

Shingles Guidelines

WHAT IS SHINGLES?

Shingles, also known as herpes zoster or varicella-zoster virus, is a reactivation of the chickenpox virus in the body, causing a painful rash. Anyone who's had chickenpox may develop shingles. It isn't known what reactivates the virus.

COMMON SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Painful rash with blisters
- Scabs, ulcers, redness
- Usually in narrow area on half of body
- Burning sensation/itching
- Fatigue
- Fever/chills
- Headache
- Upset stomach

(Symptoms appear before the rash)

CONTAGIOUS TIME PERIOD:

Usually 7-10 days; until blisters crust over.

TIME FROM EXPOSURE TO SYMPTOMS:

None: Reactivated chickenpox.

SPREAD BY:

Direct contact with blister fluid to only those susceptible to chickenpox.

TREATMENT / SELF-CARE:

Treatments include pain relief and antiviral medications such as acyclovir or valacyclovir. Over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication for pain. Aluminum acetate to soothe irritated skin. Wet compresses, calamine lotion, and colloidal oatmeal baths may help relieve itching. Usually clears up within 2-4 weeks. An individual cannot get shingles from someone who has shingles, you can get chickenpox from someone who has shingles if you have never had chickenpox or have never received the vaccine. A chickenpox vaccine in childhood or a shingles vaccine as an adult can minimize the risk of developing shingles.

ACTION AT SCHOOL:

Exclude the child from school until fever-free (99.9°F or below) for 24 hours without the use of any fever reducing medications. Exclude if rash cannot be covered, or child's inability to comply with keeping rash covered until blisters crust over. Families should be notified of the risk to those susceptible*

CONSIDERATIONS AND PREVENTION MEASURES:

Good handwashing and hygiene. Proper disinfection of surfaces.

* Susceptible/at risk= persons not immunized, compromised immune system, pregnant

