Symptoms of Shingles

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En Español (Spanish Version)

Shingles usually begins with an unpleasant itching, burning, tingling, or painful sensation in a band-like area. The skin rash of shingles begins to appear 3-4 days after you notice these skin sensations.

Symptoms of the Prodromal Period

The prodromal period is the time (about 3-4 days) before the rash actually occurs. During this time, you may have the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue
- Anxiety, nervousness
- Discomfort in the skin, usually on one side of the face, torso, trunk, back, or buttocks. The discomfort may feel like:
  - Numbness
  - Itching
  - Burning
  - Stinging
  - Tingling
  - Shooting pain
  - Electric shock
  - Sharp pain
  - Extremely sensitive to even light touch

Symptoms of Active Shingles

The period of active shingles begins when you first notice the appearance of a rash in the same location where you originally felt the skin sensations:

- The rash begins as a reddish band or individual bumps running in a line.
- The bumps develop fluid-filled centers.
- Over the course of 7-10 days, the bumps begin to dry and crust over.
- You may continue to have pain and/or itching (as described above) in the area of the rash; the pain may be severe.
- If the rash develops on the side of your nose or elsewhere on your face, you should contact your doctor immediately. This can signal that your eye is affected.

Although the rash of active shingles should be gone within a week to a month, about 20% of people continue to have pain and discomfort well after the rash has healed. This syndrome of pain in the area of the previously infected nerve is called postherpetic neuralgia, and it can be quite severe and debilitating.

REFERENCES:

