CHICKENPOX

(Brief Information for IITK students & Campus Community)

Chickenpox is a highly contagious illness caused by primary infection with varicella zoster virus (VZV). It usually starts with vesicular skin rash mainly on the body and head rather than at the periphery and becomes itchy, raw pockmarks, which mostly heal without scarring.

Chicken pox is an airborne disease spread easily through coughing or sneezing of ill individuals or through direct contact with secretions from the rash. A person with chickenpox is infectious from one to five days before the rash appears. The contagious period continues for 4 to 5 days after the appearance of the rash, or until all lesions have crusted over. Immuno- compromised patients are probably contagious during the entire period new lesions keep appearing. Crusted lesions are not contagious. It may take from 10 to 21 days after contact with an infected person for someone to develop chickenpox.

Chickenpox is often heralded by a prodrome of muscle pain, nausea, fever, headache, sore throat, pain in both ears, complaints of pressure in head or swollen face, and malaise in adolescents and adults, while in children the first symptom is usually the development of a papular rash, followed by development of malaise, fever (a body temperature of 38 °C (100 °F), but sometimes high and loss of appetite. Typically, the disease is more severe in adults. Chickenpox is generally more severe in adult males than in adult females or children. Pregnant women and those with a suppressed immune system are at highest risk of serious complications. Chickenpox is believed to be the cause of one third of stroke cases in children. The most common late complication of chicken pox is shingles, caused by reactivation of the varicella zoster virus decades after the initial episode of chickenpox.

Some Important Advices for Community Prevention

1. In case any person is having symptoms with suspected rashes of Chickenpox (or any rashes), he or she should immediately report/be brought to the Doctor at HC/Hospital.

2. The patient of Chickenpox should be immediately isolated from others in the Community because the disease spreads through coughing/sneezing/close contact.

3. Coughing/sneezing in all situations (Whether chickenpox or otherwise) MUST be done after putting a hander kerchief on the mouth & nose. If hander kerchief is not in
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possessions, even putting hand/forearm, sleeves of shirt or coat etc. shall be the best immediate advisable action.

(Kindly note that this single action can protect hundreds of healthy people from catching the infection from the ailing person. Furthermore such action can protect a large community not only from chickenpox but also from a variety of infections/diseases both bacterial & viral that spread through airborne micro droplet transmission e.g. common Flu & other flus, other seasonal viral infections, URTIs, diphtheria, whooping cough, tuberculosis, measles, mumps, polio etc.

4. The friends & well-wishers should not sit & crowd in the room in close proximity of any Chickenpox patient. Such patient deserves to be helped & served in so many other ways by his/her friends.

5. Sometimes Chickenpox patients themselves decide to leave the hostel/workplace to make a journey for home. It need be appreciated that Journey on public transport by such an individual (suffering from a communicable disease) is neither desirable nor permitted by law.

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