

Shingles is a painful condition caused by the herpes zoster virus, in which a line-like rash develops around the body.

#### **What to look for**

- slight fever, chills, upset stomach.
- pain and tenderness usually on one side of your face or body.
- tingling, itching, or prickling skin followed by an inflamed red rash.
- blisters.
- deep burning, aching, or stabbing pain, which may be continuous or intermittent.

Shingles can last for several weeks. However, it usually only occurs once. The pain can continue for months or even years in rare cases.

#### **Causes**

The same virus that causes chickenpox, causes shingles- herpes zoster. People who have had chickenpox are immune to this virus again unless their immune system is adversely affected by a serious illness or stress or trauma. It can occur in some people and not in others.

#### **Traditional Treatment**

Treatment can only relieve the symptoms, it cannot halt the disease. Your doctor will prescribe the appropriate medications for you.

#### **Dietary Considerations**

Supplements of Vitamin A, B complex, Magnesium, Zinc are often helpful (See our Vitamins Section). To alleviate symptoms once the disease has begun, take the amino acid L-lysine, but only for one week. Studies have shown that this works best if you avoid foods containing the amino acid arginine, such as chocolate, cereal grains, nuts, and seeds.

#### **Personal Care**

- Keep the affected area clean, dry, and exposed to air.
- Do not scratch or pick blisters.
- Calamine lotion helps relieve itching. Vitamin E oil, gel from the Aloe Vera plant will soothe the skin as well.

#### **When to seek further professional advice**

- you suspect an outbreak is beginning.
- if you get shingles on your face.
- the affected area re-infected with bacteria.
- your rash lasts longer than 10 days without improvement.