

How to Shorten the Duration of a Shingles Outbreak

"It feels like the worst sunburn ever, crossed with a thousand bee stings and then someone taking a rake across my skin. I can't sleep. I can't turn over. I cannot take this pain any longer." This is how one of my patients described the pain of shingles. For some, remnants of this pain can linger for months or even years, especially if left untreated.

Shingles used to primarily affect our senior population, immune-compromised people, or those that are highly stressed. However, we are seeing shingles flare-ups are affecting young adults at an increasing rate. There are a few theories as to why this is, but I won't go into them here. Let's focus on treatment here instead.

Warning Signs That You Might Be Starting a Shingles Outbreak:

- Headache
- Flu-like symptoms, usually without a fever
- Sensitivity to light
- Itching, tingling or even severe pain that starts at the spine and radiates around the body, like a snake is wrapping around your torso.
- Rash with fluid filled blisters that may be very painful.

What to do if you suspect you have shingles?

- Come in for acupuncture immediately. Acupuncture can reduce the pain and shorten the duration of your shingles outbreak. The more frequently you come, the quicker you will be on the road to recovery. Acupuncture should be given at least two, but three



times in one week is better. Usually, by the end of the week, things feel significantly better.

- Chinese herbal therapy is most effective if it is started immediately upon experiencing the first warning signs. Dermatrol (HZ) is a potent herbal formula that treats shingles. The Chinese have been using herbal medicine to treat shingles since the second century AD.
- Rest. Rest is necessary to heal. If you continue to live every day at a break neck pace, you will lengthen the time it takes to make the virus dormant again.
- Apply raw Manuka honey to the blisters. Cold compresses can also give some relief.
- Start taking lysine immediately. Many people find 1000mg three times daily is an effective dose.
- Vitamin C, the more the better, at least 1000mg three times per day, but you could easily double that dosage.
- Eat more garlic, brewer's yeast, brown rice, raw fruits and vegetables
- Vitamin B12 spray, 1500 mcg twice daily can help with post-herpetic nerve pain.
- If the shingles is affecting the eyes, it is very important to see an ophthalmologist. If left untreated, herpes zoster infection of the eye may lead to blindness.

What not to do if you have a shingles outbreak:

- Do not apply cortisone or steroid creams to the rash
- Do not eat arginine containing foods. Arginine feeds the virus. Red wine, chocolate, red meat, chicken, whole grains, and dairy all contain high amounts of arginine.
- Avoid spicy, pungent, and aromatic vegetables such as peppers, onions, basil, rosemary, cumin, fennel, anise, mustard, chili pepper and wasabi
- Do not let anyone touch the blisters, you are contagious in this stage.
- Be careful at the gym, the virus can be transmitted through physical contact, such as via exercise mats or benches.
- Avoid alcohol and tobacco

Is shingles contagious? Well, you cannot catch shingles, however, you can catch chickenpox, if you have not had chicken pox previously, from someone who has active shingles blisters. Once the blisters have dried out and crusted over, the virus is no longer contagious. Chickenpox, comes from the varicella zoster virus, and can be relatively serious in adults. Once a person has had chickenpox, this virus lays dormant in the nerve roots of the body. Something, commonly stress, reactivates this sleeping virus and it manifests as shingles (herpes zoster). When this virus awakens, it travels along the nerve pathway and erupts into painful blisters on the skin.

Although there is no cure for the virus that causes shingles, acupuncture and herbal medicine do offer excellent short and long term relief from the symptoms. Do not take the chance of suffering for weeks or months with this painful condition. You can schedule online right now, www.AcupunctureSolutionsOnline.com or call, (239) 260-4566, to schedule a series of acupuncture treatments so you can get back to living your best life.

AD

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