

Shingles and the CLL Patient

This is not meant to be a comprehensive article; if you have any reason to think that you may have shingles, contact your doctor as soon as possible.

Shingles can be a very nasty virus which is transmitted through, and can affect, the nervous system. You must be aware of the symptoms so that speedy action can be taken.

All CLL patients have a damaged immune system, this means that you can get shingles more often, it can spread through your body faster, and you could be in pain for some time.

Symptoms

The first symptoms of shingles are very sensitive tingling or burning skin on one side of your body or your face. This can happen before you get a rash. There can even be a burning pain as the first symptom. The affected skin can become sensitive to touch and may be accompanied by redness. It is often followed by blistering of the skin, sometimes severe.

If you believe that you may have shingles, contact your doctor immediately.

When you speak to someone state that you have Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia and you have a damaged immune system.

The sooner you get treatment, which will be a strong ant-viral medication, the less the shingles is likely to spread. You may be able to avoid post herpetic neuralgia, a condition that can follow shingles. Post herpetic neuralgia is very painful, sometimes lasting for months.

You should be aware that during the infectious blistering stage of shingles you could transmit the virus to someone who has not had chicken pox. You can infect other people.

Three types of people are vulnerable to infection:

1. Immune suppressed people like yourself
2. Pregnant women
3. Children who have not had a vaccination against chicken pox and have not had the disease.

Please note that the shingles vaccine contains live virus and must NOT be used for CLL patients or for anyone who is immune suppressed.