

Chickenpox in Pregnancy

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Executive summary of recommendations

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Varicella vaccination prepregnancy or postpartum is an option that should be considered for

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6 of 17

Women should avoid contact with potentially susceptible individuals, e.g. other pregnant women and neonates, until the lesions have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the onset of the rash. Symptomatic treatment and hygiene is advised to prevent secondary bacterial infection of the lesions. Oral aciclovir should be prescribed for pregnant women with chickenpox if they present within 24 hours of the onset of the rash and if they are 20⁺⁰ weeks of gestation or beyond. Use of aciclovir before 20⁺⁰ weeks should also be considered. Aciclovir is not licensed for use in pregnancy and the risks and benefits of its use should be discussed with the woman. Intravenous aciclovir should be given to all pregnant women with severe chickenpox. VZIG has no therapeutic benefit once chickenpox has developed and should therefore not be used D in pregnant women who have developed a chickenpox rash. ovrs sntt nu os nouțt n ts r p t on o t v r ... ost r vrus Arno, s ontro tr, s, o n, t ovr, nst r or .. +vt, s or srust, urtono, vrns, pto, to, o o vr... n ton n uno o p t nt u ts o n t n. ours o v op n t r s , $n \circ p \cdot r + t \circ p = o \cdot s \cdot r \cdot n \circ s = ontro$ tr not v su + nt po r too, ntonţ, pto, ror, ovronţ srouso, ptonso, ropo u u tn to su stt tt r snon r s nt r s o or t or ton o ort stu o 2//• ovr posur npr nn - AD nş r str, s n _ n = ır port ţ pr n n out o n pr n n s pos ovrv. ovror, ovrnt +rsttr str., rt o, or rt roup s... o, pr to... nt, un pos ust pr v n ov r A on pr n n s pos to ovr s s ... or no o ontro see stustification of so programment of the second t on t, stu +, , n t, s s n r t v n o, posur In not, v t, po r nnrs rsonnvu t SO , u,t s p n r pu , t o, t u o, n t v r , $pr \quad n \quad nt \quad o \quad n \quad t \quad , \quad - \quad npo \quad t \quad \cdot \quad ss \quad n \quad C \quad n \quad \quad n \quad n \quad t \quad o \quad \quad u$ A v sor Group on C npo r o n s or ovrorpr nnt o n t npo t prisint tini, ourso t onsto t risin t r or t n. so st ton so $\int OV r \int Or \sim r \cdot s \cdot s \cdot Ou = r \cdot S \cdot$ ons r r un nous, o vr nr o, n n t t ntr v nous ov r $s s o_i s v r \downarrow t rn , n_i t on$ ZIG s r o n or post posur prop s n s not ppropr t tr t nt or $p\ t\ nts \quad t, \quad n \quad \ \ , \quad r \quad npo \quad \cdot \ , \quad s\ r \quad o, \quad n \quad t\ on \ s \quad s \quad on \ t, \quad op\ n\ on \ o_i$ pt un rst n n o, o ZIG or s

The pregnant woman with chickenpox should be asked to contact her doctor immediately if she develops respiratory symptoms or any other deterioration in her condition. Women who develop the symptoms or signs of severe chickenpox should be referred immediately to hospital.

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A hospital assessment should be considered in a woman at high risk of severe or complicated chickenpox even in the absence of concerning symptoms or signs. This assessment needs to take place in an area where she will not come into contact with other pregnant women. Appropriate treatment should be decided in consultation with a multidisciplinary team that includes an obstetrician or fetal medicine specialist, a virologist and a neonatologist.

Women hospitalised with varicella should be nursed in isolation from babies, potentially susceptible pregnant women or non-immune staff.

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Women who develop chickenpox in pregnancy should be referred to a fetal medicine specialist, at 16–20 weeks or 5 weeks after infection, for discussion and detailed ultrasound examination.

Given that amniocentesis has a strong negative predictive value but a poor positive predictive value in detecting fetal damage that cannot be detected by non-invasive methods, women who develop varicella infection during pregnancy should be counselled about the risks versus benefits of amniocentesis to detect varicella DNA by polymerase chain reaction (PCR).

Amniocentesis should not be performed before the skin lesions have completely healed.

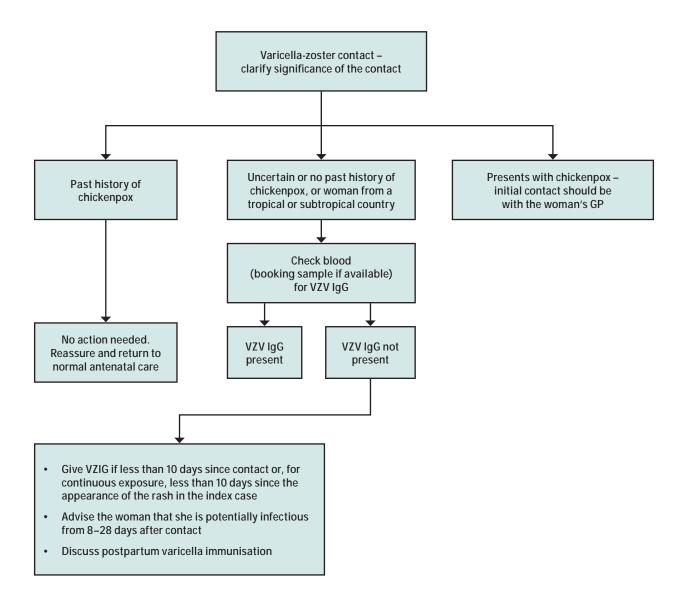
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- Women who develop severe infection and women at high risk of complicated chickenpox should be referred to hospital
- Intravenous aciclovir should be given
- Inform women that infection at < 28⁻⁰ weeks is associated with a small (~1%) risk of FVS
- Refer to a fetal medicine specialist at 16–2

Appendix II: Exp anat on o u de nes and ev dence eve s

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Dr BMP Byrne FRCOG, Dublin; Dr PA Crowley FRCOG, Dublin; and Dr C Aitken FRCPath, Glasgow

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