

## Chickenpox Newsletter

5 July 2021

Kia ora Whānau

We have had a number of students away today with chickenpox. We ask if your child has chickenpox that they stay away from school until they are better.

Chickenpox is a common childhood illness that causes an itchy, blistering rash. It is very easily spread both through the air, when someone coughs or sneezes, and through contact with the fluid in the blisters. If one child in your household gets it, it is almost certain that any others who have not had chickenpox, or been vaccinated against it, will get it.

### **Here is the advice from Regional Public Health:**

In children, chickenpox usually begins as an itchy rash of red small bumps that turn to blisters on the stomach, back and face, and then spread to other parts of the body. Blisters can also appear inside the mouth and on the scalp.

Some children may also experience additional symptoms such as:

- high fever
- tiredness
- fever
- general aches and pains
- headache
- cold like symptoms
- vomiting and diarrhoea or serious complications like pneumonia

Children with chickenpox must stay away from school. A child is infectious from two days before the rash appears and stays infectious until all the blisters form scabs and are dry, this can take up to seven days as crops of blisters occur over several days. Once all the spots have formed scabs, the child is no longer infectious. The child may then go back to their school provided they are otherwise well.

Advice to Parents and Caregivers to:

Most people with chickenpox don't need to see their doctor. Here are some things you can do to get through it (or help your child get through it):

- Take a lukewarm bath every 3–4 hours for the first few days. Add 4 tablespoons of baking soda, cornstarch or oatmeal to the water. Use soap in one of the baths each day to clean bacteria off your skin.
- Use calamine lotion on the chickenpox sores to help relieve itching.
- Put a towel-covered ice pack or cool, moist washcloth on itchy areas for 20–30 minutes. (Don't share the towel or washcloth with anyone else.)
- If the itching is severe or is making it hard to sleep, take an antihistamine.
- Trim your fingernails and wash your hands often to prevent the rash from becoming infected if you scratch it.
- Take a pain reliever such as paracetamol for headache, fever or general aches and pains.

**Ngā mihi nui**

**Luana Carroll**

**Principal, Houghton Valley School**