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Please forward to your friends and family!

Shingles-Herpes Zoster

I decided to write on this disease, because I just went through this very painful condition myself. It has been said, "I would not wish this on my worst enemy", I don't know if that is true, but this disease is truly a blight on mankind.

This disease is caused by a virus similar to other diseases with a family name of Herpes, which causes cold sores, herpes in the genital region which is considered sexual transmitted disease (STD). The cold sore is herpes simplex and the shingles is herpes zoster, which is similar to the chickenpox virus known as varicella zoster virus (VZV). If you have had chickenpox you are more susceptible to getting shingles.

Symptoms can start as extreme sensitivity or pain in a broad band on one side of the body following the spinal sensory nerves. The course that it follows is known as the dermatomes but it can also effect the facial area, which are the cranial nerves. The symptoms usually start from one to three days prior to the characteristic (vascular) blister like rash. These will filled with pus and weep and dry and a form a scab over the lesion in 10 to 12 day's time.

The symptoms can be described as itching, tingling, burning, constant aching and some times as a deep shooting "lightening bolt of pain". It can be accompanied by fever, chills and even headaches but not in every case. For me it started on the evening of 10/28/11, just before the snow storm as a deep aching pain in the lower left rib cage and into the lumbar spine. The next day it was sore but improved as the day went on but then we had the blackout and lost power and had no heat. The stress caused by this event is what led to the shingles taking hold in my case. I could not imagine what was causing this intense pain. The following morning 11/2/11, I got up, and when I was about to shave I saw the rash and I knew what it was "the dreaded shingles".

The fact that symptoms will drag on from one to three months or longer, will depending on the severity of the infection. Another complication that occurs in 15% of the case that are reported is known as post hepatic neuralgia (PHN). Potentially serious are when the lesions are near the eye or in the eye. This must be treated medically to avoid loss of vision.

As far as my own case was concerned there where muscle involvements that were not mentioned in any literature. I experienced muscle spasms in the abdominal wall and also in the thigh region. The skin discoloration is still present and I experienced swelling on the left side of the abdominal wall with significant numbness, which felt like a shot of novocain had been applied to the area. I could feel deep pressure but not soft touch. Sleeping was some trouble, but I felt better lying on the side of the lesions.

Being adjusted by my colleague helped the pain and stiffness immensely.

Now what can you do to prevent or protect your self from this problem. First is to limit your stress, which in today's world is not easy. Proper nutrition with sufficient vitamin C, D, and E is very helpful. Lysine is useful with viral problem such as cold sore so it should be useful in prevention and treatment. If you come down with shingles there are antiviral medication, which your medical doctor can supply acyclovir (Zovirax), valacyclonir or (Valtrex), and famciclovir or (Famvir). These drugs can reduce the overall infection and symptoms if taken with in 72 hours or less after the rash appears.

As you all know I am not a fan of many of the immunization or vaccine programs, you can read my reason why in my very first newsletter. The shingles vaccine is manufactured by Merck and is called Zostavax. The information I am quoting come directly from Merck and the CDC. The vaccine does not protect everyone. Some people who get the vaccine may still get shingles. The CDC facts tell us that it that the vaccine efficacy is only 51%, which is not much better then a placebo, but it does improve the incidence of PHN by 67%. The prevention rate of the vaccine is better in the younger age groups of 60-69 years in older age groups 70 years it drops to only 38%. This would mean that Chiropractic and Applied Kinesiology would be of great benefit as a protective and also a treatment method when done on a regular basis.

Also noted in the information from the manufacturer was that if you were vaccinated for chickenpox you should not take the shingles vaccine. The facts about this vaccine are that it contains a weakened live chickenpox virus, it also contains gelatin, neomycin, and a adjuvant that make the your body react strongly to the virus this many time is aluminum hydroxide or alum. You will also find stabilizers and preservatives in this vaccine so just be aware when you make a decision on taking this shot.