



# Shingles



## What is Shingles?

Shingles is a vaccine preventable disease in which people experience a painful fluid filled skin rash caused by the varicella zoster virus. The varicella zoster virus is the same organism that causes chickenpox. After a person recovers from the chickenpox, the virus stays in the body. Usually the virus does not cause problems, however the virus can reappear later in life, causing shingles.

A person who has shingles can give chicken pox to a person who has never had the chicken pox or an unimmunized person through direct contact with shingles blisters drainage. The drainage can also be transmitted on things like bedding or other soiled clothing.

Persons with shingles may be contagious for a week after the appearance of fluid-filled blisters.

## What should I do if I have Shingles?

- Cover affected draining lesions (sores) with protective dressings.
- Good hand washing after contact with lesions or dressings.
- Disinfection of articles soiled with discharge from lesions.

## How is Shingles treated?

Several antiviral medications are available to treat shingles. These medications should be started as soon as possible after the rash appears in order to shorten the duration and severity of the illness. Varicella Immune Globulin (VIG) may be recommended for immunocompromised contacts since it may prevent or reduce symptoms of the disease.

## How can Shingles be prevented?

- The CDC recommends Shingrix a shingles vaccine in persons 50 years of age and older to prevent shingles.

Shingrix is a 2 dose series separated by 2 to 6 months.

- Get the chickenpox vaccine (Varivax or ProQuad). The vaccine is recommended for children, adolescents, and adults without a reliable history of chickenpox. If a person never gets the chicken pox, they can't get the shingles.
- Cover any rash areas with clothing or dressing. If rash cannot be covered, you may consider staying home.

## Symptoms of Shingles:

- Chills, fever, fatigue and gastrointestinal symptoms may be present 3-5 days before rash develops.
- Numbness, itching, and severe pain on one side of your body, followed by clusters of blister-like lesions.
- A rash occurs in chickenpox-like crops, most often on the chest and waist area and spreads in a linear pattern.
- The rash changes to fluid-filled blisters called vesicles 1-2 days later.
- Vesicles dry and scab about 5 days after onset. There is often severe deep pain in the rash area due to irritation of the nerves.

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*[www.mijackson.org](http://www.mijackson.org)*

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