



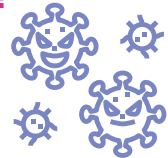
Is It Chickenpox or Measles?

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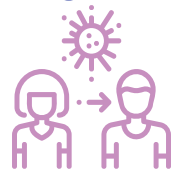
Chickenpox and measles infections in children can look similar to one another, especially during the early phase of infection. This can make it difficult for parents to distinguish between the two infections. Understanding the difference between these two illnesses is crucial for timely and appropriate care.

Chickenpox vs measles: what are the similarities?

Viral infections. Chickenpox and measles are both viral diseases (caused by a virus).



Highly contagious. Both infections are known to be highly contagious and can spread rapidly among children.



Mode of transmission. Chickenpox and measles are both transmitted through inhalation of respiratory droplets from an infected individual. In addition to this, both viruses can also be transmitted through direct contact with infected bodily fluids, such as respiratory fluid in the case of measles, and fluid from ruptured blisters in the case of chickenpox.



Rash-causing diseases. Both infections cause the development of a rash on the body.



Chickenpox vs measles: what are the differences?

Difference #1: Cause of infection

Despite both being viral diseases, chickenpox and measles are caused by different viruses. Chickenpox is caused by the **varicella-zoster virus**, while measles is caused by the **measles paramyxovirus**.

Difference #2: Type of rash

Although chickenpox and measles both cause rashes, the type of rashes produced are different from each other. Chickenpox often begins with raised red spots on the chest, stomach, face, and back. These can then develop into fluid-filled blisters, which may rupture and leak fluid, ultimately forming scabs. In contrast, measles usually starts with a flat, red, and blotchy rash on the forehead that can spread to other parts of the body.

Difference #3: Associated symptoms

Apart from the development of rashes, children infected with chickenpox and measles can also have additional



symptoms. Those infected with chickenpox often have headaches, loss of appetite, and fatigue. This is not commonly seen in those infected with measles, who are more likely to develop a runny nose, sore throat, and cough instead.

Difference #4: Duration of infection

Chickenpox tends to last for a relatively shorter period, usually around 4-7 days. In contrast, measles may persist for a more extended period, typically lasting 10-12 days, and in some cases, it can even last for several weeks.

Conclusion

As chickenpox and measles infections in children can appear similar, parents play a crucial role in recognising the distinguishing factors between the two. Understanding these differences is vital for ensuring timely and appropriate care for their children's health. By being vigilant and informed, parents can take the necessary steps to protect their children and seek medical attention when needed. **PP**

How are chickenpox and measles treated and prevented?

Treating chickenpox and measles in children focuses on easing symptoms and reducing complications. This includes taking medications like paracetamol for fever and pain relief, preventing night time scratching by wearing gloves, as well as taking a cool bath to alleviate itching.

With regards to prevention, one of the best preventive measures available to us are vaccines. Fortunately, vaccines for chickenpox and measles are available. For chickenpox, the varicella-zoster vaccine is used. This vaccine is not included in the national immunisation programme (NIP) but is available upon request at many government and private clinics. The chickenpox vaccine is best administered to children as early as 12 months.

On the other hand, for measles, the MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) vaccine is used. This vaccine is included in the national immunisation programme (NIP). Two doses of the vaccine, one at 9 months old and again at 1 year old. To learn more about vaccines for measles and chickenpox, speak with a paediatrician.



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