

Mayo Clinic Minute: What are eye shingles?

VIDEO	AUDIO
Jason	You're probably familiar with shingles, a viral infection that causes a painful rash — usually on the body's torso. But did you know that shingles also can affect the eye?
Keith Baratz, M.D. Ophthalmology Mayo Clinic	"Shingles around the eye typically involves the skin of the forehead and the skin of the upper lid. It can also involve the side of the nose or the tip of the nose."
Jason	The virus lies dormant for years, but, when triggered by stress or a weakened immune system, it travels along nerve pathways to the skin and usually affects only one side of the face.
Dr. Baratz	"You can almost draw a line right down the middle of the forehead when you get the rash."
Jason	In addition to the telltale rash or blisters, patients often will have pink eye, swelling or even blurry vision.
Dr. Baratz	"It can be very painful. But when it's around the eye, it's really a dangerous problem. The complications in the eye can last for a long time."
Jason	The key to overcoming eye shingles is quick diagnosis and aggressive treatment with antiviral medication. Your doctor will perform several dilated eye exams to monitor the health of your eye until the shingles are resolved.
Jason	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Jason Howland.