

Shingles is difficult to diagnose

Question: I recently had severe pain in the middle of my back along my ribs that turned into a rash. It still hurts even two months later. I was told it was shingles. Why is it so painful and lasts so long?

Answer: Shingles is a herpes zoster virus similar to the virus identified in chicken pox. Your description of acute severe pain in the mid-back along the ribs is the most common nerve root region to be affected. Many patients will experience severe pain and some only slight pain. Most shingles conditions demonstrate a blistering rash that follows along the nerve's path, usually along the ribs in the back or chest. Another area that I have observed shingles in my patients is on the face. This is also a very sensitive and painful area. It is almost as common not to get a rash initially or at all, which makes it difficult to diagnose shingles. Many patients may have just a few red marks and no pain or minimal pain.

Why it is so painful and why it affects only certain people at certain times is still difficult to discern. My observation is that the patients that experience the herpes zoster virus are those that are under extreme stress or have just resolved a stressful condition. I believe a healthy lifestyle of eating wholesome foods, mental relaxation, physical exercise, and proper rest are helpful in minimizing the contraction of the virus. Maintaining a healthy immune system will definitely help predisposition to the virus as well as any virus.

Chiropractic has helped my patients with shingles by balancing the nervous system and directly effecting the immune system. I am always postulating why two people exposed to the same virus will react totally opposite, one contracting the virus while the other does not. Shingles falls into the same category as all the unknown causes of disease -- the weakening of the immune system.

Strengthen your nervous system with chiropractic treatment and you will assist your immune system.

Quote of the week: *“If you’ve made up your mind you can do something, you’re absolutely right.”* – Anonymous