

## **SHINGLES - Herpes Zoster**

**Shingles** is a local outbreak of a recurrent or reactivation infection with the same virus that causes chickenpox. Shingles can be a disease of older adults.

**SYMPTOMS:** The individual will have blisters with a red/pink base form along the nerve pathways. They usually occur only on one side of the body and may be more closely grouped than chickenpox. Severe pain is common.

**DIAGNOSIS:** Laboratory tests may be used to diagnose shingles but are not usually necessary.

**TRANSMISSION:** A person cannot get shingles from another person. However, a contact may come down with chickenpox after exposure to someone with shingles. The disease occurs when the chickenpox virus, some of which has remained dormant in the body since the initial chickenpox infection, becomes activated. This frequently occurs in an immunocompromised person - one whose resistance is low, is on chemotherapy or has an immune system disease. The transmission is by direct or indirect contact with the fluid in the blisters. The transmission rate is lower than that of chickenpox. The person with shingles may be a source of infection for one week after the appearance of the blisters. The susceptible individual is considered infectious 10 to 21 days after exposure. The Varicella vaccine for chickenpox also protects against shingles.

**TREATMENT:** Normally there is no treatment but if the person is immunocompromised for any reason he may be given Varicella Zoster Immune Globulin.

**SCHOOL IMPLICATIONS:**

- Because of the lower rate of transmission, the child may return to school if the blisters are on arms or legs that are covered by clothing.
- Once the blisters have scabbed over they are no longer infective.