

Title: Shingles: Diagnosis and Treatment

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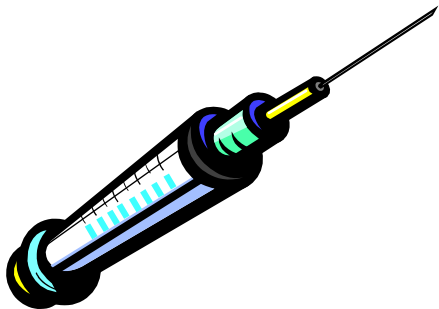
Abstract: Shingles is a painful rash that develops in older patients due to reactivation of the Varicella Zoster virus that already present in the body. The rash usually resolves in 2-3 weeks; however, some unfortunate patients have persistent pain at the sight of the rash. This pamphlet describes the initial symptoms of Shingles and describes the treatment to try and reduce the occurrence of lasting, residual pain.

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Primary Care Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up to date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.

Prevention: Shingles Vaccine

The varicella-zoster vaccine (Zostavax) can help prevent shingles in adults over 60 years old who've already had chickenpox.

Though not a guarantee, the Shingles vaccine will likely reduce the course and severity of the disease and reduce the risk of lasting pain.



For further information on shingles:

The Mayo Clinic Online

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/shingles/DS00098>

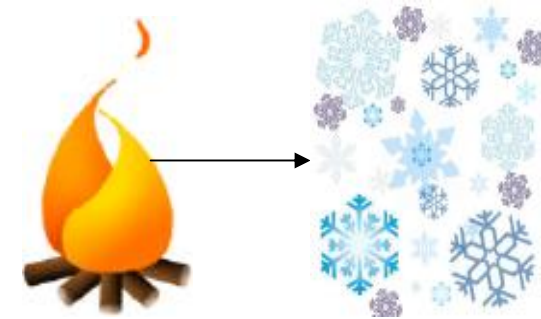
National Institute of
Neurological Diseases and
Stroke

<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/shingles/shingles.htm>

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Shingles

Diagnosis and Treatment



University of Minnesota
Primary Care Clerkship
Patient Education Tool

What is Shingles?

Shingles (herpes zoster) is a viral outbreak on the skin. It is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox.

Shingles usually begins as pain/numbness/tingling on one side of the body. Any part of the body can be affected. A blistery rash will typically appear 1-2 days after the discomfort.



Shingles is typically not a life-threatening condition, but it can be very painful.

In about 1 of 5 patients with shingles, the rash leads to a long-lasting pain called postherpetic neuralgia. The area where the rash had been remains painful and sensitive to touch for months or even years after the rash clears up. Treatment of shingles by a physician can help reduce this complication.

The signs and symptoms of shingles may include:

- Pain, burning, tingling, numbness or extreme sensitivity in a certain part of your body
- A red rash that begins a few days after the pain
- Fluid-filled blisters that break open and crust over
- Itching
- Fever and chills
- Headache
- Upset stomach or abdominal pain



www.wikipedia.org

Treatment of Shingles

Shingles usually heals on its own within a few weeks, but treatment within 72 hours of symptom onset can ease pain, speed healing, and reduce the risk of lasting pain. If you notice any of the signs and symptoms, see your physician.



Possible treatments

- Antiviral medications, such as acyclovir, to reduce the duration and severity of your symptoms. These have been shown to reduce long lasting pain.
- Anti-inflammatory drugs, such as Ibuprofen or Acetaminophen, to ease pain and irritation.
- Tricyclic antidepressants, such as amitriptyline, are occasionally used to control pain and prevent long lasting pain.