

# DOES SHINGLES AFFECT ME?

YES.

POSSIBLY

TOMORROW.

GÜRTELROSE-INFO.AT

Impfen  
schützt!

- **Almost all adults 50 years and older (>99%)** carry the virus.
- **One in three** people will develop shingles in their lifetime.
- The disease is usually accompanied by **severe pain**.

Talk to your doctor as well as your pharmacist and visit [www.guertelrose-info.at](http://www.guertelrose-info.at) for more information.

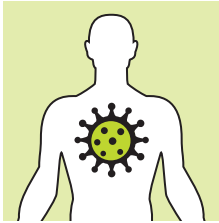
This brochure is **available** in **several languages** (Deutsch, Türkçe, Magyar, Српски):



# WHAT IS SHINGLES?

**Shingles**, also known as herpes zoster, is a **very painful nerve inflammation** that may be associated with severe and long-lasting complications.

Shingles is caused by reactivation of the varicella zoster virus (the same virus that causes chickenpox). Most adults have had chickenpox as a child which puts them at risk of shingles later in life. Our immune system naturally weakens over time as we age which may allow the usually dormant virus to reactivate, causing shingles. This affects close to the entire population;



almost all adults over 50 (>99%) are infected with the varicella zoster virus. In 1 out of 3 people, the dormant virus will reactivate and cause shingles.

**Shingles occurs in all age groups; however, people over 50 are most often affected, as the immune system naturally weakens over time as we age.**

# WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

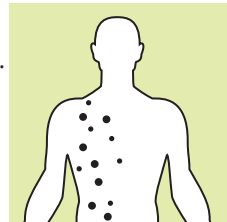
Shingles typically produces a **painful and blistering rash**, erupting in a stripe of blisters that wraps around either the left or right side of the torso along a nerve path. Prior to the rash, mostly non-specific disease symptoms occur.

## **Before the appearance of the rash:**

- Pain or numbness
- Itching or tingling
- Redness and swelling in the later affected area
- Fever, headache or a feeling of being generally unwell

## **The painful skin rash**

- most commonly appears on the chest and abdomen.
- may also occur on the arm, thigh or head.
- can take up to 2-4 weeks to heal.



# WHAT ARE THE COMPLICATIONS?

Shingles can be accompanied by severe complications.

- **Postherpetic neuralgia (PHN)**

A severe nerve pain that can last for months or even years. PHN is the most common complication of shingles and affects up to 30% of all people with shingles. The older a patient is, the more often this complication occurs.

- **Ophthalmic disease with eye involvement**

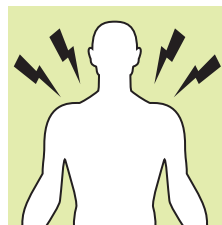
Herpes zoster ophthalmicus (HZO) affects up to 25% of people with shingles and is an infection of the cranial nerve. On rare occasions, this can lead to blindness if the eye is afflicted.

- **Central nervous system disorders**

In rare cases, meningitis, brain inflammation or spinal cord inflammation can also occur.

- **Stroke and heart attack**

In the first weeks and months after the disease, there is an increased risk for a stroke or heart attack.



**Up to 30% of those affected suffer from postherpetic neuralgia. This can greatly impair the quality of life for months to years.**

## VACCINATION PROTECTS

Vaccination enables the immune system to build up a defence against a specific pathogen, thus providing protection from infectious diseases.

**According to the Austrian vaccination schedule, vaccination against shingles is recommended:**

- for all people from the age 50 years and above
- for people with a particularly high risk of getting shingles starting from age 18

You can find more information at:

**[www.guertelrose-info.at](http://www.guertelrose-info.at)**

# INCREASED RISK

Underlying diseases can increase your personal risk of getting shingles by **30%** on average. These may include:



Asthma



Diabetes



COPD



Depression



Rheumatoid  
arthritis



Cardiovascular  
disease



Chronic kidney  
disease

# SEVERE PAINS ARE COMMON

„... and then I realised: **This pain is very strong.** Shingles is a terrible disease – so many people get it and so few know about it.“

*Martina Rupp, Radio and TV moderator and shingles patient*



„First and foremost is post-zoster pain, which lasts for at least three months, sometimes many months to years, and **severely limits quality of life.**“

„Anyone who has experience with zoster patients knows that they are among the most painful cases in medicine. And on top of that, they are very difficult to treat.“

*Prim. Univ.-Doz. Dr. Robert Müllegger, Head of the Department of Dermatology and Venereology, Landeskrankenhaus Wiener Neustadt*



„I'm used to pain from my football career. But this kind of pain was almost unbearable.“

*Herbert Prohaska, former national football player and shingles patient*

