

# Health Update

## Doctors Have A New Way To Ease Post-Shingles Pain

(NAPSA)—It may seem surprising, but using a synthetic form of capsaicin, the naturally occurring compound in chili peppers that gives them their heat sensation, may help thousands of Americans who suffer from what many say is excruciating pain from nerve damage caused by postherpetic neuralgia.

### The Problem

Each year, about one million Americans develop shingles, a painful viral infection caused by a reactivation of the same virus that causes chickenpox. Anyone who has had chickenpox—approximately 95 percent of adults—is at risk.

The shingles virus can damage nerves, and the pain from damaged nerves may feel like a sharp, burning, tingling, shooting or numb sensation. After the shingles rash clears up, the pain can persist and disrupt sleep, mood, work and activities of daily living.

The nerve pain that can occur after shingles is a condition known as postherpetic neuralgia (PHN). The chances of developing PHN increase with age and are especially high for people who experience severe pain or a severe rash during an acute shingles outbreak.

It is estimated that up to one in five people with shingles will experience prolonged pain due to PHN.

“The pain that may occur after a shingles outbreak can be excruciating and can greatly affect a person’s daily living,” said Dr.



**The pain that can come from an attack of shingles may be relieved by a patch made from synthetic peppers.**

Lynn Webster, medical director, Lifetree Clinical Research, Salt Lake City, Utah. “Despite a variety of pain medications, side effects of these medications, such as drowsiness and interactions with other drugs, often limit how doctors and patients can use them. Because of these limitations, the treatment of post-shingles pain continues to represent a significant unmet need.”

### A New Solution

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved Qutenza (capsaicin) 8% patch, the first and only product containing prescription-strength capsaicin for post-shingles pain, also known as PHN. Qutenza delivers a synthetic form of cap-

saicin through a patch applied by a health care professional in a doctor’s office. Clinical studies have shown that PHN pain can be reduced for three months following a single one-hour treatment.

### How It Works

The Qutenza patch is cut to fit the size and shape of the painful area and is then applied to the painful area by a doctor or other health care professional. Up to four patches may be used during a single one-hour treatment.

According to Dr. Webster, “Qutenza works by acting on the nerve fibers in the skin and reduces their ability to transmit pain from the skin to the central nervous system. It is targeted directly to the site of the pain and may be used alone or in combination with existing therapies.”

Qutenza is non-narcotic, unlikely to cause drowsiness, or interact with other medicines. Treatment may be repeated every three or more months as needed.

In clinical trials, the most common side effects were application site redness, pain, itching and papules (small bumps). Serious adverse reactions included application site pain and increased blood pressure. Increases in blood pressure were unrelated to the pretreatment blood pressure but were related to treatment-related increases in pain.

### Learn More

You can find more information at [www.Qutenza.com](http://www.Qutenza.com) and by calling 877-900-6479.