



CHADSTONE

REGION

OSTEOPATHY

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.

Phases of shingles:

- The first phase is burning or tingling pain, sometimes numbness or itching on one side of the body.
- Between 1-5 days after the first sign, a red rash appears.
- Few days after the rash, it will turn into fluid-filled blisters.
- 7-10 days the blister dries up and crusts over.
- 2 weeks later, the scab clears up.

Caution must be taken during the blister phase. This is when the virus is contagious and may spread. Therefore, be sure to cover the rash, avoid touching or scratching the rash and wash your hands regularly.

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.

On some occasions the pain may still be there even after the rash heals. If the pain lasts for more than 3 months, this is called post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN). One in five people with shingles may develop PHN. Signs and symptoms of PHN may include sensitivity to light touch, itching and numbness. These symptoms may be eased with painkillers such as panadol or nurofen or your doctor may prescribe you with a nerve medication called lyrica.

Risk factors for developing PHN 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. However, if shingles is diagnosed early enough (within three days of the rash appearing), it can be treated with antiviral medication prescribed by your doctor.

Coping tips:

- Wear loose fitting clothes.
- Use calamine lotion to soothe the skin.

- Apply a cold cloth to the blistered area to help dry them quicker.
- Keep the area clean and don't scratch as the blisters may become infected.
- Rest and eat a well balanced diet
- Avoid stress as this may increase the pain.
- Do activities that take your mind off the pain e.g. listening to music, watching TV or working on a hobby.

Information sourced from: <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/shingles-herpes-zoster> and <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/shingles#:~:text=Most%20cases%20of%20shingles%20last,a%20red%20rash>

Information compiled by Dr Eliza Clark