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**Shingles**

If you have ever had Chickenpox, the virus that caused it, Varicella Zoster, is lying inactive in nerve tissue somewhere in your body. Several factors can permit the virus to reactivate, especially in adults older than 50. When the virus reactivates, it spreads along a nerve pathway and causes a painful, blistering skin rash known as shingles (herpes zoster). The virus usually travels along a branch of nerve fibers that extend to your skin. It is often on only one side of the body, with the spinal cord as the dividing line. Less commonly, shingles can occur on the legs, neck, mouth, and face. It can become more wide spread, and symptoms may include pain or discomfort along the nerve branch, flu-like symptoms and a blistering rash. Blisters that develop usually crust over within 7-10 days and can last 2-4 weeks. Shingles itself cannot be transmitted from person to person.

For most, chickenpox is a one-time experience occurring typically during childhood. A healthy immune system can keep an inactive virus in check, however, immunity to the virus may decrease with age. Illness, stress, immune-suppressing medications, or undergoing radiation or chemotherapy treatment for cancer can weaken your immune system, allowing an outbreak to occur. Prompt care is important if you suspect shingles. Prevention is best and the shingles vaccine (Zostavax) is recommended by the Center for Disease Control for most adults 60 or older. The vaccine boosts your immunity with the goal of keeping the virus dormant. More information on this topic can be located at [www.HealthLetter.MayoClinic.com](http://www.HealthLetter.MayoClinic.com) or [www.NIH.gov](http://www.NIH.gov).



***Winter Snow Policy -***

2015 finished with mild weather but 2016 has arrived with colder temperatures! If we find snow & ice on the roadways, we will make every effort to be open. However, if we are unable to make it into the office, we will call our scheduled patients as soon as possible. If you are unable to make your appointment, please call us at your earliest possible opportunity.

**Office Closings** – Our office will be closed on the following dates for Continuing Education and Holidays. Friday, Jan. 15, Friday, Jan. 29, Monday Feb. 15, and Friday March 25. Thank you for your understanding when we must be out of the office.

Elite Dental Care TN  
William S. Lenihan III, D.D.S  
400 Laboratory Road, Suite 104  
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

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**Congratulations! –**

Congratulations to our recent drawing winners! One of Oak Ridge's finest, Officer Brad Jenkins won a Spooky Ghost & Laser Gun game just in time for Halloween! We understand his cat had fun chasing the ghost! In November, we surprised Gerry Jones with a ceramic snowman cookie jar that we filled with our favorite cookie recipes! Be sure to sign up when you are in the office!

**BRIGHTEN YOUR SMILE!** – Have you ever wondered if the over-the-counter whitening products are as effective as the solution available at our office? Most OTC products contain solution that is acidic and can be harmful to your teeth! The typical range of whitening is 1-2 shades lighter and the trays are basically one size fits all. The whitening solution available through our office is a buffered solution that will not harm your teeth. We make custom trays to fit your mouth and have witnessed a wide range of lightening. And if you act fast – you can take advantage of the **25% whitening discount** that has been extended through January! Call today for your appointment!



**What's Cooking?**

**Slow-Cooker Chicken Taco Soup**

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 onion, chopped                            | 2 (10 oz) cans Rotel, undrained |
| 1 (16 oz) can chili beans                   | 1 package taco seasoning        |
| 1 (15 oz) can black beans                   | 3 whole skinless, boneless      |
| 1 (15 oz) can whole kernel<br>corn, drained | chicken breasts                 |
| 1 (8 oz) can tomato sauce                   | 8 oz shredded Cheddar cheese    |
| 1 (12 oz) can beer                          | sour cream                      |
|   | crushed tortilla chips          |

Place the onion, chili beans, black beans, corn, tomato sauce, beer & diced tomatoes in a slow cooker. Add taco seasoning, stir to blend. Lay chicken breasts on top of the mixture, pressing down slightly until just covered by the other ingredients. Set slow cooker for low heat, cover, and cook for 5 hours. Remove chicken breasts from the soup, allow to cool long enough to be handled. Shred chicken & stir back into the soup; continue cooking for 2 hours. Serve topped with shredded Cheddar cheese, sour cream, and crushed tortilla chips.