

You Can Prevent the Spread of Chickenpox (Varicella) at Summer Camp

Protect yourself, your family, and the community

What is chickenpox?

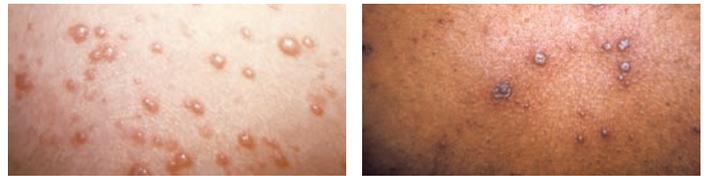
Chickenpox (varicella) is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus. It spreads easily from person to person if they are not immune. Chickenpox causes a rash with blisters that can spread the disease through direct contact. This disease can also travel through the air when people cough, sneeze, talk, or laugh. It can also spread when items with saliva on them are shared. Items include cups, bottles, cans, forks, spoons, and more.

Living in close spaces like dorms or camps can increase the risk of chickenpox spreading. People who get chickenpox can get very sick and spread the disease to others. That's why it's important to recognize the symptoms, follow prevention steps, and get vaccinated. Any child who becomes sick at camp should receive medical care right away. The health director or camp director should be notified.

Know the signs and symptoms of chickenpox.

At first, people might notice small red spots that itch. They can show up anywhere – on the arms, legs, and even inside the mouth, ears, or genital areas. The spots turn into little blisters that eventually turn into scabs. Other symptoms may begin to appear one to two days before the rash. They include fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, and headache.

Even before a rash appears, people are highly contagious. People with chickenpox can spread the virus one to two days before they develop the typical rash. This makes it hard to prevent the virus from spreading. A person with chickenpox is contagious until all blisters have formed scabs.



Steps to prevent chickenpox:

- 1. Get vaccinated.** Be sure you and your family are fully vaccinated with the chickenpox vaccine. It is safe and effective.
- 2. Know if you and your family are immune.** You are considered immune if you have either a written record of age-appropriate doses of chickenpox-containing (varicella) vaccine – or a laboratory test showing immunity. If you are not sure about immunity, talk to your health care provider before going to camp.
- 3. Practice good hygiene.** Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Scrub between fingers, on the backs of your hands, and under nails. Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow. Put used tissues in a lined waste bin or a trash can with a lid. This will help reduce the risk of germs spreading in the air and on surfaces.
- 4. Avoid contact and stay home when sick.** Stay away from people who have chickenpox until they are no longer contagious. If you are sick, protect others by staying home until you are no longer contagious.
- 5. Call ahead before seeking medical care.** If you think you or a family member have chickenpox, call before seeking medical care. This will help the office, clinic, or emergency department take steps to prevent others from being exposed to chickenpox.

*Need a vaccine or want to learn more about how to prevent chickenpox?
Call your health care provider or local health department. For more information, visit:*

health.ny.gov/chickenpox



Department
of Health