

Quick Tips – Shingles

It seems that Shingles are becoming more common. I have checked through some of my books for some information that hopefully will provide relief and help prevent further outbreaks. Please let me know if you or someone you know tries any of this and what the results are. Thanks!

Source: The Family Guide to Homeopathy

Shingles (Herpes Zoster)

Caused by same virus that causes Chickenpox; virus may lie dormant in a nerve root in spine for many years until reactivated by STRESS; when this happens, virus multiplies and attacks the nerve, causing searing, knifelike pains along its course; a few days later, skin above nerve erupts in itchy blisters; these generally heal within one week, but nerve pains may last for many weeks. If facial nerve is affected, face may be temporarily paralyzed; if optic nerve is affected, cornea may be seriously damaged.

If nerve pain and rash occur on trunk, only wait 24 hours before seeking assistance, if face or eyes are involved, 2 hours. Orthodox treatment includes analgesics and antiviral ointments with antiviral tablets and infusions for eye involvement.

SPECIFIC REMEDIES. To be taken every 2 hours for up to 10 doses while waiting to see doctor:

- Red, blistered, itchy skin, especially if scalp is affected or person is young, warmth and moving about make symptoms more bearable - - Rhus tox 6c
- Burning pains worse between midnight and 2 a.m., isolated skin eruptions becoming more numerous and merging together, person restless, anxious, exhausted, and chilly, symptoms alleviated by warmth - - Arsenicum 6c
- Severe pain, skin burns and itches and forms brown scabs, person middle-aged or elderly - - Mezereum 6c
- Nerve pains and itching, slightest touch or movement makes symptoms worse, and so does eating - - Ramunculus 6c
- Left side of body affected, with some swelling, aggravated by warmth but relieved by cold - - Lachesis 6c

PREVENTION. Anyone who is elderly or infirm and has been in contact with a chickenpox or shingles sufferer should take 3 doses of Variolinum 30c at 12-hour intervals as a preventive.

SELF-HELP. Take as much bed rest as possible to begin with. Sponge blisters with Hypericum and Calendula solution (5 drops of mother tincture of each to 0.25 liter [1/2 pint] boiled cooled water). Hot and cold compresses also relieve nerve pains.

NOTE FROM COLLEEN - - if Canadian Health Food stores don't carry these remedies, you can contact Hahnemann Labs in the USA (<http://www.hahnemannlabs.com/>). I have found them very good to deal with. They will ship even one remedy at a time if required.

Source: 1,801 Home Remedies (from Reader's Digest)

Shingles

What's Wrong: Shingles occurs when the dormant herpes zoster virus, which causes chicken pox, re-awakens in nerve cells and makes its way to the skin. About 20 percent of people who had chicken pox will later develop shingles, usually when they're over age 50. The infection causes a burning, blistering rash - often on the torso, face, and neck - which appears as a band or patch of raised dots. Itching, tingling, or pain can be mild or severe. Within a week or so, small, fluid-filled blisters form, dry up, and crust over. Anything that lowers resistance to infection, such as illness or stress, can awaken the virus. On average, the rash and pain last 2 to 4 weeks, but sometimes the pain lingers for months.

First step: Call your doctor, who will likely put you on a prescription antiviral drug (**note from Colleen – this is the suggestion in the book, not something that I am suggesting**). Meanwhile, you'll want all the relief you can get from the burning and pain. You can try acetaminophen (**note from Colleen - I would question this**) or ibuprofen (**note from Colleen - again, I would question this**), plus the remedies in this chapter. But if the pain is more than you can stand, don't hesitate to call your doctor, who can prescribe stronger medication.

Beat the Blisters and Ditch the Itch:

- To help dry the blisters, apply calamine lotion. As the wet solution evaporates from your skin, it also draws moisture from the blisters.
- If you have an aloe vera plant in your home or garden, cut a leaf and smooth the liquid over your skin. The milky liquid inside the leaves may help soothe the blisters. Or use an over-the-counter aloe vera gel (make sure it's 100% aloe).
- A paste of baking powder and water will dry up blisters and soothe the itching. Add enough water to dry baking powder to create a paste, then apply it liberally to the affected area.
- Another remedy for drying blisters and soothing inflammation is a paste made from Epsom salt and water. Apply directly to the affected area. Repeat as often as you wish.
- Brew a tea of lemon balm, a herb from the mint family that European studies suggest fights herpes viruses. To make it, boil 2 teaspoons dried herb in 1 cup boiling water. Use a cotton ball to dab it directly onto the affected areas. Some herbalists recommend bolstering the brew with rose oil or mints such as peppermint, spearmint, and sage.
- Reach into your pantry, where you probably have the ingredients for another shingles solution: vinegar and honey. Mix them together to form a paste and dab it onto your sores.

Send the Pain Packing:

- Dip a washcloth or towel into cold water, squeeze it out, and lay over the affected area. Alternatively, you can use cold milk instead of water. Some people say that the milk is especially soothing.
- Made from the extract of hot pepper, capsaicin cream can quell pain that lingers after the rash is gone. Zostrix is one brand to try. When you first put it on, you'll feel a burning sensation, but as long as you're not using it on an open rash, the burning will diminish as you continue using it over the next few weeks. (Just don't use the cream if the skin is broken or you have an open rash - it will burn intensely.)
- If you still have pain after the blisters have healed, fill a bag with ice and use it to gently stroke your skin. Experts don't know why the cold treatment is helpful, but it does work.

Put Brakes on Breakouts:

- As long as you have your doctor's approval, and a prescription, take 500 to 1,000 milligrams of supplemental lysine three times a day during an outbreak. This amino acid prevents viruses from replicating and may speed healing. **(Note from Colleen - Foods high in lysine include most vegetables, legumes, fish, turkey, and chicken - - go organic if at all possible to avoid gmo's, antibiotics, pesticides, etc.)**
- Take two 250-milligram capsules of Echinacea three times a day to help your body fight the infection.
- Try taking cat's claw, an herb long used for a variety of purposes among indigenous people of Peru and now considered a promising treatment for viral disorders, including shingles. Follow the dosage directions on the package.

The Power of Prevention:

- To protect others from the virus, wash your hands often, especially if you have an oozing rash. The blisters contain the varicella virus, so you could infect someone with chicken pox. Or cover the blisters with an antibiotic ointment and wrap them with gauze.

(Note from Colleen - Arginine is an amino acid that plays an important role in wound healing, detoxification reactions, immune functions, and promoting the secretion of several hormones, including insulin and growth hormone. Arginine Warning: Because the herpes virus utilizes arginine, diets high in arginine in people harboring the herpes virus may lead to reactivation. For this reason, it is important to balance the intake of arginine by also increasing the intake of lysine. Foods high in arginine are chocolate, peanuts, seeds, and nuts such as almonds and walnuts - - I have found that eating peanuts causes me to get cold sores)

These are suggestions from two totally different books. If you try any of these ideas, please let me know what results you get. Obviously this can be very painful to deal with so the sooner relief can be achieved the better. Also, the more a person can deal with issues like this in a natural manner the better off they will be.