



# The Beacon

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## Med-Cert Medical Management Resources

*“Guiding your way to better health management”*

### Shingles

The varicella-zoster virus is responsible for causing chickenpox and shingles. Both chickenpox (varicella) and shingles (herpes zoster) are marked by an outbreak of rash or blisters on the skin.

People who have had chickenpox in the past are at risk for developing shingles because the virus remains inactive in certain nerve cells of the body and can become active later in life.

#### Who Gets Shingles?

Scientists are not certain why the virus reactivates or why it only reactivates in about 20% of the people who have had chickenpox. There is evidence to suggest that a weakened immune system may cause the virus to break out of its dormant state, multiply, and move along nerve fibers to the skin. You may be at risk for shingles if you:

- Have a weakened immune system (such as people with cancer or HIV)
- Are over the age of 50
- Have been ill
- Are under significant stress
- Have had a physical trauma

#### What are the symptoms of Shingles?

Early symptoms of shingles include:

- Pain that is itching, stabbing, or shooting
- Tingling feeling in or under the skin, which is red in the affected area
- Fever, chills, and headache
- Stomach upset

After a few days, a rash appears as a band or a cluster of raised dots, only on one side of the body. The rash often appears around the waistline or face. The rash eventually develops into red, fluid-filled, round, painful blisters. Usually, these blisters begin to dry out and crust within 7 to 10 days.

#### How is Shingles Diagnosed?

Doctors diagnose shingles based on the way it looks, since the rash usually appears in a band on one side of the body. Shingles also may be diagnosed with the scraping or swab of the fluid from the blisters that can be analyzed in a lab.

#### How is Shingles treated?

There is no cure for shingles, but treatments for the condition can help ease the associated pain and discomfort. Antiviral medications such as Zovirax, Valtrex, and Famvir

can ease discomfort and reduce the duration of symptoms. In most cases, it is recommended that antiviral drugs be started within 72 hours of the first sign of shingles.

Pain medications can also offer relief. Tylenol or over-the-counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) can be effective in relieving mild pain. For more severe cases of pain, prescription NSAIDs or narcotic pain relievers may be necessary. In some cases, steroids can be prescribed to ease the discomfort, inflammation, pain, redness, and itching associated with shingles' rash and blisters.

#### Is Shingles contagious?

Yes. People who have never had chickenpox and have not been vaccinated against the disease can develop chickenpox if exposed to the virus. Also, in women who are pregnant, it's possible to infect the unborn child as well.

#### Med-Cert provides:

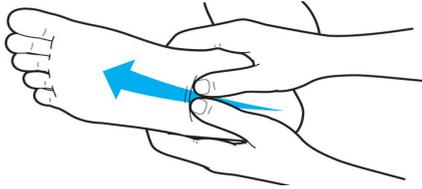
Utilization Management, Maternity Management, Large Case and Wellness Disease Management, Transplant Coordination and Stop Loss Assessments

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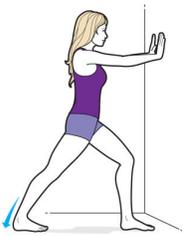
## Three Moves To Ease Your Heel Pain

### Heel rub



The most common cause of heel pain is plantar fasciitis, the famous inflammation of the band of fibrous tissue that runs along the bottom of your foot. Heal heels faster with these three simple remedies:

### Morning wall stretch



Stand barefoot in front of a wall, as shown. Press into the wall with both hands and lean forward, feeling stretch along back of left leg and heel. Hold for 30 seconds; switch sides and repeat.

### Freeze and roll



Freeze a small water bottle. Cover it with a towel and place the arch of your foot on top of it. Slowly roll bottle beneath arch of foot for about 5 minutes at a time. Switch sides and repeat.



## Eight Glasses a Day?

The Institute of Medicine actually recommends 11.4 cups per day, although hydration needs vary from person to person. The exact amount of H<sub>2</sub>O you need is dependent on your size and weight. And since you can also get water from foods like fruits and veggies, you may not need to guzzle as much if you're eating water-rich meals and snacks. In general, though, if you take your weight and divide it by two, that should give you roughly the number of ounces of water you need in a day.

## Did you know??

If all your DNA is stretched out, it would reach to the moon 6,000 times....

## August is Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

More than 12 million children ages 5 to 15 are visually impaired due to uncorrected refractive errors as a result of near-sightedness, far-sightedness, or astigmatism. For more information on children's eye health and safety call: 800-331-2020 or visit:

<http://www.preventblindness.org>

## Med-Cert News

*Our office will be closed on Monday, September 7<sup>th</sup> in observance of Labor Day.*

# Recipe Corner



## Cheesy Zucchini Black Bean Skillet

### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 - 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 cups cooked rice
- 1 1/2 cups zucchini, quartered lengthwise and sliced
- 1/2 cup diced green bell pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1/4 to 1/3 cup vegetable stock\* (optional)
- 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (14.5 oz.) fire-roasted diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 cup grated Cheddar cheese (or any good melting cheese)

### Directions

1. Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat.
2. Add zucchini, garlic, crushed red pepper and bell pepper; cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add beans and undrained tomatoes (adding a little vegetable stock here is optional, see note).
3. Increase the heat to medium high and add the cooked rice. Stir well. Cover; remove from heat and let stand 7 minutes or until liquid is absorbed.
4. Sprinkle with cheese.
5. Replace the lid until the cheese is melted.



This newsletter is brought to you courtesy of Med-Cert Inc. Our sources for this edition are Web MD and Prevention Magazine.