

Shingles (Zoster) Prevention and Treatment

Shingles, this is a rash (often very painful) on any part of the body, but only on one side. It comes from the chickenpox virus that has lain dormant in the sensory nerves, ever since the person had chickenpox. When it comes out of the nerve, it causes the rash in the specific area of that skin nerve. Then the immune system and other things like drugs or herbs can attack the virus. It is not contagious. It happens mostly to people over age 50, whose immune defenses are weaker than in earlier years.

What can be done to prevent it? Getting exposed to the chickenpox boosts the immune systems protection against the shingle virus. But, that is infrequent since there are not so many children with chickenpox any more. Keeping healthy otherwise keeps the immune system balanced. Not too overactive, as in allergies and in autoimmune conditions, not too weak, as in getting infections and cancer. This means the usual exercise, sleep, stress management, eating many vegetables, avoiding pollution as much as possible (good luck) and taking supplements like Vitamin C, Astragalus Root and adaptogenic herbs.

The vaccines available: Zostavax, given in a single dose, about 50% effective and few side effects. A newer vaccine, Shingrix reexported to be 90% effective, is given in 2 doses, 2-6 months apart. The adverse effects include: rash, headache, joint pain and malaise are common and sometimes so severe that people avoid getting the second dose.

What can you do if you get Shingles? Medicines are available that, if given during the first 2 days of the outbreak can reduce the time of infection by a few days.

Many herbs are antiviral. The following are recommendations by Stephen Harrod Buhner, herbalist and author. He has done extensive study of herbs that are effective against many infections, bacterial, parasitic and viral.

Systemic antivirals to be taken orally are:

1. Lemon balm (alcohol) tincture ¼ teaspoon 3 times a day. (Herb Pharm is highly recommended <https://www.herb-pharm.com/>)
2. A tincture combination of equal parts of licorice, isatis and skullcap ¼ – ½ teaspoon 3-6 times a day.
3. L-lysine 3000mg 3 times a day. (Reduce your intake of nuts and chocolate while taking this.)

For immune support: A tincture combination of equal parts made of Astragalus, Rhodiola and Cordyceps ½ teaspoon 3 times a day.

Topical application: Lemon balm essential oil diluted with a carrier oil such as olive oil, apply daily. Rosemary, licorice and birch bark cream.

Many of these herbs can be obtained from Mountain Rose Herbs, Elk Mountain Herbs and Herb Pharm, among others. Whatever source you use, be sure the company uses GMP certified (Good Manufacturing Practices) and certified organic materials.

The damage to the nerves sometimes leaves a painful neuropathy that can last for weeks or months. Some of the following can help to heal the damage to the nerves:

1. Chinese Senega root tincture – 30 drops 3 times a day for 30 days.
2. Lion's Mane tincture – 1 teaspoon 2 times a day.
3. Vitamin B-12 – 500-2000mcg a day
4. L-lysine – 1000mg 3 times a day.
5. L-carnitine – 500-700mg 3 times a day.
6. Alpha Lipoic Acid – 200g 3 times a day.
7. Inositol – 500-1000mg 3 times a day.

I would add to this protocol Coenzyme Q10 – 100mg a day and n-Acetyl Cysteine – 400mg a day as well, for nerve repair.

Peripheral Neuropathy Prevention and Treatment

The nerves that supply the extremities, mostly feet and hands, can be injured by Diabetes, Shingles, Vitamin B-12 deficiency, cancer, chemotherapy or other causes. Constant pain and sometimes numbness occurs. The best way to treat or prevent it is to correct the underlying condition that caused it. The most common cause is Diabetes. Strict control of blood glucose is important, preferably by dietary means and other natural measures. A healthful diet, avoiding junk food, reduces inflammation. High choline foods such as egg yolk, olive oil, nuts, leafy greens and cocoa can help nerve function. The mediators of the neuropathy are mostly inflammation, oxidative stress and scarring.

Many natural substances can be helpful in improving this condition. Especially those supplements and herbs that reduce nerve pain, reduce scarring, have antioxidant effect, promote the growth of nerves and myelin sheaths, reduce nerve pain or do combinations of the above.

A long list of supplements and herbs have been found to have beneficial effect:

- Alpha Lipoic Acid (Supports mitochondrial function, very important in energy production in nerve cells.)
- n-Acetyl Cysteine (Supports mitochondrial function, very important in energy production in nerve cells.)
- Coenzymes Q10 (Supports mitochondrial function, very important in energy production in nerve cells.)
- Acetyl-carnitine (Supports mitochondrial function, very important in energy production in nerve cells.)
- Vitamin E complex (Very important nutrient for good nerve function.)
- B-complex (especially B-12 and B-6 (Very important nutrient for good nerve function.)
- Vitamin C (Very important nutrient for good nerve function.)
- Magnesium (Very important nutrient for good nerve function.)
- Omega 3 oils (Helps reduce inflammation.)
- EPA (Helps reduce inflammation.)
- DHA (Helps reduce inflammation.)
- GLA (Helps reduce inflammation.)
- Bromelain and Quercetin (Between meals helps reduce inflammation.)
- Saint John's Wort (Helps nerve regeneration and reduces nerve pain.)
- Astragalus (Helps to grow nerve cells and myelin sheaths.)
- Ginko Leaf (Helps promote nerve growth.)

- Lion's Mane (Helps promote nerve growth.)
- Lumbrokinase (Helps promote nerve growth.)
- Rosemary (Helps reduce nerve pain.)
- Centella Asiatica (Helps reduce nerve pain.)
- Corydalis (Helps reduce nerve pain.)
- Barcopa Monnieri (Helps reduce nerve pain.)
- Andrographis (Helps reduce nerve pain.)
- Vinpocetine (Has been shown to help with Diabetic Neuropathy.)