

*Columbus Ophthalmology Associates*  
**HERPES ZOSTER**

**What is Herpes Zoster?**

Herpes zoster is a condition commonly known as “shingles.” This disease is caused by a virus that lives along the nerves of our body. We first acquire the virus as children, when we develop chicken pox. The virus can be reactivated under certain conditions, especially in individuals who have a reduced immune system.

**What are the symptoms?**

Quite often, pain or itching is the first symptom, followed by redness in the skin along a specific nerve distribution. Afterwards, there is the characteristic blistering along this area of the skin that can last 3-6 weeks. A burning sensation may persist, even after the skin lesions have resolved.

**Can Herpes Zoster involve the eye?**

If the nerve that supplies the eye lid and forehead become involved, the virus can affect the eye itself. Complications can be severe and involve corneal ulcers, severe inflammation of the eye and a devastating glaucoma. This is why any patient who has shingles that involve the face, need an evaluation by an ophthalmologist.

**What is the treatment?**

The skin condition can be controlled with pain medications, skin ointments; as well as anti-viral drugs. When the eye becomes involved, drops may be needed to reduce the inflammation and treat any underlying condition, such as glaucoma. Fortunately, most people recover without any complications, but a few may need long-term treatment.

5155 Bradenton Avenue, Suite 200  
Dublin, Ohio 43017

5965 East Broad Street, Suite 480  
Columbus, Ohio 43213

(614) 766-2006  
[www.coavision.com](http://www.coavision.com)