

SHINGLES FACT SHEET



Lenawee County
HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What is Shingles?

Shingles, or herpes zoster, is a condition caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox that will lie dormant in your body that when reactivated causes shingles. 1 in 3 people in the United States will develop shingles. This is not the same virus or condition as genital herpes.

What are the symptoms?

- Painful rash that develops on one side of the face or body. The rash will form blisters that scab over.
- Most commonly the rash occurs in a single stripe around the left or right of the body.
- Fever
- Headache
- Chills
- Upset stomach
- **Typically scabs over in 7 to 10 days and clears up in 2-4 weeks**

How can it be prevented?

- The only way to prevent the development of shingles is to get the shingles vaccine.

How can it be spread?

- Shingles cannot be spread from person to person.
- The virus that causes shingles can be spread from a person with shingles to another. This might cause chickenpox but not shingles. This virus is spread through direct contact with fluid from the rash blisters from shingles.
- If you have shingles, cover the rash and avoid scratching. Wash your hands often.

How it is treated?

- Several antivirals are available. These will shorten the length and severity. Speak to your healthcare provider to discuss treatment recommendations.
- Common pain medications can reduce the pain. Wet compresses, calamine lotion, and colloidal oatmeal baths may reduce the itching.