



**Headache &
PAIN CENTER**
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NERVE BLOCKS FOR SHINGLES PAIN

Definition: The same virus responsible for chicken pox during childhood causes shingles pain as an adult. The virus becomes active in nerve tissue causing severe pain usually on one side of the body. This occurs more frequently in people older than 60, but can occur in younger individuals. Shingles usually presents as sharp pain followed by a rash. The more likely areas to be affected include the chest or abdomen, and less frequently, the face, the arms or the legs.

Reasons for Treatment: A shingles infection causes a very severe nerve inflammation that if left untreated can evolve into a more severe form of the disease called **post-herpetic neuralgia**. This disease is a complication of shingles where nerves and their blood supply have been severely damaged from inflammation. Typically, the older you are and the more pain you have during your shingles episode, the more likely it is for you to develop permanent pain. Blocking the pain in the affected nerves using strong numbing medicines and anti-inflammatories will shorten the actual shingles pain and may decrease the chance of developing severe nerve damage and chronic pain.

Procedures: The doctors may choose a number of different nerve blocks to treat your shingles pain depending on its location. These nerve blocks can be in the front of the neck, around the spine, under the ribs, or other areas of pain. The procedures may require the use of an X-ray machine (C-Arm Fluoroscopy) to guide the doctors to the areas of severe inflammation. The nerve blocks will be done in short intervals usually a day or two apart. The number of treatments will depend on your response to therapy. Finally, you may also receive a variety of different medications, creams, or patches that can help with the pain coming from this form of nerve injury. Our physicians are on call twenty-four hours a day. If you have a problem, please contact Headache and Pain Center.