

## **Chicken Pox / Varicella**

### **What is Varicella?**

It is an infectious disease caused by the Varicella Zoster virus, which results in a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness, and fever.

### **How do you get chicken pox?**

Chicken pox is highly infectious and spreads from person to person by direct contact or through the air from an infected person's cough or sneeze. A person with chicken pox is contagious 1-2 days before the rash appears and until all blisters have formed scabs. It takes 10-21 days after exposure for a person to develop chicken pox.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

- High fever
- Severe itching
- Uncomfortable rash
- Blister-like lesions
- Dehydration
- Headache

### **Treatment and Prevention**

The Varicella vaccine is recommended for children in 2 doses, at age 12-15 months with a second dose between 4-6 years of age. People 13 years of age and older (who have never had chicken pox or received the Varicella vaccine) should get 2 doses at least 28 days apart. The vaccine prevents chicken pox in most people.

Treatment includes rest, Tylenol (not Motrin or Aspirin) for fever, Benadryl or an antihistamine for itching, and calamine lotion to help dry up the lesions.

Avoid contact with others to prevent spread of virus until ALL lesions are scabbed over.

Contact Health Services at 588-6374 or your health care provider for resources.