing may be needed to confirm the diagnosis. If testing is not available through a private laboratory, collection materials and testing services can be ordered by your local health department.