



2096 Red Arrow Trail
Madison, WI 53711
608-275-6740

Shingles

Communicable Disease Exposure Notice

Dear Parents:

Your child may have been exposed to the communicable disease **Shingles** in a Reach Dane/Reach Green classroom on the following date_____.

Please review the information below. If you have any questions, or if you child begins experiencing symptoms of the illness, contact your child's primary care provider or one of the agencies listed below.

Public Health – Madison & Dane County

(608) 266-4821

Green County Health Department

(608) 328-9390

What is shingles?

Shingles is an infection caused same virus that causes chickenpox (varicella-zoster). It occurs only in people who have had chickenpox in the past and the virus becomes active again. Why the virus becomes active again in some individuals and not in others is unknown. Shingles can appear many years after a person has had chickenpox. The children in DCPC classrooms cannot get shingles, but they can get chickenpox from being exposed to someone who has shingles.

When and for how long is a person able to spread shingles?

The virus is present at the site of the rash and is contagious for a week after the appearance of lesions (blisters) or until vesicles become dry and crusted.

For children exposed to shingles:

What are the symptoms of chickenpox resulting from shingles exposure?

The classic symptom of chickenpox is a rash that quickly turns into itchy, fluid-filled blisters that eventually turn into scabs. The rash may first show up on the face, chest, and back then spread to the rest of the body, including inside the mouth, eyelids, or genital area. It usually takes about one week for all the blisters to become scabs. Other symptoms that may begin to appear 1-2 days before the rash include: high fever, tiredness, loss of appetite and headache.

How does a person get chickenpox from someone who has shingles?

The virus spreads in the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It can also be spread by touching or breathing in the virus particles that come from shingles/chickenpox blisters. The virus spreads easily from infected persons to others who have never had the disease or have

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not received the chickenpox vaccine. A person with shingles can spread the virus to others who have never had chickenpox or received the chickenpox vaccine.

How long does it take to develop chickenpox following exposure to chickenpox or shingles?

Symptoms usually begin 10 to 21 days after contact with an infected person.

How is chickenpox treated?

Your health care provider can advise you on treatment options. Antiviral medications are recommended for people with chickenpox who are more likely to develop serious disease including: otherwise healthy people older than 12 years of age; people with chronic skin or lung disease; people receiving steroid therapy; some groups of pregnant women. For persons at risk of serious complications should call their health care provider.

Symptomatic treatment of chickenpox includes medications to reduce itching and prevent scratching, to decrease the risk of infection and scarring of the chickenpox blisters. Fever in children should be treated only with acetaminophen (**not** aspirin products) in order to prevent Reye syndrome, a very serious illness sometimes associated with chickenpox.

How long is a child with chickenpox excluded from childcare?

Children are excluded until all chickenpox blisters become dry and crusted over.

How can I limit the spread of chickenpox?

Persons with chickenpox symptoms should seek prompt medical care. The best method to prevent further spread of chickenpox is for people infected with the disease to remain home and avoid exposing others who are susceptible.

How can chickenpox be prevented?

The best way to prevent chickenpox and later shingles is to **get the chickenpox vaccine**. Children, adolescents, and adults should have two doses of chickenpox vaccine. Chickenpox vaccine is very safe and effective at preventing the disease. Most people who get the vaccine will not get chickenpox. If a vaccinated person does get chickenpox, it is usually mild—with fewer blisters and mild or no fever. The chickenpox vaccine prevents almost all cases of severe disease.

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For parents:

What are the symptoms of shingles?

- The first symptom is often a tingling feeling on the skin, itchiness or a stabbing pain.
- After several days, a rash appears as a band or patch of raised dots on the side of the trunk or face.
- Next, it develops into small, fluid-filled blisters that dry out and crust over within a few days.
- When the rash is at its peak, symptoms can range from mild itching to severe pain.
- The rash and pain usually disappear within three to five weeks.

What can be done to prevent the spread of shingles?

Chickenpox must be prevented in order to prevent shingles. A vaccine for chickenpox has been developed and may reduce the risk of developing shingles later in life.