

Q & A: What Should You Know About Shingles?

Shingles, also called herpes zoster, is a painful, potentially debilitating disease. You may have heard of it but, like many adults, you might still have questions. Here are answers to some commonly asked ones.

Q. WHAT CAUSES SHINGLES?

A. Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. After a person gets chickenpox, the virus remains inside certain nerves, quietly hiding. Years later, it can “reawaken” as shingles.

Q. WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

A. The first sign is a tingling, burning, or itching feeling on one side of the body. After several days or weeks, painful, fluid-filled blisters appear. The pain can be mild or severe. Some people also have abdominal pain, fever, chills, or headache. The rash usually clears up within two to three weeks. But some people develop severe pain in the area where shingles occurred that lasts for months or years.

Q. HOW IS SHINGLES TREATED?

A. If you have any symptoms of shingles, call your doctor right away. If caught before or shortly after blisters appear, shingles can be treated with antiviral medicine. Moist, cool



Get your shingles shot! Find out how on the back cover.

compresses, calamine lotion, and oatmeal baths can soothe itching and pain.

Q. WHO'S AT RISK?

A. About one in three people develops shingles at some point. Half the time, it occurs in people ages 60 and older. However, people of any age who have a weakened immune system also are at risk.

Q. CAN I LOWER MY RISK?

A. A one-time shingles vaccination can lower your chances of getting this painful condition. Ask your doctor if vaccination is right for you. ■

Spot the Signs of Shingles

See photos and learn the telltale symptoms of this condition at www.livewellnebraska.com. Type “shingles” into the search box and click on the link to the shingles informational page.

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Get Screened for Colorectal Cancer

When caught early, as many as nine in 10 cases of colorectal cancer are curable.

People with an average risk for colorectal cancer should begin screenings at age 50. If you have a chronic bowel disease or other risk factor, you may start at a younger age.

The American Cancer Society recommends people with an average risk receive one of the following tests. They detect cancer and polyps, growths that can turn into cancer.

- A flexible sigmoidoscopy, every five years
- A colonoscopy, every 10 years
- A double-contrast barium enema, every five years
- A virtual colonoscopy, every five years

A test that checks for blood in stool and a new stool DNA test are other options, but blood and stool tests only find cancer, not polyps.

How to Reach Us

From a simple phone call to following our tweets, there are more ways than ever to connect with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska:

- Call Member Services at **888-592-8960**, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Write to us at **P.O. Box 3248**, Omaha, NE 68180-0001.
- Visit us online at **www.nebraskablue.com**.
- Follow us on Twitter **@BCBSNebraska**.
- Watch our videos at **www.youtube.com/nebraskabluecross**.



Build a Better Relationship with Your Doctor

Communicating well with your doctor can go a long way in ensuring you receive the right care. To make the most of each visit, plan ahead. Before the appointment, list your symptoms, when they started, how often they occur, and what eases them. Bring the list with you, along with a list of any other topics you want to discuss. Plan on addressing the most important concerns first.

You'll also want to bring a list of the prescription and over-the-counter medications and supplements you take, the contact information for your other doctors, a list of your allergies, and any pertinent medical records. Your doctor sees many patients and might not remember all the important

details about you, so it can't hurt to remind her or him.

Here are a few more tips for building a solid relationship with your doctor:

- Be honest and open about your lifestyle. Be prepared to discuss where you live, family problems, sexual issues, alcohol and tobacco use, diet, and sleeping habits. Discuss any major life changes that have occurred since your last visit, such as a divorce or the death of a loved one.
- During the appointment, take notes or ask your doctor to write down information for you. You might consider bringing a friend or family member to take notes.
- Ask plenty of questions. Don't hesitate to tell your doctor if you don't understand something.
- Call your doctor after your appointment if you have more questions, begin feeling worse, or have problems with medicines. ■

Do You Need a New Doctor?

We can easily help you find one. Just call Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska at **888-592-8960**.

▶▶▶ Smart Swaps to Cut Cholesterol ▶▶▶

A diet that's low in cholesterol, saturated fat, and trans fat helps improve blood cholesterol levels. Luckily, eating this way doesn't have to mean skipping your favorite meals. Often, it's a simple matter of switching one tasty food for another.

Here are smart substitutions to get you started.

