

Information regarding Chickenpox (Mizubousou: みずぼうそう)

Chickenpox (varicella) is a highly contagious infectious disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus, and is spread by airborne droplets of saliva and nasal secretions when an individual coughs or sneezes. The virus chiefly affects the skin and the lining of the mouth and throat.

Symptoms may take 10-21 days to appear after contact with the virus. Children may initially develop mild flu-like symptoms along with a fever. Most commonly, a skin rash of small, flat, red spots appears on the trunk and face, eventually spreading to the arms and legs. Over 12-14 hours, these spots will raise and form a round, itchy, fluid-filled blister. After a few days the spots burst, dry out and then crust over; this process of spot development and crusting over may last for several days. Usually by day seven blisters have crusted over.

The vaccine is available at most clinics. Vaccination within three days of contact with an infected person may prevent the disease or may reduce the symptoms.

Chickenpox are very itchy, therefore the most common complication is infection of spots due to excessive scratching. The risk of infection can be minimized by keeping finger nails clipped, hands clean, clothing clean and dry. Applying soothing cream or lotion to the skin may lessen itchiness. Oral antihistamines may also be prescribed to control the itching. Do not give aspirin as this may induce a potentially fatal disorder known as Reye Syndrome. Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Paracetamol) may be used to control fever.

A doctor should be contacted if blisters become infected or child has difficulty breathing; pregnant women who have not had chickenpox and are exposed to the disease should also notify their obstetrician.

A person with chickenpox is most contagious two days before the rash appears but remains contagious until the last blisters have crusted over.

Important: If your child has chickenpox please keep him or her at home until all the blisters have become dry scabs (crusted over) and fever has subsided. Siblings who are uninfected can come to school but parents can keep them at home if they wish. Please complete the Certificate for returning pupils when your child comes back to school.

We would advise that you check the following website for up-to-date information regarding this illness:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chickenpox/>



Health Information

If you have trouble accessing the website or would like any further information please contact the School Nurses:

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Shibuya Medical Room – 03 5467 4366

Showa Medical Room – 03 3411 4213

Best Regards,

The British School in Tokyo
Health and Safety Office