



HERPES VARICELLA ZOSTER (SHINGLES)

What is shingles?

- Shingles is a rash disease caused by the dormant (sleeping) chickenpox virus. After a chickenpox infection, the virus does not leave the body, but hides along nerve pathways of the skin. Shingles is the rash that occurs on the area of skin where the virus lays.

What are symptoms that could occur?

- Chills, fever and fatigue may occur 3-4 days before the rash.
- The rash occurs in chickenpox-like crops, most often on the chest and waist (but can occur anywhere on the body).
- One (1) or two (2) days later the rash changes to fluid-filled blisters.
- The blisters dry and scab around the 5th day.
- There is often deep, severe pain in the rash area due to the inflammation of the nerves.

How is it spread?

- Shingles cannot be spread to other people. The fluid in the blisters contains the virus. Coming in contact with this fluid can cause **chickenpox** in 10-21 days for those not immune. Once the blisters have scabbed, the person is no longer able to spread chickenpox.

How is it diagnosed and treated?

- Primary care provider evaluation
- Anti-viral medications may be prescribed
- Pain medication may be prescribed

Are there complications?

- Pain at the site of the healed rash has been known to persist for months or years
- Scarring can occur
- People who have immunity problems may have repeated cases of shingles, otherwise it is rare to have recurrence
- If shingles affect the eye, it can lead to temporary or permanent blindness

Should the sick child be isolated?

- Shingles does not cause shingles in others, but can cause chickenpox to persons who have not had chickenpox or varicella vaccine, therefore should be isolated from those persons
- Should also be isolated from non-immune pregnant women for the same reason

When can the child return to day care or school?

- When lesions are dry and crusted, at least 1 week after first eruption

Genesee County Health Department
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Should schools do special cleaning?

- Special cleaning is not necessary. Routine cleaning with EPA approved products is recommended.

If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?

- Call the Genesee County Health Department at 257-3612

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information, call your health care provider.

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