

What Is It?

- Shingles is a painful rash (also known as herpes zoster) that will appear on one side of the face or body
- Shingles is caused by the Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV), which is the same virus that causes chickenpox
- Anyone who has had chickenpox is at risk for shingles

Symptoms of Shingles:

- Painful rash consisting of blisters
- Pain, itching and tingling on skin (prior to developing rash)
- Other symptoms may include: sensitivity to light, fever, upset stomach, headache and/or chills

How is Shingles Transmitted?

- The Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV) is transmitted through direct contact with active rash blisters
- VZV can be transmitted to someone who has never come into contact with the virus before (never had chickenpox or the chickenpox vaccine), *however:*
- You cannot get shingles from someone who has shingles
- VZV will stay dormant in the body (in our spinal nerves) after recovery from chickenpox, and reactive later on, causing shingles
- Reactivation of VZV, causing shingles, can be influenced by factors such as:
 - Older age
 - Stress
 - Weakened immunity, especially people living with HIV

How Do I Lower My Risk of Getting Shingles?

- Wash hands and maintain good hygiene
- If you suspect someone has shingles, try to refrain from physical contact until their rash is gone (especially if you have never had chickenpox or the chickenpox vaccine)
- Get vaccinated for shingles

Some Other Facts about Shingles:

- About 1 in 10 people who develop shingles will experience nerve pain that lasts for months or years (most common complication)
- Older age contributes to increased complications and severity of shingles
- Most people who develop shingles have only one episode during their lifetime, however, you can have shingles more than once
- Some complications may arise from shingles, including:
 - Vision loss
 - Bacterial infection of rash blisters
 - Permanent pigmentation changes and scarring on the skin

Treatment of Shingles:

- Antiviral medications will help treat and shorten the duration and severity of illness
- Wet compresses and anti-itch lotions will help aid rash symptoms
- Covering rash will help prevent transmission to others

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Other Information & Resources

Prevalence of Shingles:¹

- About 1 out of every 3 people in the U.S. will develop shingles in their lifetime
- An estimated 1 million people get shingles each year in the U.S.
- Herpes zoster rates are increasing among younger adults

Information About Shingles Vaccine:²

- Shingrix (also called a recombinant zoster vaccine) is the recommended vaccine in the U.S. for Shingles:
 - 2-dose series of shots into muscle of upper arm
 - 2nd given typically 2-6 months after the 1st
- Shingrix helps boost body's protection against shingles (does not prevent chickenpox)

Local Resources:

Maine Primary Care Association
(Medical Care/Testing/Vaccinations)
<https://mepca.org/community-health-centers/locations/>
207-621-0677

Maine Hannaford Pharmacies
(Shingles Vaccinations)
<https://www.hannaford.com/pharmacy>
(800) 213-9040

Maine Access Points
(Harm Reduction supplies & support)
<https://www.maineaccesspoints.org/>
207-370-9445

Other Information About Local Pharmacy Vaccine Access:

- All pharmacies accept Mainecare, and the cost of vaccines may vary with other insurances.
- All adult vaccinations are available at Hannaford pharmacies without a prescription from a provider (Tetanus, MMR, HPV, Hep. A, Hep. B, Shingles, Pneumonia, Flu).
- Only Flu vaccinations are available at Walgreens pharmacies without a prescription from a provider.
- Access to vaccinations at pharmacies may differ depending on location and it may be helpful to call ahead.

If you need assistance with or have questions about getting vaccinated or getting help with linkage to care please reach out to:

MAP's Director of Health Services,
Anna McConnell
call/text/signal 207-319-8079

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/shingles/index.html>

²<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/shingles/public/shingrix/index.html>

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References:

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