

TOP 7 MYTHS ABOUT SHINGLES

Learn the truth about this painful, blister-like skin rash. Don't fall for these common myths.

Myth 1

The first sign of shingles is a skin rash.



No! Shingles often starts with a headache, nausea, fever or chills. Then there's tingling, itching, burning or a stabbing pain under the skin, although your skin may look normal. The tell-tale shingles rash — stripes of fluid-filled blisters — may not appear for days. Some people never get a rash.

Not always! Shingles blisters typically appear on one side of the torso. But they can also appear on your face, around your eye. See a doctor right away if you suspect shingles on your face. You may need special care to prevent eye damage.

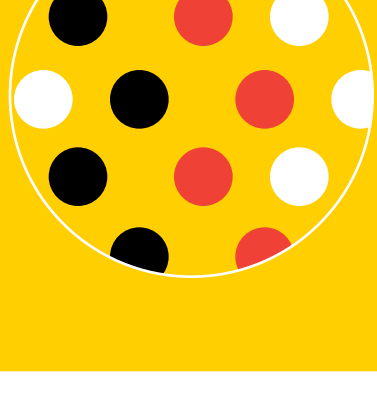
Myth 2

It always appears on your torso.



Myth 3

You can only get shingles once.



Wrong! While not common, you can get shingles more than once. Those who have multiple bouts typically don't get the rash in the same place.

Not exactly! Someone with shingles can't spread shingles, but they can spread chickenpox. The virus is released from the oozing rash, so keep the rash covered and avoid contact with anyone who has never had chickenpox or a chickenpox vaccine.

Myth 4

It's not contagious.



Myth 5

There's not much you can do to prevent it.



False! A shingles vaccine is available — and recommended for people age 60 and older. One shot can reduce your risk of shingles by 50 percent.

Not so! See a doctor immediately for antiviral medication, which can ease your symptoms and make the infection go away faster. The sooner you get it the better — ideally within three days of detecting the illness.

Myth 6

You just have to let it run its course.



Myth 7

It goes away in a couple of weeks.



Only for some! Up to 40 percent of shingles sufferers continue to feel the shooting, burning pain for months or years after the rash and infection are gone. The chronic condition, called postherpetic neuralgia, is actually nerve damage caused by shingles. Pain specialists can offer a variety of treatments: pain-relief medications, nerve block injections and even implanted nerve stimulators that block pain signals.

BAM!

Bust those **myths** and stand for **truth**. Knowing what to watch for and how to strike back is your superpower for defeating shingles.

SOURCES

http://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases_conditions/hic_Shingles
<http://health.clevelandclinic.org/2014/09/shingles-what-you-should-do-if-the-chicken-pox-virus-returns/>
<http://my.clevelandclinic.org/services/anesthesiology/pain-management/patient-education/managing-pain-fall-2014>

clevelandclinic.org/HealthHub