

# Chickenpox - information prescription

## Preventing the spread of chickenpox

**If your child has chickenpox, the Health Protection Agency recommends you inform their school or nursery and keep them at home for five days.**

If you have chickenpox, stay off work and at home until you're no longer infectious, which is until the last blister has burst and crusted over. This usually takes five or six days after the rash begins.

If either you or your child has chickenpox, it is also a good idea for you, or them, to avoid contact with:

- pregnant women
- newborn babies
- anyone who has a weak immune system, such as people who are having chemotherapy (a treatment for cancer) or taking steroid tablets

If you or your child have recently been exposed to the chickenpox virus, you may not be able to visit friends or relatives in hospital. Telephone the ward to check first.

## Travelling on a plane

If you or your child have chickenpox, you may not be allowed to fly until six days after the last spot has appeared.

You and your child should be safe to fly once you're past the infectious stage and all of the blisters have crusted over. But it's best to check the policy of your airline first. Inform the airline as soon as chickenpox is diagnosed.

It is also important to let your travel insurer know if you or your child have chickenpox. You need to make sure that you'll be covered if you have to delay or cancel your holiday, or if you need to extend your stay until your child is well enough to fly home.

## Stop the virus spreading

Chickenpox can sometimes be spread through contact with objects that have been infected with the virus, such as

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children's toys, bedding or clothing.

If someone in your household has chickenpox, you can help stop the virus spreading by wiping any objects or surfaces with a sterilising solution and making sure that any infected clothing or bedding is washed regularly.

## Vaccination

There is a chickenpox vaccine that is used to protect people who are most at risk of a serious chickenpox infection or of passing the infection on to someone who is at risk.

People who may be considered for chickenpox vaccination include:

- healthcare workers who are not already immune – for example, a nurse who has never had chickenpox and who may pass it to someone they are treating if they become infected
- people living with someone who has a weakened immune system – for example, the child of a parent receiving chemotherapy

The vaccine is not suitable for pregnant women. Avoid getting pregnant for three months after having the vaccine. The vaccine is also not suitable for people with weakened immune systems.

Read more about the chickenpox vaccination.

## Tips for parents

See the pregnancy and baby guide for practical advice about all aspects of parenting, plus videos and interactive tools to help you and your child stay healthy.

## Additional information

### Useful organisations

#### NCT

Alexandra House, Oldham Terrace, London, W3 6NH  
Tel : 0300 330 0773

<http://www.nct.org.uk/home>

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