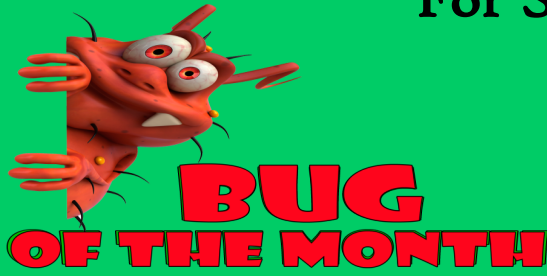


For Staff /Patient Education



Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV)

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What is it?

- Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV) is a member of the herpesvirus family and causes two clinically distinct forms of disease: [Varicella \(chickenpox\)](#) and [Herpes Zoster \(shingles\)](#).
- Primary VZV infection results in the diffuse vesicular rash of varicella, or chickenpox. Endogenous reactivation of latent VZV typically results in a localized skin infection known as herpes zoster, or shingles.
- Varicella is generally a mild disease in children, although serious complications can sometimes occur (eg, secondary bacterial skin infections and pneumonia). Complications from VZV infection are more common in neonates, adults, or immunocompromised persons.
- The average incubation period is 14–16 days (range 10–21 days).
- Infection is often characterized by a short (1 or 2 days) prodromal period (fever, malaise), although this may be absent in children, and by pruritic rash consisting of crops of macules, papules, and vesicles (typically 250–500 lesions), which appear in ≥ 3 successive waves and resolve by crusting. Characteristic for varicella is presence of lesions in different stages of development at the same time.
- For most people, getting chickenpox once provides immunity for life. However, for a few people, they can get chickenpox more than once, although this is not common.

How is it spread?

- Chickenpox spreads in the air through coughing or sneezing.
- It can also be spread by touching or breathing in the virus particles that come from chickenpox blisters.
- It takes from 10 to 21 days after exposure to a person with chickenpox or shingles for someone to develop chickenpox. A person with chickenpox can spread the disease from 1 to 2 days before they get the rash until all their chickenpox blisters have formed scabs.

Where is it found?

- Humans are the only reservoir of the virus, and disease occurs only in humans.
- After primary infection as varicella (chickenpox), the virus remains dormant in the [sensory-nerve ganglia](#) and can reactivate at a later time, causing herpes zoster (shingles).

Prevention and Control:

- [Immunization](#). Varicella vaccine is very safe and effective at preventing the disease. Children, adolescents, and adults should have two doses of chickenpox vaccine. Most people who get the vaccine will not get chickenpox. If a vaccinated person does get chickenpox, it is usually mild—with fewer blisters and mild or no fever.
- [Isolation precautions](#) for patients with varicella: [Airborne](#) plus [contact](#) isolation precautions.
- Educate all Healthcare Workers & visitors regarding the importance of adherence to isolation procedures.
- Only health care personnel with evidence of immunity to varicella should care for patients who have confirmed or suspected varicella or herpes zoster.
- Post-exposure vaccine should be provided as soon as possible to previously unvaccinated health care personnel who have been exposed to VZV.



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LBC

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