

St. Paul Health Ministry



"Faith Rooted in Community"

Providing information requested by parishioners

# THE HEALING PLACE

JAN-FEB-MAR 2014

Volume 7, Issue 1

## Health Ministry Team

*"wholeness of body, mind and spirit"*

## Spiritual Leaders

Father Vicente Teneza  
Father Felipe Paraguya

## Chair

Clara Heimericks, RN

## Members

Eleanor Banya, RN  
Grace Bati, RN  
Paz Cajucom, RN  
Dana Dinh, RN  
Carmela Encina, RN  
Romy Encina, RN  
Norv Latreille  
Lottie Munsayac, RN  
Judy Niedzwiedz  
Monica Parker, LVN  
Ramona Parks, RN  
Bernie Silla, RN  
Chinnamma Uralil, RN

## Regular Meetings

Second Wednesday, 6:30 pm  
Religious Education Bldg,  
Rm #3

## Membership

You need not be a medical professional. If you are interested in the Health Ministry please call Clara Heimericks at 916-689-3932 or the rectory at 916-381-5200.

## What Do You Know About Shingles? –

No, not those things on the roof of your house – I mean **shingles the illness!**

## What Is Shingles—How Do You Get It?

Shingles is an extremely painful and debilitating rash that can have severe complications. It has been called "*the scourge of the elderly*," and it really decreases the quality of life for senior citizens. Anyone who has had the chickenpox is at risk of getting shingles and the risk increases with age. Studies show that over 95% of all adults in the United States have had chicken pox caused by the varicella-zoster virus (VZV). VZV remains dormant in the nerve roots of the body forever after you recover from the chicken pox. As a person's immunity to VZV declines with age, the virus can travel back up the nerve and reach the skin, causing the painful rash known as shingles. This is the reason older adults are most at risk.

Shingles also can produce typical virus symptoms: chills, fever, upset stomach or headache. Some people will have chronic persistent pain which can last for months or even years after the rash heals. Patients have called the pain "horrible" and "excruciating" and as pain levels increase, the person is more likely to have a decline in physical and social functioning and an increase in emotional distress.

***This is a serious illness—doctors have seen active people end up in nursing homes due to the excruciating pain, pneumonia, visual and hearing impairments that can accompany shingles.***

## What Are The Symptoms?

Symptoms include the development of a rash usually limited to a small area on one side of the body, often on the face or torso. The skin becomes red, blistered and painful. The rash occurs in a band-like area, which is the region supplied by the particular involved nerve. Clusters of small bumps become fluid-filled blisters, which later drain and form crusted scabs. The weight of clothing or a passing breeze can cause **agony**. Even sitting, sleeping and eating are aggravating if those activities put pressure on the sores.

## If You think You Have Shingles What Should You Do?

You need to get to a doctor to receive anti-viral medicine as soon as possible. Anti-viral medications can reduce the severity and duration of shingles, but do not prevent the development of the excruciating pain. The rash may continue for two to four weeks after beginning the anti-viral medications. Some people who have shingles have severe complications that make it difficult to sleep, leave the house, or shop. Sometimes they **never** return to normal activities and become depressed and reclusive because of long-term pain and disability. Complications develop in about one-third to one-half of older adults with the **percentage rising with age**.

## Can You Prevent Getting the Shingles?

There is a vaccine with few side effects that can cut in half the chance of getting shingles and, perhaps more importantly, reduce the severity of complications of an attack. You'd think that older people would be jumping at the chance to get the vaccine wouldn't you? But they're not. The Census Bureau estimates there are 50.6 million people age 60 or

older in the United States (the group most at risk) yet only a very small fraction of that group even knows about the vaccine. Why is this? The United States has a robust vaccination program for infants and children, but not so much for adults. The shingles vaccine is the first new adult vaccine in a long time and physicians may not be accustomed to counseling adults on vaccines. Additionally, people may think that if they've already had the shingles they don't need the vaccine—**wrong!** You can get multiple reactivations of the virus! The vaccine can help.

### How Can You Get the Vaccine?

The vaccine must be ordered by a physician and the easiest way is to talk with your primary care physician at your next appointment. The CDC recommends that adults 60 years of age and older receive a single dose of the shingles vaccine. The cost of the vaccine is covered under most insurance plans and the Medicare Part D prescription drug plan. Check with your plan provider and your primary care physician.

### Who Should Not Get the Vaccine?

You should not get the shingles vaccine if you:

- ▶ Have ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to gelatin, the antibiotic neomycin, or any other component of shingles vaccine. *Discuss this with your doctor.*

- ▶ Have a weakened immune system because of current AIDS

or another disease that affects the immune system; treatment with drugs that affect the immune system; cancer treatment such as radiation or chemotherapy; cancer affecting the bone marrow or lymphatic system (ie., leukemia or lymphoma;

- ▶ are pregnant, or might be pregnant.

### So, to recap:

- ▶ Anyone who has had chicken pox can get shingles. That means 95% of adults are at risk. ***That's just about all of us!***

- ▶ Among those who get shingles more than one-third will develop serious complications ***which can drastically reduce the quality of life for senior citizens.***

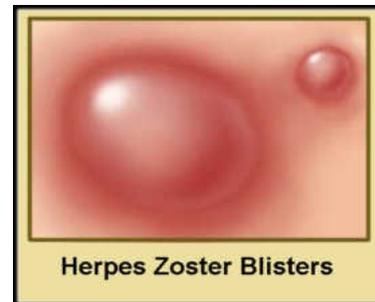
- ▶ More than half of older adults do not understand the seriousness of shingles and its complications. ***Complications increase as patients age.***

- ▶ Prompt treatment is essential to control acute symptoms

- ▶ There is a vaccine that can lower the risk of getting shingles, talk with your doctor about your need for the vaccine.

***Don't wait until it's too late!  
Take this newsletter to your doctor and ask if the vaccine is right for you!***

*(Source: CDC)*



**Upcoming Health Ministry Events and Activities:**

- ▶ **Sunday, Mar 2, 2014**  
Free Blood Pressure Screening  
Parish Hall  
8:30 am to 12:30 pm
- ▶ **Sunday, Apr 6, 2014**  
Free Blood Pressure Screening  
Parish Hall  
8:30 am to 12:30 pm
- ▶ **Sunday, May 4, 2014**  
Free Blood Pressure Screening  
Parish Hall  
8:30 am to 12:30 pm
- ▶ **Organ Donation Workshop**  
-Watch your bulletin and the website for more information.