

Information regarding Shingles (Taijōhōshin: 带状疱疹)

School Policy for Shingles

Important: If your child has shingles, please cover all the rashes. **Please keep the child home from school, if the rash is weeping and cannot be covered and if the child is scratching often (even the rash is covered).**

Transmission/Cause

Shingles is caused by the same virus as chickenpox, the Varicella Zoster virus. The varicella virus remains in a person's body after they have had chickenpox and may be reactivated, at a later time, causing shingles. The virus may be reactivated by stress, certain health conditions, or medical treatments. A person with active shingles can cause chickenpox in a person who has never had chickenpox or has never been vaccinated. Anyone who has had chickenpox can develop shingles, including children. The varicella virus is spread through contact with blisters of a person with the shingles rash. The virus is only infectious from when the blisters first appear until after the blisters crust over.

Signs and symptoms

Shingles symptoms start with a painful, red blotchy rash that develops on one side of the face or body which can be accompanied with fever, headache, chills, and upset stomach. Areas of the skin may feel painful, itchy, or tingly before a rash develops. Once the rash fully develops, painful, itchy blisters form that scab over in 7 - 10 days. These normally clear up within 2 to 4 weeks. Contact your health care provider immediately if shingles is suspected since medication can be used to speed recovery and is best taken within 3 days after symptoms start. **A doctor's certificate is required for your child to return to school.**

Prevention and Treatment

If antiviral medicine is prescribed by the doctor please complete the course. Acetaminophen (paracetamol) can be used to help ease a painful rash. Do not give Aspirin to children under 16 years of age as this can cause a serious illness called reye syndrome. A cool compress a few times a day can relieve pain or discomfort associated with the rash, as well. Keep the rash clean and dry to reduce risk of infection. Do not use antibiotic cream on the rash as antibiotics have no effect on a virus and may slow the healing process. Cover the rash with a non-stick dressing and wear loose clothing.

Seek medical attention immediately if your child continues to have pain after the rash disappears, has any changes to their vision or hearing, or becomes short of breath, or confused.

To prevent spreading the virus to others, cover the rash, avoid scratching or touching it, wash hands with soap and water frequently, and avoid contact with pregnant women, infants, and immunocompromised individuals until the rash

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has crusted.

Please check the websites below to learn more about this illness:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/shingles/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/shingles/index.html>

If you would like further information please contact the School Nurses by email at nurses@bst.ac.jp or call:

Shibuya Campus Medical Centre: 03 54674366

Showa Campus Medical Centre: 03 3411 4213

The British School in Tokyo
Health and Safety Office

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