



Shingles

Shingles, also called zoster, is caused by the varicella virus, which also causes chicken pox. Shingles may occur in anyone who has already had varicella (chicken pox) or the chicken pox vaccine. The chicken pox virus stays in the body long after the disease goes away in an inactive form. If the immune system is not working well, the virus can become active again.

Shingles usually occur as a patch of red blisters along a line of the skin on the back or chest or other part of the body. The blisters usually occur on one side of the body. It can be very painful, with a deep burning feeling along the nerves affected by the infection. There can also be fever, chills, and flu-like symptoms as the rash develops.

Exposure

- If you have never had chicken pox or the chicken pox vaccine and are exposed to someone with shingles, you can get chicken pox. This most often occurs by touching the rash.
- If your child is admitted to the hospital or seen in clinic, they will need to be in an isolation room to prevent exposing other children.

Treatment

- Antiviral medications are given in some cases.
- Medications for pain and itch may also be given.
- Your child may need to be admitted to the hospital for treatment.

Special Instructions

- Antiviral medications are most effective when given early, so call your care provider right away.

Contact Us

For patient care assistance, please call the following phone numbers:

- Jimmy Fund Clinic (617) 632-3270
Business Hours 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday
- Page Operator (617) 632-3352
Off hours: weekdays after 5 p.m., holidays, and weekends
Page pediatric hematology/oncology fellow on call
- Life Threatening Emergencies dial 911