

**Greater Manchester Minor Ailments Scheme- Treating Chicken Pox in otherwise healthy person**

**How should I symptomatically treat an otherwise healthy person with chickenpox?**

* Offer paracetamol to relieve pain or fever.
	+ The use of antipyretic agents should be considered in children with fever who appear distressed or unwell. Antipyretic agents should not routinely be used with the sole aim of reducing body temperature in children with fever who are otherwise well. The views and wishes of parents and carers should be taken into consideration.
* Consider the use of topical calamine lotion to alleviate itch- not available on the scheme but patients may wish to purchase
* Chlorphenamine may be useful for itch associated with chickenpox for those who are 1 year of age or older.

**What advice should I give to someone with chickenpox?**

* Advise the following simple measures to help alleviate symptoms:
	+ Encourage adequate fluid intake to avoid dehydration.
	+ Dress appropriately to avoid overheating or shivering.
	+ Wear smooth, cotton fabrics.
	+ Keep nails short to minimize damage from scratching.
* Advise that the most infectious period is 1–2 days before the rash appears, but infectivity continues until all the lesions have crusted over (commonly about 5–6 days after the onset of illness):
	+ During this time, advise a person with chickenpox to avoid contact with:
		- People who are immunocompromised (for example those receiving cancer treatment or high doses of oral steroids, or those with conditions that reduce immunity).
		- Pregnant women.
		- Infants aged 4 weeks or less.
		- Children with chickenpox should be kept away from school or nursery for 5 days from the onset of the rash.
* Inform the person to seek urgent medical advice if their condition deteriorates or they develop complications. Parents of young children with chickenpox should be particularly aware of:
	+ Bacterial superinfection — manifesting as sudden high grade pyrexia (often after initial improvement), erythema and tenderness surrounding the original chickenpox lesions.
	+ Dehydration — encourage and monitor fluid intake and seek medical attention if signs of dehydration develop (for example reduced urine output, lethargy, cold peripheries, reduced skin turgor).

Full guidance is available from <http://cks.nice.org.uk/chickenpox#!topicsummary>