

# What You Need to Know about SHINGLES

**1 in 3**

Americans will have shingles in their lifetime



Your best defense against shingles is the shingles vaccine, which is recommended for everyone over the age of 60. While this doesn't prevent shingles, it does cut your risk in half, and if you do develop the condition, the severity and complications will be minimized. Contact your primary care physician about getting vaccinated.

*Shingles treatments will depend on your specific needs, but they include antiviral medications, topical antibiotics to prevent infections, and corticosteroids in severe cases.*

**Q:** What causes shingles?

**A:** After you recover from chicken pox, the virus remains dormant in your system, and shingles occurs when this virus reactivates. While we aren't sure exactly why reactivation occurs, it is believed to be connected to weakness of the immune system.

If untreated, shingles can lead to complications like long-term pain, and in rare cases pneumonia, hearing problems, blindness, or brain inflammation. In a very small number of patients, this can be life-threatening.

## CAUTION

Antiviral medications are most effective when used within three days after symptoms arise, so call DAA promptly if you have shingles symptoms.

A delay could result in complications like post-herpetic neuralgia, or long-term pain.

## Risk Factors:

- History of chicken pox
- Weakened immune system
- Recent illness or trauma
- High stress level
- Age over 50

## Symptoms:

- The first sign of shingles is generally pain although less commonly itch.
- This is followed by a band-like rash on one side of the body within the site of the pain. The rash may be comprised of small blisters but these may be crusted over.
- Some patients may experience fever, headache, chills and an upset stomach.

## FUN FACT:

A recent study from the Mayo Clinic found that adults who had asthma as children now have a higher risk of developing shingles in adulthood.