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## **Herpes Zoster**

One's first encounter with the herpes zoster virus is usually childhood chicken pox. Later in life, the virus may reactivate, causing a characteristic rash of small blisters, frequently on the chest or forehead, which form crusts and may leave scars. This second encounter is known as shingles.

Unlike chicken pox, this condition is usually quite painful. Although this disease often occurs in normal, healthy people, it occurs more frequently in elderly or immune-compromised individuals.

It is important to see an ophthalmologist when herpes zoster occurs on the face because the virus may invade the eye. An ophthalmologist looks for elevated pressure in the eye, inflammation, and herpes zoster lesions on the surface of the eye. All these problems can be treated but they are sometimes difficult to manage. Therefore, careful treatment and follow-up are required. New oral antiviral medications are providing sufferers with a quicker, more complete recovery.