

Shingles



Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. Once an individual gets chickenpox the virus remains in the body and can later cause shingles when the body's immune system becomes weakened.

Symptoms include:

- A tingling or painful sensation in an area of skin (followed by a rash a few days later)
- Headache
- Feeling generally unwell.
- The rash usually appears on one side of the body only.

Red flag symptoms

- Confusion or disorientation
- Muscle weakness
- Loss of bladder or bowel control
- Facial nerve paralysis
- Neck stiffness
- Mottled skin
- Sensitivity to light

Self-care advice

- Keep the affected area clean and dry.
- Where possible cover the rash to minimise the risk of spreading the virus.
- Loose fitting clothes will help to minimise the pressure on the affected area.
- Apply calamine lotion to help sooth unbroken itching skin.
- Apply cool compresses to help with the symptoms.
- Paracetamol for pain relief.
- Avoid certain groups of people who may be more vulnerable such as pregnant women, people with weakened immune systems and babies less than one month old.

Onward referrals

- Shingles around the eyes
- Immunosuppressed individuals

Signposting

- Pharmacy First England - Antivirals
- Pharmacy First Scotland - Antivirals
- Private Shingles vaccination

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