

Chickenpox

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- Chickenpox is a very contagious **disease of children**. The disease occurs in epidemics, especially in children under the **age 13 of ten years**. Children of the first four years of life are the most susceptible. There is an incubation period **of 14—21 days**, most frequently 17 days.

Etiology:

Chickenpox is caused by the *Varicella Zoster* virus of the herpesvirus family, aka the human herpes virus type 3. This is a **DNA-containing** virus, little resistant in the external environment, **capable of replication** only in the human body.



Epidemiology

→ The source of infection is a sick person. The patient infects susceptible people from the last 48 hours of the incubation period and up to 5 days after the appearance of the last fresh element of the rash.

→ The transmission mechanism is airborne. The disease is very contagious, but close contact of the patient and the susceptible organism is necessary for the implementation of infection.

Clinical pattern

- ✦ The first symptoms are the following: a slight fever and sometimes pains in the back and legs. Almost at the same time (within twenty four hours) a characteristic eruption appears on different parts of the body. It is found very frequently on the scalp (the hairy part of the head).
- ✦ The number of vesicles is very variable. In a slight case there may only be eight or ten of the vesicles, but sometimes in severe cases their number may amount to six or seven hundred.
- ✦ The eruption consists of red maculas quickly progressing to papules and vesicles. Soon they become crusted. The brownish crusts dry up and fall off in two – three weeks. The child remains infectious until the scabs scale.
- ✦ Chickenpox is one of the mildest of acute infectious diseases of children. Children remain feverish for 2 – 3 days, while new vesicles still appear and after that feel well. The recovery is usually complete.

Complications

- Chickenpox in children and adults is similar, but complications develop more often in adults.

Specific complications:

- stenosing laryngotracheitis;
- neurological complications — meningitis, encephalitis, myelitis;
- keratitis;
- hemorrhagic nephritis.



Nonspecific complications:

- abscesses;
- phlegmons;
- otitis media;
- pneumonia;
- sepsis.

Diagnostics

A doctor's consultation

with a high body temperature appearance of a rash on the skin.

Laboratory diagnosis of chickenpox is rarely carried out. If necessary, in doubtful or complex cases, they can be used:

- clinical blood analysis with leukocyte formula
- general urine analysis
- biochemical blood tests
- serological reactions



Treatment

In the majority of cases no other treatment beyond **isolation** is required:

- The **child should** be kept in bed during the eruptive stage and as long **as there** is any fever.
- The further management of the patient is handled by an infectious disease specialist.
- When the first signs **appear, you need** to contact a therapist or pediatrician.
- The lesions should be **treated with** a disinfective solution.
- **Self-treatment** of chickenpox is unacceptable.



