

Chickenpox Diagnosis and Treatment

One of the classic children's diseases is chickenpox, which is easily transmitted between children. Chickenpox can be transmitted by direct contact as well as by airborne transmission. Rare but serious complications can be caused by the disease, requiring immediate medical attention. The most effective method for avoiding chickenpox is by immunization against the disease. The most common symptoms of chickenpox are fever, headache, stomach ache, and loss of appetite, followed by an itchy rash of blisters, normally lasting for 2 to 4 days. The virus culprit of chicken pox is the varicella-zoster virus (VZV). It is the same as the human herpes virus 3 (HHV-3), which causes herpes zoster, or shingles, in adults.

Chickenpox is usually diagnosed by observing the tell-tale rash and blisters that caused by chickenpox and from taking the sufferer's medical history. Blisters located on the scalp are also a strong chickenpox indicator. Blood tests and various tests of the pox blisters themselves can confirm the chickenpox diagnosis.

As with other viral diseases, antibiotics are ineffective in combatting chickenpox. In the vast majority of cases, a chickenpox infection should simply be allowed to run its course. In most cases, the best course of treatment is to keep the chickenpox sufferer comfortable while allowing their natural defenses fend off the illness. Calamine lotion, oatmeal baths in lukewarm water, antihistamine lotions, and topical lotions can help alleviate some of the itching. If scratching of chickenpox blisters becomes a problem, it is best to keep fingernails trimmed short to reduce the chance of turning the blisters into sores, which can get infected which can cause scars.

Immunization is the best defence against chicken pox. However, there are some people who do not believe in vaccination for themselves and their children. To keep from transmitting chickenpox to people such as this, as well as unvaccinated visitors from other countries, it is recommended that chickenpox sufferers remain isolated at home until 4 days after the symptoms have passed.

There are various effective antiviral medicines available. They are most effective when they are administered within 24 hours of the appearance of the chickenpox rash. For the majority of healthy children, these medicines are unnecessary. However, these medicines are especially beneficial for adults and teenagers who generally develop more severe symptoms. Additionally, for people with lung conditions such as asthma, skin conditions such as eczema or recent sunburn, or those who have recently taken steroids, or those who need to take a regular aspirin regimen, antiviral medication may be an effective treatment.

Some physicians also prescribe the antiviral medicines to people who are living with a chickenpox sufferer but have not had chickenpox themselves. This is to help them avoid developing a more severe case of chickenpox as a result of their increased exposure to the disease. If you suspect that you or your child has contracted chickenpox, it is advisable to contact your doctor as soon as possible to avoid the risk of developing complications or transmitting the disease to others.

WARNING: DO NOT USE ASPIRIN. Unless instructed by your child's doctor, never give aspirin to a child suffering from a viral illness since the use of aspirin in such cases has been linked to development of Reye's Syndrome. Reye's Syndrome is a serious and potentially deadly encephalitis-type illness. If pain-relief is necessary, acetaminophen and ibuprofen may be used safely.