Chickenpox: the symptoms, the diagnosis and the cure for one of the most widely spread childhood illnesses

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**Chickenpox: what it is, how it develops and how to cure it. Here’s some useful information to better understand one of the most widely spread childhood illnesses.**

Chickenpox is a highly contagious infectious disease caused by the Varicella zoster (Vzv) virus, a member of the Herpes virus family. Alongside rubella, measles, whooping cough and mumps, it is the most wide spread childhood illness and usually manifests itself in children aged between 5 and 12 years.

It spreads primarily through the air through the cough or sneezes of infected individuals, or through direct contact with the rash secretions. This typical skin exanthema manifests itself in these cases and causes itching.

## Symptoms

The symptoms of chickenpox are usually easily identifiable: it starts off with the emergence of little red blisters on the back, stomach and face, spreading eventually all over the skin.

Often this infectious rash phase is preceded by a prodromal phase, that consists of a mild fever, a slight headache and a general ill feeling for 1-2 days, but this is a much more common factor in adults. In children it can easily pass unnoticed.

The real exanthematic manifestations appear, rather, in the form of various vesiculars, that appear in successive stages and that undergo a process of change that lasts between a few hours to several days. At its peak therefore, there might be distinct red patches present (macules), distinct marks (papules), puss filled blisters (vesciculars) and scabs. This phase is often accompanied by a fever of between 37.8 and 39.4 °C.

## The Infection

Those who have chickenpox are usually contagious 1-2 days before the skin rash appears. Normally it takes 10-21 days from the moment of contracting the virus for it to spread, so those who are infected go through a period of incubation of around two weeks, that i, they are contagious not long before the rash appears.

If a vaccinated patient falls ill, he might still be contagious.

Contracting chickenpox normally means also becoming immune to it: it is rare in fact that a person contracts chickenpox twice in their life.

## The cure

To reduce itchiness, the application of a wet bandage on the rash area is recommended. In some cases, doctors also advise you take oat baths, which soften the spots.

To control the pain and body temperature you should instead proceed with the administering of painkillers and antipyretics. In more serious cases antihistamines or broad spectrum antibiotics should be taken to alleviate excessive discomfort and itching.

We know how difficult it is to resist scratching in situations like these, especially for children: this is why Mums might resort to using gloves and shoes to stop their little ones scratching, particularly during the night.

## Vaccination

Here are the doses and timings of the vaccination according to age:

• For children aged between 12 months and 12 years: one vaccine dose

• For children older than 12 years and for adults: two vaccine doses, at least four weeks apart.

The vaccine has an 80%-90% success rate in preventing infection, and an 85%-95% chance of preventing serious types of chickenpox. If administered within 72 hours of contraction (or, at the very most 5 days), it may in fact protect you from or facilitate a contraction of the illness to a more tolerable kind.

The vaccination isn’t obligatory and is recommended for adults, especially women who intend on having a child and those who have a high risk of contracting it, such as healthcare workers, teachers and babysitters.

It is contraindicated for individuals who are immunodepressant, pregnant women or for its anaphylactic reaction on the first dose.
If an unvaccinated woman wants a child, it is best that she takes the vaccine at least 1-3 months before conception. It is not advisable that she has a vaccine during pregnancy or during the 30 days before conception.

<http://www.alfemminile.com/bambini/varicella-sintomi-diagnosi-cura-s1593238.html>