

Chickenpox (varicella)

What is it? Chickenpox is a very contagious disease caused by a virus. Signs of chickenpox will start 10-21 days after exposure. The main signs are:



Itchy rash of blisters



Loss of appetite



Feeling very tired



Fever

How does it spread?



Someone with chickenpox talks, coughs, or sneezes around others.



Another person touches blisters or contaminated objects.

Who is at risk of getting very sick?



Babies



Teens and adults



Pregnant people



People with a weak immune system

How can I avoid spreading it to others?



Wash hands with soap and water



Do not share food, utensils, and personal items



Keep blisters covered with clothes



Clean frequently touched surfaces



Stay home and away from others when sick



Vaccination is the best way to prevent chickenpox.

Children, teens, and adults need 2 doses of vaccine if they are not already immune.





Talk to your health care provider about vaccination, if you are sick, or if you were exposed to chickenpox. To learn more visit [kingcounty.gov/cd](https://www.kingcounty.gov/cd).

Vaccination protects people from chickenpox.



Children, teens, and adults need 2 doses of chickenpox (varicella) vaccine if they are not already immune. You are immune if you had chickenpox disease or were vaccinated before.

Who should get vaccinated?

		
Who needs to get vaccinated?	Babies and toddlers	Young children
When to get vaccinated?	First dose: 12-15 months	Second dose: 4-6 years

What should I do if my child or I are not immune to chickenpox?

If you have never been vaccinated or had chickenpox disease, it's not too late to get protection! Talk to your healthcare provider about catching up.

		
Who needs to get vaccinated?	Children 12 years and younger	People 13 years and older
How long should I wait between dose #1 and #2?	3 months	4-8 weeks

Who should not get chickenpox vaccines?



Pregnant people



People who may be allergic



People with a weak immune system or severe illness

How safe are chickenpox vaccines?

They are very safe for most people. Like any other medicine, chickenpox vaccines can have side effects. These are usually mild and go away on their own. Side effects might include:



Soreness where vaccine was given



Mild rash



Fever



Talk to your health care provider about getting vaccinated.
Visit [kingcounty.gov/findaclinic](https://www.kingcounty.gov/findaclinic) for vaccination options near you.