

# health~e~mail

news & views on wellness & health



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## MYSTERY PATIENT PROGRAM

We are enthusiastic about improving our services wherever we can. To find out where we shine and where we need polishing, we need your feedback. If you would like to participate in our mystery patient program, please call Joyce Stevens at (406) 721-5600.

red rash which persists from a few days up to four weeks. During that time, live VZV (chickenpox virus) is shed and can infect infants and adults who have never had chickenpox or been immunized against it. For the individual with shingles, the most important complication is that irritation of the nerve in which VZV is reproducing can cause the nerve to fire over and over again, resulting in symptoms ranging from a mild tingling for several days to a burning pain lasting for months. This is known as “post-herpetic neuralgia”, which is difficult to treat and may result in chronic pain and decreased quality of life.

The shingles vaccine (Zostavax) is a live, attenuated VZV vaccine, which causes a mild local inflammation at the immunization site and causes the body to redevelop a robust set of antibodies against VZV and suppress it for many years. Because it is “attenuated”, it is a defective virus which cannot reproduce for more than a few days. Even after the millions of doses which have been administered, it has never been shown to cause chickenpox or shingles in a person coming in contact with someone recently immunized with Zostavax. However, because it is a live virus, it should not be taken by someone who is pregnant or immunosuppressed (i.e. leukemia, lymphoma, HIV-infected; or on immunosuppressive drugs without first discussing with their health-care provider). The most common reactions include mild redness, swelling, or itching at the site for several days in about 1 in 3 people. Like all vaccines, it is not 100% effective, but studies show that Zostavax decreased the likelihood of shingles by more than 50% in adults (64% in those over 60), and among the minority who still develop shingles, it reduces the risk of post-herpetic neuralgia by 67%.

In summary, Zostavax is a safe, effective vaccine which reduces the risk of painful complications to the individual receiving it, and the risk of transmitting VZV to those at risk for chickenpox. Zostavax is recommended for all adults over 60.

Two excellent websites with additional information are:

- ✓ CDC: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/shingles/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/shingles/)
- ✓ Immunization Action Coalition: [www.vaccineinformation.org/zoster/](http://www.vaccineinformation.org/zoster/)



## SHINGLES (HERPES ZOSTER) AND ZOSTAVAX IMMUNIZATION

Sam Mitchell, M.D., Ph.D.

WMC Now Care

Shingles, also known as herpes zoster, is a common rash among adults caused by reactivation of chickenpox. Chickenpox, also known as Varicella-Zoster Virus (VZV), is a common childhood illness caused by a human herpes virus. Although the incidence of chickenpox is decreasing in the USA due to use of the childhood chickenpox vaccine (Varivax), more than 98% of US adults were naturally infected with VZV and are at risk for shingles. After infection with VZV, the virus never fully disappears from the body but instead is suppressed by the human immune system and becomes dormant. We believe the virus is restricted to a few nerves in the spine (the dorsal ganglia) and suppressed by antibodies our body creates during the initial chickenpox outbreak. Many years later, as the immune system “forgets” about the virus, VZV can begin reproducing again and usually spreads out along a single nerve root. These nerve roots correspond to “dermatomes”, the area of the skin which is sensed by a single nerve root on one side of the body. Dermatomes vary in size from small areas on the head and neck to large bands on the body, arms, or legs. As the virus grows through the nerve and spreads through a single dermatome, it causes an itching, tingling rash to spread across the skin in a belt-like fashion. In fact, the origin of the word “shingles” originates from the Latin root *cingulum* – belt, or girdle – reflecting the band-like infection on the body.

When shingles occurs, one generally develops a blistering



## SMOKING IS BAD ~ YADA, YADA, YADA

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Smoking is the single most PREVENTABLE cause of death in this country. Smoking is bad for you yeah, yeah, yeah we all know that, but HOW bad is it really?

There is virtually no part of your body not affected when you use any tobacco product. It harms nearly EVERY organ. Along with nicotine, smokers inhale over 4000 other chemicals, 60 of these are known to cause cancer.

Let's start with the head and go over just a few effects of cigarettes and chew.

