

Childhood Infections

Chicken Pox

On the first day a rash appears, usually on the trunk, with small red spots about 3 or 4mm wide. Within a few hours these develop small blisters at the centre. During the next three or four days further spots will appear and the earlier ones will turn crusty and fall off.

Calamine lotion may be applied to help the itching. The most infectious period is two or three days before the rash appears and until the last crusts have formed dry centres, usually 7-10 days after the rash started. Children may return to school as soon as all the spots have scabbed. Paracetamol can be taken for a temperature.

German Measles

The rash appears during the first day of the illness and usually covers the body, arms and legs in small pink spots about 2-4mm large and does not itch. There are usually no other symptoms, apart from occasional aching joints and raised temperature.

It is infectious from two days before the rash appears until the rash disappears in about four or five days. The only danger is to unborn babies and therefore it is important that all contacts are informed in order that anyone who is pregnant, and not immune, can contact their Doctor. Immunisation can prevent this disease.

Measles

The rash is blotchy and red and appears on the face and body on about the fourth day of feeling unwell and is often accompanied by cold symptoms. It is most infectious from two to three days before the rash appears until eight or ten days afterwards. Immunisation can prevent this disease.

Mumps

The symptoms are swelling of the salivary gland in front of one or other ear often followed a couple of days later by a swelling front of the other ear.

It is infectious for two or three days before the swelling until ten days afterwards. If the pain is severe, you should consult your Doctor. Immunisation can prevent this disease.

All of the above infections are caused by viruses and usually require no treatment from the Doctor, but please notify the surgery if your child appears particularly unwell or you are worried and your Doctor will be happy to give you advice.

High Temperature

A high temperature occurs commonly even with mild infections. In small children it is important to stop the temperature rising too quickly and children should be given paracetamol syrup, which may be bought from the chemist. If they still appear hot, they should be gently sponged all over with tepid water as in a bath or shower in order to cool them. It is sometimes necessary to carry this on for twenty to thirty minutes at a time on more than one occasion to get results. They should also be encouraged to drink extra fluids.

If a temperature is very high and does not come down with the above treatment or the child appears unwell with the temperature, consult your Doctor.

A child or adult with a high temperature will come to no harm being brought .