



# One minute guide to...

## Chickenpox

### What is it?

Chicken pox is generally a mild illness, and the peak in cases is usually between March and May in children under 10 years old. Chickenpox is highly infectious, and symptoms often start with fever, then a runny nose, cough and finally an itchy, spotty rash (anywhere on the body) with blisters that scab over. The scabs typically drop off within 1 to 2 weeks. Some children have only a few spots, but other children can have spots that cover their entire body.

### What to do if children in your setting have chickenpox:

- Children with chickenpox should stay away from the setting until all the spots have formed a scab. This is usually 5 days after the spots appeared.
- Encourage everyone in the setting to wash their hands regularly (supervise and support younger children to wash their hands).
- Keep rooms well ventilated where possible.
- Increase the cleaning of high touch point areas.
- In primary schools/nurseries - suspend activities such as water play and play-doh play until there have been no new cases for a week.
- Minimise the sharing of equipment (such as I-pads and pencils) between children.
- You are infectious to other people from 2 days before spots appear until the spots scab over. Any pregnant staff exposed to a child with chickenpox should seek advice from their midwife. Any clinically vulnerable staff exposed to a child with chickenpox should seek medical advice from their consultant or GP.
- A reminder that the NHS recommends not to give ibuprofen to children with chickenpox (unless advised to do so) as it may increase the risk of severe skin infection. Paracetamol can be used to relieve pain and discomfort. Cooling creams and gels are available from pharmacies.
- If a child becomes seriously ill immediate medical advice should be accessed.

### Who to contact/inform:

You only need to inform [UKHSA](#) if you have any concerns or specifically if there is an outbreak of scarlet fever (2 or more cases), and /or there is chickenpox co-circulating in the setting at the same time. The Cumbria and Lancashire local UKHSA Health Protection Team can be contacted on 0344 225 0562 or emailed: [cl.hpt@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:cl.hpt@ukhsa.gov.uk)

### Further Information:

Further information on chickenpox from <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chickenpox/>

This guide has been produced by Education IPC, Public Health & Communities Team in Cumbria. Feb 24



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& Furness  
Council

Working for Cumberland Council and  
Westmorland & Furness Council