

# Children with asthma at higher risk for shingles: study

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Painful skin condition typically strikes older adults, researchers note.

(HealthDay) -- Children with asthma have a higher risk for developing shingles -- a painful skin rash -- following infection with the herpes zoster virus, new research reveals.

The authors noted that 1 million Americans are estimated to be infected with the [herpes](#) zoster virus every year. However, typically it's a problem that strikes men and women over the age of 60 or people with weakened immune systems.

Researchers analyzed 277 [medical records](#) involving patients under the age of 18 who had experienced an episode of [shingles](#) between 1996 and 2001.

Stacking up the shingles cases against 277 [children](#) who had no history of shingles, the team found that asthmatic patients were 2.2 times more likely to have a case of shingles compared to those who did not have [asthma](#).

While 23 percent of the shingles patients had a history of asthma before the onset of shingles, only 35 [patients](#) without shingles (about 12.5 percent) had asthma in their past.

The findings are slated to be presented Monday at the American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology annual meeting in Orlando, Fla.

"It had previously been unknown whether asthma status poses an increased risk of shingles among children," study author Dr. Young Juhn, a pediatrician at Mayo Clinic Children's Center in Rochester, Minn., said in an academy news release. "These results suggest that asthma significantly increases the risk for shingles in children."

The researchers' previous work found that microbial infections in people with asthma came from airway-related conditions such as strep infections and whooping cough and serious pneumococcal disease.

"However, shingles is not an airway-related illness, and cell-mediated immune function is an important host-defense mechanism from developing shingles," Juhn said.

Because this study was presented at a medical meeting, the data and conclusions should be viewed as preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

**More information:** For more on shingles, visit the [target=" new">U.S. National Library of Medicine](#).

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