

## Prevention and Control Measures: Shingles

### Transmission:

- Shingles is caused by the varicella zoster virus (VZV), the same virus that causes chickenpox. After a person recovers from chicken pox, the virus stays in the body and can reactivate, causing shingles.
- Shingles cannot be spread to another person, though a person with shingles can spread chickenpox to a person who has never had chickenpox. The virus is spread through direct contact with fluid from the rash's blisters. Once the rash has crusted over, the person is no longer contagious.



### Symptoms:

- Shingles is a painful rash, often in a single stripe, that develops on one side of the face or body.
- The rash forms blisters that typically scab over in 7-10 days and clear up in 2-4 weeks.
- From 1-5 days before the rash develops, people often have pain, itching, or tingling in the area where the rash will appear.
- Other symptoms may include fever, headache, chills, and upset stomach. Shingles can affect the eye and cause loss of vision.

### Prevention and Control Measures:

- Keep the rash covered and avoid touching or scratching the rash. Wash hands often to prevent the spread of the varicella zoster virus.
- Until your rash has developed crusts, avoid contact with pregnant women who have never had chickenpox or the chickenpox vaccine, premature or low birth weight infants, and people with weakened immune systems.
- The only way to reduce the risk of developing shingles following a varicella zoster infection is to get vaccinated.
- Those 60 years and older are recommended to get one dose of shingles vaccine. The shingles vaccine is available in pharmacies and doctor's offices.
- Treatments are available to both shorten the length and severity of the illness and over the counter pain medicine, wet compresses, calamine lotion, and colloidal oatmeal baths may help with pain and itching.

**For More Information:** Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and type [Shingles](#) in the SEARCH box.



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