



Shingles Guidance for Schools

Your child may have been exposed to this illness on _____.
Date(s)

Please check your child for symptoms through _____.
Date

If your child has symptoms, please contact your child's healthcare provider.

If my child becomes sick, when can they return to school or child care?

Children may only return to school or child care after all blisters have scabbed over or are covered with a bandage.

Shingles is an illness caused by the chickenpox virus.

It can cause:

- A painful rash that occurs in a stripe around either the left or right side of the body or on the face
- Fever
- Headache or chills
- Upset stomach

Shingles only occurs in people who have already had chickenpox because the virus goes dormant in the body and can later cause shingles. However, an adult or child with shingles can give chickenpox to someone who has never had chickenpox or been vaccinated. Shingles is less contagious than chickenpox, and the risk of spreading the virus is low if the shingles rash is covered. Shingles is only contagious to people who have not had chickenpox or the vaccine.

If a person develops chickenpox because of being exposed to shingles, it usually takes 14 to 16 days to get sick, but it can take up to 21 days. Rarely, vaccinated people get sick. If this happens, they usually have milder illness, fewer blisters, and bumps that may not develop into blisters.

How is this illness spread?

This virus is spread by touching the fluid that comes from a sick person's blisters. A person with shingles cannot spread the illness before blisters appear.

What can I do now?

If your child has not had chickenpox or the vaccine, watch your child for symptoms of chickenpox (itchy rash of small bumps, fever, fatigue, headache, loss of appetite). Additionally, they can receive the chickenpox vaccine within **3 to 5 days** of exposure, which may prevent them from becoming sick or make illness less severe. **A pregnant woman who is not immune to chickenpox, a child under 1 year of age, or person with a weakened immune system who has been in contact with a sick person or has symptoms should contact their health care provider immediately.**

If your child develops chickenpox, call the health care provider **before** visiting and tell them your child has symptoms. A sick person should not be in a waiting room in a clinic or hospital.

How can I protect my child from chickenpox?

Get the chickenpox vaccine. Children usually receive two doses of vaccine, the first at 1 year of age and the second between 4 to 6 years of age. Talk to your child's health care provider for more information.

For more information, contact your health care provider, your School Nurse, the Marin County Health Department at 415-473-4163, or visit: www.cdc.gov/chickenpox