



Learn What to Expect When You Have Shingles

Description

Shingles are characterized by a painful rash, itching, and burning skin that lasts 3 to 5 weeks. Although most people only get shingles once, the virus might reoccur.



Shingle is a viral virus that affects about one in every three persons in the United States. Adults over the age of 60 accounts for around half of all shingles cases.

Because the varicella-zoster virus causes both shingles and chickenpox, it can arise in anyone who has had chickenpox (VZV). After chickenpox has cleared, this virus stays in the body and can reactivate at any time, resulting in shingles.

Shingles symptoms typically appear on one side of the face or body. In addition, they frequently only

affect a small area. Although they can appear anywhere, the most commonplace is on the side of the waist.

Symptoms' Timeline

After many days of early symptoms, a red rash commonly develops.

Shingles can cause skin irritation or pain several days before the rash emerges. Among the other early symptoms are:

General Annoyance

Itching, numbness, and tingling are all symptoms of hot skin irritation.

A red rash will typically appear around the sensitive area within the next 1 to 5 days. Fluid-filled blisters will form at the rash site a few days later.

Within 10 days of emerging, the blisters will flow before drying up. Scabs will grow on the skin at this point, and they will usually recover within 2 weeks.

Other symptoms that may accompany the skin sensitivity and rash include:

- chills\sfatigue\sfever
- a headache, malaise, or a feeling of being ill, nausea
- light sensitivity
- If the shingles occur near the eyes, a person's vision may be compromised.

It should be emphasized that the severity of shingles symptoms varies from minor to severe, with some people suffering itching and mild discomfort and others experiencing acute pain.

Complications that could arise

The majority of shingles instances recover without creating long-term consequences. However, there are certain potential snags:

Herpes zoster neuropathy (PHN)

Post-herpetic neuropathy (PHN) is a common shingles consequence. It refers to nerve damage that causes pain and burning even after the infection has cleared up shingles.

According to some estimates, up to 20% of those who acquire shingles develop PHN, with older folks being especially vulnerable.

PHN is difficult to treat, and the symptoms might continue for years. However, most people recover completely within a year.

It is unknown why some people who get shingles acquire PHN. However, the following are risk factors for PHN:

- a weaker immune system experiencing discomfort during the early stages of a shingles infection
- advanced age experiencing severe shingles covering a big section of the skin
- According to some research^{Trusted Source}, older women who experience significant pain and rash signs have a 50% likelihood of acquiring PHN.

Other issues to consider

Shingles can also cause the following complications:

- Bacterial skin infections cause facial paralysis
- loss of hearing
- Hepatitis taste loss pneumonia ringing in the ears
- Vertigo is a type of dizziness that causes vision issues.
- Treatment
- To treat shingles, over-the-counter or prescription medications may be prescribed.
- It is critical to seek medical attention as soon as shingles symptoms appear.

The National Institute on Aging advises people to seek medical attention no later than three days after the rash begins. Early therapy can help lessen pain, speed up the healing of the rash, and reduce scarring.

When a doctor confirms shingles, the following therapies may be recommended:

Antiviral medications: These alleviate symptoms, hasten heal, and even avoid complications. Antiviral drugs are often recommended for 7 to 10 days. Among the options are:

- valacyclovir (Zovirax)
- acyclovir (Zovirax)
- famciclovir (Famvir) (Valtrex)
- Antiviral medications are most effective when used within three days after the rash's appearance, but they can still be recommended within the first seven days.
- Antihistamines and pain relievers: Pain and skin irritation may be relieved by over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription drugs. Among the options are:
- anti-inflammatory medications, such as ibuprofen (Advil), antihistamines for itching, such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl), corticosteroids or local anesthetics for severe pain, and numbing agents, such as lidocaine (Lidoderm)
- Ibuprofen, antihistamines, and lidocaine are among the pharmaceuticals purchased online.
- Antidepressants: Certain antidepressant medications are useful in lowering shingles pain and PHN symptoms.
- Tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs) are the most widely recommended medications for shingles pain, and they include:

- Amitriptyline (Elavil), imipramine (Tofranil), nortriptyline (Aventyl, Pamelor) Antidepressants can take several weeks or months to work for nerve pain.
- Anticonvulsant drugs: Although they are normally used to treat epilepsy, several anticonvulsant medications have alleviated nerve pain. Again, it may take many weeks for them to take action. Anticonvulsants that are commonly recommended for shingles include:
 - gabapentin (Neurontin)
 - gabapentin (Lyrica)
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Taking care of shingles symptoms

People can make various efforts to alleviate their symptoms and lessen discomfort and seek medical therapy. These are some examples:

- obtaining enough rest and sleep
- applying a damp compress to itchy, irritated skin and blisters
- Stress reduction can be accomplished through a healthy lifestyle, meditation, and deep breathing techniques.
- wearing loose-fitting natural fiber garments, such as cotton
- bathing with oatmeal and putting calamine lotion on the skin
- Scratching the rash and blisters should be avoided as much as possible. Infection and other issues might result from breaking the skin or popping the blisters.

Is the shingles virus contagious?

Shingles are not contagious and are caused by the reactivation of an already present virus in the body.

On the other hand, a person with shingles can transmit chickenpox to someone who has never had the VZV virus.

As a result, those suffering from shingles should avoid contact with those who have never had chickenpox until their rash has healed entirely. Someone must come into direct touch with the rash to contract the virus.

People who have shingles should do the following to avoid spreading VZV:

- Avoid close contact with those who have never had chickenpox or been immunized against it.
- Avoid close contact with low-birth-weight newborns and anyone with weakened immune systems, such as those taking HIV treatment or undergoing organ transplantation.
- Cover it with loose, natural clothing to avoid others coming into contact with the rash.
- They should often wash their hands after touching the rash or putting lotion on their skin.

Getting a Shingles Vaccine

People over the age of 50 should get a shingles immunization.

A vaccine is available to lower the risk of developing shingles and long-term consequences like PHN.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Reliable Source advises that adults aged 50 and over receive two doses of the Shingrex vaccine over a two to six month period. It is thought to be more than 90% effective at preventing shingles and PHN.

People who have already had shingles can get the vaccine to prevent it from happening again.

Takeaway

Shingles impact up to one-third of the population in the United States. The severity and duration of symptoms vary. Early intervention is critical in lowering symptoms and avoiding complications such as PHN.

As a result, people should seek medical attention as soon as possible if they experience increased skin sensitivity or develop a rash or blisters. When combined with medical care, several home remedies can help relieve shingle symptoms.

People should think about getting a shingles vaccination to lower their chances of getting shingles and experiencing long-term nerve discomfort.

Category

1. Lifestyle

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