

Patient Information Ophthalmic Shingles (Herpes Zoster Ophthalmic)

Eye Unit

Shingles – and how to treat it.....

What does Shingles look like?

A rash of blisters will have formed on one side of your face which may include your scalp, forehead, nose and cheek. These blisters will dry into scabs within 3 – 4 days. Your eyelids may become extremely swollen and you may be unable to open them for a few days. The swelling can sometimes spread to the other side of the face but the rash tends to stay on one side of the face. Shingles on the face can sometimes affect the eyeball, making it red, sore and your vision blurred.

Is it painful?

You may have experienced pain and tingling of the scalp and forehead prior to the blisters forming. This pain is sometimes severe and it is usual for the pain to continue for several weeks, even after the rash had gone. You may also feel very “rundown” and suffer a loss of appetite.

When will I begin to feel better?

It is usual to start feeling better after the first two weeks, but it may take longer if your shingles is very severe.

How did I catch it?

You will have had chicken pox in the past. The virus which has caused this has remained inactive in a nerve since then. Now it has returned as shingles.

Could I have Shingles again?

Yes. It is possible to have a second attack although it is not very common.

How is it treated?

In the early stages of infection, tablets to fight the virus can help to reduce the severity. You may also need to take pain killers on a regular basis until the pain decreases. If the eyeball is involved you will need eye drops and/or ointment specifically for this.

You may feel very rundown and if you become dehydrated you will feel worse, so it is important to take lots of fluid.

The scabs will fall off over a two week period. Avoid picking them or bacterial infection may occur.

Occasionally some people are affected by tingling/pain in the affected area even after the rash has resolved. This can be treated with tablets that your GP can prescribe. Sometimes scarring may remain after the scabs have resolved.

If your eye becomes red and started to have blurry vision please see your local optician to have it check.

Do not come into contact with anyone who has **not had** chicken pox whilst in the blister stage. Avoid contact with anyone who is pregnant.

Do not share towels and pillows with anyone.

Where can I obtain further advice?

If you require further information or advice please contact: -

Emergency Eye Clinic on: -

Tel. No: - 01633 – 238856

**“This document is available in Welsh /
Mae’r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**