

What is shingles?

Shingles (herpes zoster) is caused by the reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus, the same virus that causes varicella (chickenpox). Before you can develop shingles, you must get varicella first.

Shingles causes a painful, blister-like rash that often appears as a stripe on one side of the body, commonly on the torso. The rash can also appear on one side of the face. In rare cases, it can cover a larger portion of the body.

How does shingles infection happen?

If you have ever had varicella (chickenpox), you are at risk for developing shingles. Once you develop varicella and recover from it, the virus remains dormant in your body. The virus can then reactivate later in life, causing shingles. Shingles is most common in adults over the age of 50 and in persons with weakened immune systems.

When a person has shingles, other people (who have never had chickenpox) can catch the varicella-zoster virus from that person by coming into direct contact with the liquid from the blisters/rash.

Shingles immunization is safe and effective.

All adults 50 years of age and older should be immunized against shingles.

Getting vaccinated against shingles helps prevent the reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus, lowering your risk of developing shingles.



If you are 50 or older, talk to your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or local public health office about getting yourself immunized against shingles (herpes zoster).