

Shingles (Herpes Zoster)

What is Shingles?

Shingles is an infections caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox, varicella zoster. It only occurs in people who have had chickenpox in the past.

Signs and Symptoms

- Rash
- Blisters
- Fever
- Headache
- Chills
- Upset stomach

Before the rash develops, people have pain, itching or tingling on the area it will develop which may occur 1-5 days before the rash appears.

The rash forms blisters that typically scab over in 7-10 days, and clears within 2-4 weeks.

Once the rash has developed crusts, the person is no longer contagious.

If you have symptoms, call your healthcare provider. If shingles is on the upper half of the face, see a doctor at once.

Transmission (How it spreads)

- Found in the stool of infected persons
- When Hands, food, water or objects become contaminate with the stool of an infected person and then get into someone's mouth (fecal-oral route)
- Not washing hands after using the bathroom
- Swallowing recreational water (lakes, river, ponds. Etc.)

Diagnosis and Treatment

A doctor's examination is normally enough to diagnose illness. If necessary, a scraping or swab of blisters may be taken

While most cases resolve on their own, without specific treatments, treatment options include:

- Antiviral medication to reduce pain and shorten the duration of illness
- Topical antibiotics applied to the skin to stop infection of blisters

Prevention:

In order to prevent shingles, you must prevent chickenpox. If you have never had chickenpox, being vaccinated may reduce the risk of having shingles later in life

Those with shingles infection should:

- Keep the rash covered
- Not scratch the rash
- Wash hands

Who is at Risk?

Anyone who has had chickenpox in the past; immunocompromised and elderly persons are at an elevated risk compared to other age groups and those who are not immunocompromised.

If you have symptoms, call your healthcare provider

Report cases to the Riley County Health Department by calling the Disease Investigation
Line: 785-317-0474