### INNER EAR:

- dizziness due to nicotine effects on the inner ear, this usually occurs when one first begins smoking

### EYES:

- blurry vision
- blind spots, possibly due to lack of oxygen to eyes and nerves

### GUM DISEASE:

- promotes plaque on teeth, causing problems with gums
- loss of teeth, on the average, a 1 pack/day smoker loses 2 teeth every 10 years
- black tongue
- brown stained teeth
- decreased taste and smell
- more prone to cancers in the sinuses, mouth, and throat. (more common with chewing tobacco)

### DIGESTIVE:

- causes muscle from the esophagus to stomach to be weaker resulting in heartburn that can be more severe and last longer than in non-smokers
- irritates the lining of the stomach which increases the risk of peptic (stomach) ulcers

### LUNGS:

- lung cancer
- emphysema, which cripples your lungs into not being able to exchange air
- "smoker's cough" due to inflammation in the airways and mucous getting trapped

**HEART:** (The most devastating effect is on the heart and vessels)

- immediately causes a rise in blood pressure with each cigarette, which increases the demand on your heart

- it decreases the flow of oxygen to your heart muscles, which can lead to heart attacks
- causes your blood to clot faster, increasing your risk of forming a blood clot, which in turn can lead to stroke or heart attack
- inflames blood vessels, which can lead to heart attacks
- can lead to a lack of circulation in hands and feet (some people do need amputations due to this condition)

### IMMUNE SYSTEM:

- weakens body's defense system, so if you do get ill, it can take much longer to recover
- increased chance of developing Lupus or Rheumatoid Arthritis, which are diseases of the immune system
- other cancers associated with smoking ~ in the mouth, nose, voice box, pancreas, bone marrow, kidney, liver, ureter, bladder and stomach
- smokers experience a 4 times greater risk of bladder cancers

### BONES:

- can lead to osteoporosis

### SKIN:

- causes premature wrinkling of skin

### MEN:

- lowers sperm number and increased amount of deformed sperm
- can cause impotence due to the effect on blood vessels

### WOMEN:

- reduces fertility, increases risk of cervical cancers
- cannot use certain forms of birth control if you are a smoker

### PREGNANCY:

- risk of miscarriage, premature birth
- if one continues to smoke after having a baby, that child usually has a higher number of ear infections, respiratory infections

If you are a tobacco user and have not experienced any of these above conditions but you continue to smoke or chew, there is a strong chance that you eventually will experience one or more of the above.

Millions of smokers/tobacco chewers quit every year. Let us help you be one of them! For more information on quitting, tips and medications to help you quit, please contact your health care provider.

**It's not just something we say, we really want you to quit!**

## HEALTHY HINTS



### START WITH WHOLE GRAIN

Athletes who down whole-grain cereal first thing in the morning burn more fat during the day and during exercise than those who eat more quickly digested fare, such as bagels.



### DRINK GREEN TEA

Sipping three cups of green tea per day may boost your metabolism by about 4%.



### USE MORE OLIVE OIL

People who eat a diet high in mono-unsaturated fats (like olive oil and avocado) may burn more fat over a four week period than those on a diet high in saturated fats.



### LETTUCE

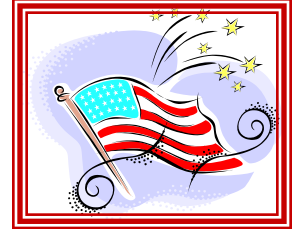
With a mere 60–70 calories per pound, lettuce is high on the list of diet-friendly foods. Romaine lettuce alone is a great source of B vitamins, folic acid, and manganese, which helps regulate blood sugar and is essential for proper immune system

function. Choose other dark green or purple varieties such as green or red leaf for the most nutrients, and toss with a zesty homemade vinaigrette.

## A SAFE 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY IS A FUN 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY

The best safety tip is to leave fireworks to the professionals and visit one of many local displays. You'll see a great show and avoid the dangers associated with using fireworks.

The Fourth of July is a great time to enjoy yourself while celebrating our nation's independence. The best way to make sure you keep it fun is by always keeping safety in mind.



## WESTERN MONTANA CLINIC WELCOMES NEW PROVIDERS

**June 1, 2009 ~ Carol Cady, MD, PhD—Allergy & Immunology** is seeing patients at two locations in Missoula— on the 4th Floor of the Broadway Building located at 500 W. Broadway and at 2835 Fort Missoula Rd—Community Campus Phys Center 3.

**July 6, 2009 ~ Heather Maddox, MD** will be joining the Family Practice physicians and staff on the 6th floor of the Broadway Building located at 500 W. Broadway - Missoula, MT

**August 10, 2009 ~ Jennifer Hall, MD** will be joining the Pediatric physicians and staff located at 2835 Fort Missoula Rd - Community Campus/Physicians Center 3 - Missoula, MT

**August 31, 2009 ~ Craig McHood, MD** will be joining the Family Practice physicians and staff on the 6th floor of the Broadway Building located at 500 W. Broadway - Missoula, MT

## HOURS CHANGING

Now Care Downtown will be changing their hours of operation. As of July 6, 2009 the hours will be 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

## Disclaimer / Terms of Use

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