



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Chickenpox

Recovering from chickenpox can be uncomfortable, but your doctor can walk you through what to expect and what warning signs to watch out for. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

Varicella	Varicella is the more clinical name for chickenpox. The varicella zoster virus is the pathogen that causes chickenpox.
Incubation Period	Sometimes it can take a while for symptoms to appear after you've been exposed to a virus. This is called the incubation period. For chickenpox, it typically takes 14–16 days for people to start feeling sick after getting infected with the virus, though it can sometimes take anywhere from 10–21 days.
Latent Infection	After the initial infection, the varicella virus can lie dormant in the body. This latent infection can reactivate later in life as shingles.
Period of Communicability	Chickenpox is more contagious than many other viruses, including mumps. The period of communicability is the time frame where someone infected with the virus can spread it to other people. For chickenpox, this period starts roughly 1-2 days before the rash appears and lasts until the rash starts to crust over.
Congenital Varicella Syndrome	When pregnant women become infected with chickenpox during the first 20 weeks of pregnancy, it can increase their babies' chances of being born underweight or with other serious complications. Congenital varicella syndrome is the umbrella terms used to describe the negative outcomes in babies that are linked to their moms getting chickenpox during pregnancy.
Varicella Zoster Virus Polymerase Chain Reaction	Varicella zoster virus polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is a method healthcare providers use to confirm or rule out chickenpox.

