

Shingles Outbreak: Is the Chicken Pox Vaccine to Blame?

Cases of shingles, a painful rash caused by the same virus that triggers chicken pox, have increased by 39 percent since the chicken pox vaccination program was introduced in 1996.

Many experts have seen the increase as more than just mere coincidence and have blamed the vaccine. But a study released this month says that's not the case.

Dr. Craig Hales, a medical epidemiologist at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), says he examined Medicare claims of more than 2.8 million people and found that although shingles cases did increase over the 18-year study period, cases didn't increase after the introduction of the vaccine.

Some experts, including nationally recognized health authority and neurosurgeon Dr. Russell Blaylock, aren't convinced.

"The rise in shingles cases paralleled the widespread use of the chickenpox vaccine," Dr. Blaylock tells Newsmax Health.

As for the CDC study, he believes it has little validity.

"The study is unable to truly differentiate between other factors suppressing immunity and the effects of the childhood chickenpox vaccine, and this negates their study," he says.

Chicken pox is a common illness that causes rashes and blisters all over the body and is most common in young children. The varicella zoster virus that causes it remains in the body and lies dormant until triggered years later by a weakened immune system. Shingles is a viral infection of the nerves and is extremely painful, and residual pain can last for months or years.

Dr. Blaylock doesn't believe there was ever a strong need for a chicken pox vaccine in the first place.

"Chicken pox is a very benign childhood disease, and there was no urgency to produce a vaccine," he says. "Most infectious disease docs found it laughable that they produced one."

In addition to possibly increasing the risk of shingles, the chicken pox vaccine itself is only effective for about four years, whereas natural infections offer lifetime protection. And a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that even with the vaccine, 10 percent of vaccinated children contracted the disease anyway.

The same study also found that five years after being vaccinated, children who caught chicken pox were more likely to suffer from moderate to severe infections and also had a much higher rate of complications.

"The age of infection has shifted upward because of the massive vaccination program," Blaylock say.

The age of natural infection was usually between the ages of 3 and 6, but now most cases are seen in children older than six.

"This dramatically increases the risk of severe complications," he says.

People develop shingles because their cellular immunity is suppressed, Dr. Blaylock continues, which he says the author of the CDC article, at least in part, acknowledged.

"The solution to this problem is to address the cellular immune suppression in older adults," he says. "We know that even subclinical deficiencies in even single nutrients can cause cellular immunity dysfunctions—especially the mixed carotenoids (astaxanthin especially), vitamin C, mixed tocopherols, B1, B3, B6, folate, B12 and the minerals zinc, magnesium and selenium, all of which are commonly deficient in

older individuals.”

Bad diets consisting of massive amounts of sugar, immune-suppressing oils (omega-6 oils) and tremendous free-radical production in older adults are also adding to the problem of suppressed immune systems, as well as pesticides, herbicides and fungicides and exposure to industrial chemicals.

“The answer to this problem is not to add one more vaccine—it is to boost cellular immunity by replacing deficient vitamins and minerals and using specific cellular immune stimulants, such as beta-glucan,” Blaylock says. “Cleaning up the immune-suppressing American diet is also essential.”

“Finally, the number of vaccines has increased dramatically right at the time we observed the 39 percent increase in shingles cases,” he says, “and this continues to increase.”

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