

health matters

What You Need to Know

The Shingles Shot

What is shingles?

Shingles is a painful rash on the skin that looks like a group of blisters. It usually appears on the back, chest or face.

Many people who have had shingles can have pain even after the rash goes away. This pain appears in the same place that you had shingles blisters. It can

feel like your skin is burning, tingling, aching or stabbing.

Who can get shingles?

- People who have had chickenpox. Shingles comes from the same virus that causes chickenpox.
- Older adults. The chance of getting shingles increases every year after age 50. About half of people up to age 85 will get

[more on page 3](#) ▶



Protect Your Baby from SIDS

A sleeping baby is a peaceful sight.

But careful attention to where your baby sleeps and sleeping position is very important. These are factors that can determine the risk for SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome). Make sure where and how your baby sleeps is safe.

Babies who are at risk

SIDS is the sudden unexplained death of an infant younger than 1 year old. Babies are at higher risk if they:

- Were born early or small
- Have parents who smoke, drink or use drugs
- Sleep on their tummy or on their side

[more on page 6](#) ▶

In this issue:

2 Back from the hospital?
Avoid readmission

3 Postpartum visits:
Checkups for new moms

5 Headaches: When it
is an emergency

6 Tummy trouble: There is
help for constipation

Avoid Going Back to the Hospital

Returning to the hospital is not something anyone wants. Sadly, a lot of people find themselves back in the hospital within 30 days of being sent home. Most of these situations can be avoided. You and your health care team can work together to make sure you stay healthy at home.

Here are steps you can take to avoid going back to the hospital:

1. Ask questions about your health condition.

- What you can do to get better
- What activities you should avoid
- What problems you should watch for
- What to do if you have problems

If you have to do something like change a bandage, ask the hospital staff to go over the steps with you. Make sure you know how to do it. Ask them to show you again if you need to see it a second time.

2. Review your medications.

Ask if you need to continue taking all the medicines you were taking before you went to the hospital.

Do you have to take any new medicine? If you do need to take new ones, be sure you know when and how to take them. Ask how much to take and for how long. Also, be sure you understand

why you are taking the new medicines.

It is a good idea to keep a list of all your medicines. You can also talk to your primary care doctor to make sure you are taking them correctly.

3. Keep your doctor appointments.

Follow-up tests or doctor appointments are often scheduled for you before you leave the hospital. They are important for checking to see how well you are doing and keeping you healthy. Remember to show up to all your appointments.

4. Speak up if you need help.

Can you bathe, dress, and cook for yourself? If you are worried about not being able to do these and other tasks, it is important for you to tell us. Health Plan of San Mateo can get help for you. Call our Care Coordination Unit at **650-616-2060**.

5. Ask for a name and phone number. You may have questions or concerns after leaving the hospital. Before you leave, ask who you should call. By working together, we can help keep you healthy and out of the hospital as much as possible. ■



Shingles Shot

► continued from cover

shingles or have already had it.

There is a shot you can get to protect against shingles: Zostavax.

Who should get the shingles shot?

- Anyone 60 years old or older.
- People who already had shingles. It can prevent against the pain that can appear after the rash goes away.

You need to get the shot only once.

What are some side effects of the shingles shot?

The most common side effects are redness, soreness or swelling. You will feel it on the arm where the shot was given.

Where can you get the shingles shot?

- **Medi-Cal, ACE, MCE and HealthWorx members:** You can get the shot at your doctor's office. There is no cost to you.
- **CareAdvantage members:** You can get the shot at many local pharmacies. Usually no

appointment is needed. The cost depends on your Medicare Part D plan. ■

Sources: www.cdc.gov; www.zostavax.com



New Moms Need Checkups Too

As a brand-new mom, you may be busier than you've ever been.

Your body is still healing from the hard work of giving birth. Be sure to take care of yourself too.

Eating well and resting are now more important than ever. So is seeing your doctor for a checkup.

A must-have visit

You will need a postpartum checkup about three to eight weeks after giving birth. If you had a cesarean section, you may

need to see your doctor two weeks after the surgery.

A postpartum visit gives your doctor a chance to:

- Make sure you're recovering well from giving birth
- See if you can get back to normal activities

Your turn to talk

This is also your chance to bring up any concerns you might have about your recovery and how your body is feeling. You can ask

your provider about:

- Breastfeeding
- Birth control
- Your weight and diet

Feeling low?

Some women become depressed after having a baby. This can happen to any mom. So it is nothing to feel embarrassed about.

If you feel sad, tell your doctor. There's nothing you cannot share with your provider. ■

Source: *Office on Women's Health*



Mean Greens

Eating lots of leafy green vegetables gives your body the vitamins and minerals to fight off disease. This includes spinach, Swiss chard, kale and collard greens. To choose the most nutrient-rich vegetables, remember that the darker, the better.

Dark green veggies are rich in vitamins A and C. This helps prevent many diseases and certain types of cancers.

In addition to their disease-fighting qualities, these greens are fat-free, cholesterol-free and low-calorie. They are also an excellent source of fiber.

Choosing: Pick crisp, green bunches without any insect damage.

Storing: After washing and rinsing them thoroughly, you can loosely wrap them in damp paper towels and store them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to five days.

Preparing: Leafy green veggies are easy to use for salads and add to sandwiches. You can also sauté spinach, grill collards, and mix Swiss chard or kale into a soup or casserole.

Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; American Institute for Cancer Research; Produce for Better Health Foundation

Your Waistline

Swap Out to Trim Down

If fat is settling around your middle, it is time to rethink your diet. Tummy fat puts you at higher risk for diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

You do not have to stop enjoying food. Replace foods that are high in sugar and fat with

low-fat, low-sugar foods that fill you up. Eating fruits and veggies and whole-grain foods and choosing low-fat milk or yogurt will help trim your waistline.

Try these healthy trades, for starters. Over time, it will be easy for you to make the switch.

Instead of...	Try...
Breakfast	
Doughnut or pastry	English muffin or whole-grain toast with natural peanut butter or fruit-only jam
Sugar-coated cereal	Whole-grain cereal with fresh or frozen berries
Lunch	
Creamy soup	Water-based vegetable soup with low-fat whole-grain crackers
French fries	Baked white or sweet potatoes
Snack	
Cookies or chips	An orange, apple, or carrots and celery sticks
Dinner	
Meat pizza	A slice of cheese and veggie pizza
Regular ground beef	Lean or extra lean ground beef, ground turkey or chicken breast
Dessert	
Cake or pie	Fresh or water-canned fruit salad topped with low-fat vanilla yogurt and toasted almonds
Ice cream	Frozen grapes, sorbet or low-fat frozen yogurt
Drink	
Regular soda	Sparkling water with lemon or lime slices or mint sprigs
Frozen coffee drink with whipped cream or large latte with syrup	Black coffee or small nonfat latte with half the sugar or artificial sweetener

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Department of Agriculture

Help for Headaches

Does your head pound or ache? Or do you feel pressure or tightness in the head and neck? These are symptoms of a headache. Some headaches might bother you. Others will stop you from doing your regular activities.

Tension headaches are the most common type. They can be relieved with an over-the-counter pain reliever. Other types are more serious. They include migraines, cluster headaches and daily headaches that will not go away.

What you can do

When a headache starts to come on, it might help to:

- Take a pain reliever. If your doctor has given you a prescription for headaches, use it as directed.
- Lie down in a quiet, dark room.
- Put something cold, such as a wet washcloth, over your forehead.

Headache Emergency?

Having a headache is not usually a medical emergency. However, if you have a sudden, severe headache with no known cause, call 911 right away. This could be a stroke.

- Massage your scalp and put pressure on your temples.

People with migraines may find that certain things can cause symptoms. Avoid these triggers to help reduce the number of headaches. For example, certain smells or types of food can give you a headache. Do not smoke, and avoid alcohol and

caffeine. Also get plenty of sleep and exercise, and find ways to reduce stress.

Getting help for bad headaches

If you have bad headaches a lot, call your doctor. Your doctor will help you get the treatment you need. ■

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; American Headache Society



Go to the emergency room if the pain:

- Is very bad and your medicine does not help—or it causes side effects. The drug might make you very drowsy. Or you might have nausea or vomiting.

- Makes you unable to eat or drink.
- Feels different or worse than past headache pain.
- Comes with a high fever, a stiff neck, confusion or vomiting.

Source: American College of Emergency Physicians

Protect Your Baby

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- Sleep on or with pillows, fluffy blankets or other soft surfaces
- Sleep with another person
- Get too warm while sleeping

How to prevent SIDS

The best thing you can do to prevent SIDS? Make sure your baby sleeps on his or her back with nothing else in the crib or bassinet—every time.

Other steps:

- Keep stuffed toys, pillows, blankets and bumper pads out of the crib.
- Put your baby to sleep in a crib with a firm mattress.
- Breastfeed your baby if possible.
- Keep your baby up-to-date on vaccinations.
- Do not smoke, and do not let anyone else smoke in your home or around your baby.

Be sure that every person who cares for your child knows how to prevent SIDS. ■

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics



Kids' Diarrhea, Constipation Sick Tummies

Little tummies can have big problems, including diarrhea and constipation. When you know how to help your child feel better, you will feel better too.

When diarrhea strikes

Mild diarrhea (loose, watery stools) is not a problem. But if it continues, your child can lose too much fluid.

Watch for signs of dehydration, such as:

- Dry mouth
- Sunken eyes or soft spot (in babies)
- No wet diapers for a few hours
- No tears when baby cries

You can give children fluid

replacement drinks, like Pedialyte. But do not give your child diarrhea medicine unless your doctor say it is OK.

Go to the doctor if:

- Your child seems dehydrated
- Diarrhea lasts more than a day
- Your child has a fever of 102 or higher
- Stools are black and tarry or have blood or pus

Clearing up constipation

Knowing your child's normal pattern for bowel movements can help you notice signs of constipation. Your child may be constipated if you notice:

- Your child is not passing stool as often.
- Stools are hard and dry.
- It is painful for your child to go

to the bathroom.

Constipation is very common. And it usually goes away on its own. You can try to help by doing the following:

- Give your child more high-fiber foods, such as peas, beans, prunes and whole grains.
- Offer plenty of liquids. A little prune juice can help too.
- Ask the doctor before using a laxative.

See the doctor if the problem lasts more than two weeks, or sooner if your child also has:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Blood in the stool
- A swollen tummy or has lost weight ■

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; American Academy of Pediatrics