

# VARICELLA-ZOSTER VIRUS (VZV)

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## THE VIRUS

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The varicella-zoster virus (Human Herpesvirus 3) is a DNA virus belonging to the Herpesviridae family, the Alphaherpesvirinae subfamily and the Varicellovirus genus. Varicella and zoster represent different clinical manifestations of the same infective agent, the VZV.

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## CLINICAL MANIFESTATION

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Varicella is the primary infection of VZV and it mainly occurs in children. It's characterized by a vesicular exanthema, which is often associated to fever. Zoster is a secondary infection provoked by the reactivation of latent VZV in nervous ganglion: it occurs in old people or in immune-depressed and it consists in vesicular cutaneous eruption with nervous sensory ganglion inflammation. Sun or stress can help the reactivation of VZV.

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## PREVENTION

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A soft vaccine with VZV is available and it's recommended to patients who have an high risk of problematic progress of the illness (children with serious tumors before immune-depressive therapies). A passive immunisation is possible with VZV immunoglobulin for not immune people, which are at contact with the virus.

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## EPIDEMIOLOGY

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Varicella is a childhood illness at high risk of contagious (90%), the 90% of teenagers have antibodies against the virus. The incubation period of the varicella is about 2-3 weeks and it's contagious 1-2 days (maximal 5) before the appearance of vesicles and up to 6 days after the appearance.

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## TEST

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Highlight of the virus through PCR.

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## SAMPLE TAKING

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Eye and vesicular smear, liquor and biopsy.

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## EXECUTION

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Daily.

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## COST

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According to the federal charge rate of the analyses (3184.00) TP 180

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Laboratorio  
di diagnostica  
molecolare

Further information or bibliographic references can be asked to the laboratory.