

PARENT ALERT

Contagious disease exposure in room _____ on _____.

CHICKENPOX (Varicella)

WHAT IS IT? A virus that is preventable by immunization, though cases are possible in vaccinated individuals. It usually starts with fever, tiredness, loss of appetite then after 1-2 days rash will follow. The rash will turn into itchy, fluid-filled blisters that eventually will turn into scabs usually after 5-7 days ([CDC, 2021](#)).

WHERE DID IT COME FROM? It came from another infected person.

WHEN CAN YOU CATCH IT? From 1-2 days before rash onset and continuing until all lesions are crusted (usually about 5-7 days) ([CDC, 2021](#)).

HOW CAN YOU CATCH IT? Through direct contact or touching the blisters and/or fluid from the lesions, or by breathing the same air or aerosols of an infected person. It may also be transmitted by touching the blisters of someone with Shingles (CDPH, 2022)

HOW LONG BEFORE THE SYMPTOMS APPEAR? Rash onset will start 14 to 16 days but more commonly 10 to 21 days after exposure.

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS? Those who are immunocompromised may have serious complications such as pneumonia, bacterial skin infection, swelling of the brain, dehydration, blood stream infections and death. Children with chickenpox should not be treated with aspirin. This can lead to [Reye's Syndrome](#) .

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

1. See a health professional.
2. Notify the Center to alert other parents.
3. Wash towels and pillowcases daily with hot water and soap and use EPA-approved disinfectant or bleach.
4. Wash hands after caring for the child.
5. Clean and disinfect areas.

WHAT WILL THE STAFF DO?

1. Post this notice.
2. Meticulous handwashing.
3. Wash and clean everything used by the child with hot water and soap. Disinfect using EPA-approved disinfectant.
4. Exclude children and staff with symptoms consistent with chickenpox until cleared to return to center.
5. If there are unvaccinated persons in the center, refer to their medical provider and seek Public Health Department's advice if needed.

WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR THE ILL CHILD?

San Francisco Department of Public Health
Child Care Health Program
333 Valencia St. 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA, 94103

1. Calamine lotion and a cool bath with added baking soda, uncooked oatmeal, or colloidal oatmeal may help relieve some of the itching.
2. Encourage increase in fluid intake as child may have difficulty eating.
3. Use mitts on babies, or clip fingernails of older children to prevent scratching.
4. Provide a comfortable environment for rest and relaxation.
5. Follow medical provider's medication and treatment plan.

WHEN CAN THE CHILD RETURN TO CLASS? Infectious persons should be isolated until ALL lesions are crusted (usually about 5 days) or after receiving clearance from medical provider or Public Health Department. *If you have any questions, please contact your childcare center and healthcare provider.*

References: [CDC, 2021](#), [CDPH, 2022](#)

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