



Powerstown Educate Together National School

Roll number 20384J
Powerstown Road, Tyrrelstown, Dublin 15.
Telephone: 01 8272018
Email: info@powerstownet.com
www.powerstownet.com

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Dear Parents/Guardians

There has been a case of Chickenpox in your child's class and your child may have been exposed. If your child has not had Chickenpox before it is quite likely that he/she will catch it.

What is Chickenpox?

Chickenpox is a common childhood illness. A high temperature and cold symptoms are often the first signs of illness, followed by the appearance of the typical rash. The rash starts as small pink bumps, around the neck, ears, back and stomach. The bumps will develop a little water blister, which will turn yellow and oozy and then crusty as it dries. The rash spreads across the whole body including the lower arms and legs. Some people will only have a few spots others could be covered with them.

Symptoms usually develop 8 to 21 days after exposure. The infected person can spread infection for up to 3 days before the rash appears and until the last pox is crusted and dry. Anyone who has had Chickenpox will not get it again.

Why should I be concerned about Chickenpox?

Chickenpox is usually a mild illness for most children although complications can sometimes develop. Chickenpox can be much more serious for anyone with a weakened immune system and for adults. Adults are more likely to develop complications from Chickenpox. Chickenpox infection in women who are in the early stages of pregnancy can result in congenital abnormalities in the infant.

If your child has a weakened immune system, please contact your Doctor to say that he/she may have been exposed to Chickenpox. There is an antibody preparation (VZIG) that can be given to prevent illness, but it must be given within 72 hours of exposure, so contact your Doctor promptly.

What should I do if I think my child has Chickenpox?

Arrange for your doctor to see the child and confirm the diagnosis. Do not bring the child to the surgery as this will just spread the infection further. Do not use Aspirin or any products that contain aspirin to control a high temperature. This has been associated with the development of a rare but serious disease called Reye's syndrome. Paracetemol can be used to control a high temperature.

- If your child is normally healthy, Chickenpox will probably be a mild illness and no specific precautions are necessary.
- If your child has a weakend immune system contact your doctor immediately. There is a medication called Acyclovir that may shorten the illness.

- If you or anyone in your family has a weakened immune system (for example from cancer or an organ transplant) contact your doctor immediately.

Can my child stay in school?

If your child develops Chickenpox they should not attend school until all the spots have crusted over. Children with spots that are crusted and dried can safely attend school as they are no longer infectious.

Your doctor and local health clinic will be able to answer any further questions that you might have about Chickenpox.

Yours sincerely,

Helena Trench

Helena Trench (Principal)