INSTEAD OF ▶ MEAT LASAGNA

EAT ▶ VEGETABLE LASAGNA

Most saturated fat comes from animal sources, including meat and dairy products. Use reduced-fat cheese as well to lower the fat level even further.

INSTEAD OF ▶ PAN-FRIED BURGER

EAT ▶ GRILLED BURGER

Start with lean ground beef. Cook on a rack to let the fat drip away. Or get rid of saturated fat completely by grilling a portobello mushroom instead of a burger.

INSTEAD OF ▶

EGGS SUNNY-SIDE UP

EAT ▶ EGG-WHITE OMELET

All the cholesterol in eggs is found in the yolks. In recipes, replace each whole egg with two egg whites. When baking, add a little vegetable oil for a moister consistency.

try this recipe!

INSTEAD OF ▶ DEEP-FRIED CHICKEN

EAT ▶ BAKED CHICKEN

Extra calories can lead to extra weight, which can raise cholesterol. Even healthy oils have about 120 calories per tablespoon, making baking better than frying. Choose light meat, too, and remove the skin. ■

Save Money Through Blue365

For help balancing calories and nutrition, check out the weight-management programs available through Blue365, your free resource for healthier living. You can get discounts on Jenny Craig, Nutrisystem, and more! Visit www.nebraskablue.com/Blue365 for details.

Breakfast for Two

RED AND YELLOW PEPPER OMELET

These omelets call for egg whites to help you cut cholesterol in your diet.

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 4 egg whites
- ½ tsp. dried basil
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 2 tsp. grated Parmesan cheese, divided

1. Warm oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add the peppers; cook, stirring frequently, four to five minutes. Keep warm over low heat, stirring occasionally.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg whites, basil, and black pepper.
3. Coat a small nonstick frying pan with cooking spray. Warm over medium-high heat for one minute. Add half the egg mixture, swirling the pan to evenly coat the bottom. Cook for 30 seconds or until eggs are set. Carefully loosen and flip; cook one more minute or until firm.
4. Sprinkle half the peppers over the eggs. Fold to enclose, and transfer to a plate. Sprinkle with 1 tsp. Parmesan cheese. Repeat with remaining ingredients.

Serves two; each serving provides:
Calories 90, Total fat 3 g (Saturated fat 1 g), Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 140 mg, Total carbohydrate 8 g, Fiber 2 g, Protein 9 g.



Heart smart! Layer lasagna with veggies, not meat.

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Health or wellness or prevention information.



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OUR COMMUNITY

Our Prescription Plan Earns Top Rating! ★★★★★

MedicareBlue Rx—a prescription drug plan offered by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska—has been awarded Medicare's highest **five-star rating** for quality and performance in 2011.¹

Achieving five out of five stars is an accomplishment we are very proud of. It reflects our dedication to providing excellent products and services to members like you.

¹Plan performance summary star ratings are assessed each year and may change from one year to the next.

New Bike-Sharing Program Available in Omaha

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska is a proud sponsor of B-cycle, a bike-sharing program that gives you access to bicycles around town.

B-cycle allows you to borrow a bike from one kiosk—called a B-station—and return it to any other kiosk. The B-cycle program makes it easy to run errands by biking instead of driving.

Swipe your credit card at a B-station to start a 24-hour pass, or purchase a 30-day or annual membership online. If you qualify as a senior, you'll get a special discount on pricing. Visit www.omaha.bcycycle.com or call **402-957-2453**.

Vaccinations Now Available at Participating Pharmacies

You can reduce your chances of getting the flu, shingles, or pneumococcal disease by getting vaccinated. And Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE) is helping make it easier to get those vaccinations.

BCBSNE health plan¹ members can now get the flu, Zostavax (shingles), or Pneumovax (pneumococcal disease) vaccines at participating pharmacies in Nebraska or across the nation.² Simply present your BCBSNE member I.D. card at the pharmacy and pay according to your plan's prescription drug coverage. The pharmacy administers the vaccination and files the claim.

Please visit www.nebraskablue.com for a list of participating pharmacies in Nebraska. Please note: Not all pharmacies may carry the listed vaccines.

If you have questions, call Member Services at the number on the back of your member I.D. card.

¹Only applies to BCBSNE members with pharmacy benefits through Prime Therapeutics LLC, an independent company providing pharmacy benefit management services for BCBSNE.

²Vaccine coverage is subject to contract limitations and/or Medical Policy.

For more health and wellness tips, visit www.nebraskablue.com.