

Shingles

Shingles is a viral infection that is caused by the reactivation of the chickenpox virus. It causes a painful blistering rash that may be seen as a stripe or belt-like pattern along one side of the body or face.

Shingle symptoms include:

- Pain in the area, this may be severe and unresponsive to normal pain alleviating methods such as massage or medication.
- Tingling or burning sensations in the area
- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Light sensitivity.

These symptoms can occur for several days before the rash appears. This rash can last for 10-15 days and can form small blisters. These blisters fill with liquid and burst before the skin crusts over and heals.

On some occasions the pain may still be there even after the rash heals. If shingles is diagnosed early enough (within three days of the rash appearing), it can be treated with antiviral medication prescribed by your doctor.

If the pain lasts for more than 3 months, this is called post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN). Signs and symptoms of PHN might include sensitivity to light touch, itching and numbness.

Risk factors for developing this condition include severity of shingles, age (50+), chronic illnesses, shingles location and if treatment was delayed for more than 72 hours after the rash has appeared.

To help relieve this pain, your doctor may prescribe you nerve medication such as Lyrica.

Early Signs of Shingles

