

Chickenpox

Chickenpox is common and mostly affects children, although you can get it at any age. It usually gets better by itself within a week without needing to see a GP.

Check if it's chickenpox



1. Chickenpox starts with red spots. They



can appear anywhere on the body.

2. The

spots fill with fluid and become blisters. The blisters may burst. They might spread or stay in



a small area.

3. The spots scab over. More

blisters might appear while others scab over.

Other symptoms

You might get symptoms before or after the spots, including:

- a high temperature above 38C
- aches and pains, and generally feeling unwell
- loss of appetite

Chickenpox is very itchy and can make children feel miserable, even if they do not have many spots. Chickenpox is usually much worse in adults.

It's possible to get chickenpox more than once, although it's unusual.

If you're not sure it's chickenpox

Check other [rashes in children](#).

How to treat chickenpox at home

Important

You'll need to stay away from school, nursery or work until all the spots have crusted over.

This is usually 5 days after the spots first appeared.

Do

- drink plenty of fluid (try ice lollies if your child is not drinking) to avoid dehydration
- take [paracetamol](#) to help with pain and discomfort
- put socks on your child's hands at night to stop scratching
- cut your child's nails
- use cooling creams or gels from your pharmacy
- speak to a pharmacist about using antihistamine medicine to help itching
- bathe in cool water and pat the skin dry (do not rub)
- dress in loose clothes
- check with your airline if you're going on holiday – many airlines will not allow you to fly with chickenpox

Don't

- do not use [ibuprofen](#) unless advised to do so by your doctor, as it may cause serious skin infections
- do not give aspirin to children under 16
- do not be around pregnant women, newborn babies and people with a weakened immune system, as it can be dangerous for them