

SHINGLES FACT SHEET



ABOUT

Shingles is the common name for Herpes Zoster. Shingles is caused by the same virus responsible for chickenpox.

Shingles occurs mostly in people over 50.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Early symptoms may be severe pain, itching and numbness around the affected areas.

A painful rash of small blisters usually appears on one side of the face or body. The rash usually lasts approximately 10–15 days.

You may also experience headache, sensitivity to bright light, or a general feeling of being unwell.



If you experience these symptoms, contact your GP or HCP.

HOW IT SPREADS

Shingles cannot be passed from one person to another, however exposure to the varicella zoster virus may cause chicken pox in a person who has not had the disease or vaccination.

The virus is spread by direct contact with the fluid contained in the blisters.

Shingles is less contagious than chickenpox and the risk of a person with shingles spreading the virus is low if the rash is covered.

Avoid contact with people who have a weakened immune system, newborns and pregnant women while you are contagious.

PREVENTION & TREATMENT

There is only one zoster vaccine available in Australia. This is free through the National Immunisation Program (NIP) Schedule for eligible adults.

Antiviral treatment may help to reduce pain and shorten the duration of shingles. (best taken within 72 hours of the onset of the rash).



For further information on available shingles-specific preventative treatment options, contact your GP or HCP.