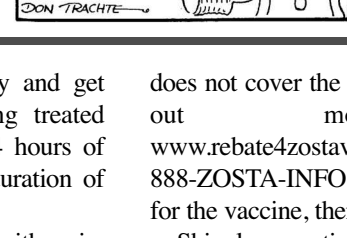
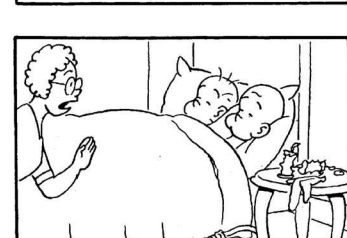
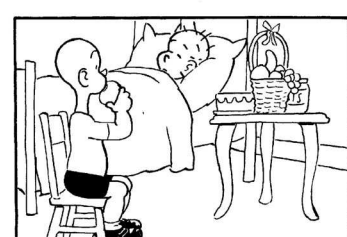
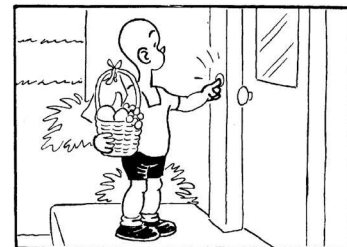
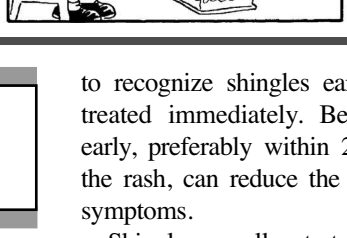
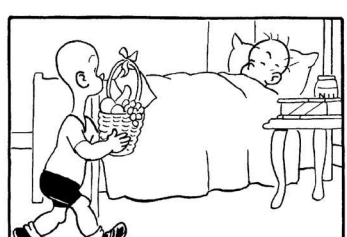
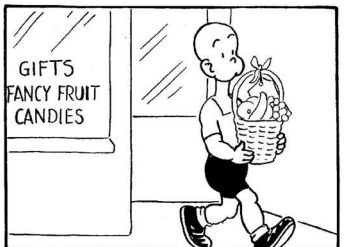
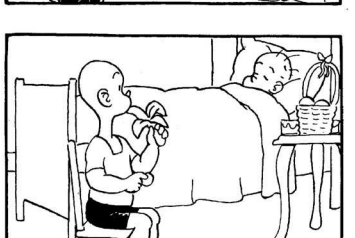
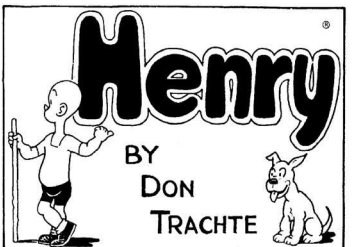
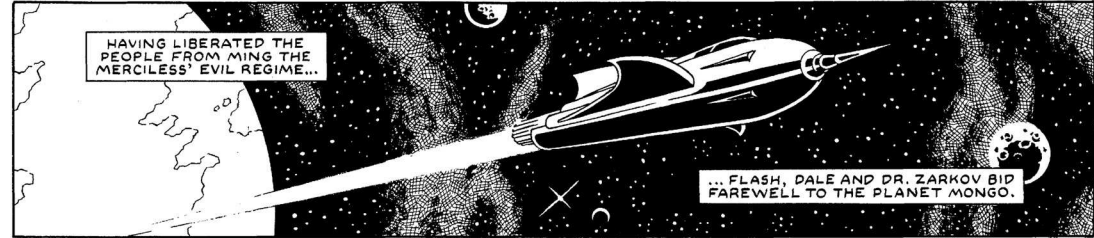
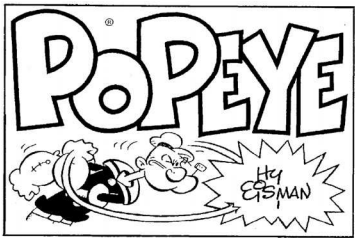


SIDE SHOW



TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

Barriers to getting shingles vaccine

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am 61 years old, and was anxious to get a shingles vaccine shot. I was upset to learn that, because I am allergic to neomycin, an ingredient in the vaccine, I cannot get vaccinated. I have talked to my doctor and a pharmacist about options, but they don't know of any. Do you know of anything I could use to protect myself against shingles? — B.G.P.

ANSWER: If it's a severe (the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says "life-threatening") reaction to neomycin, then you cannot get the vaccine. There is no other way to reliably prevent getting shingles. Keeping your immune system healthy (good diet, regular exercise, good sleep) may help. However, the most important thing for you and others who haven't been vaccinated will be

to recognize shingles early and get treated immediately. Being treated early, preferably within 24 hours of the rash, can reduce the duration of symptoms.

Shingles usually starts with pain, burning or itching on one side of the body in a particular location, called a dermatome. This might be a band around the torso, the top of the arm or part of the face. The classic description of the rash is a clear, fluid-filled blister on reddened skin ("dewdrop on a rose petal"), but it does not always look so classic. See your doctor immediately after any painful rash shows up in a single area of the body.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I had chickenpox as a child. I am 60 years old and was shocked to find out that the shingles vaccine costs \$249 here. My doctor offers it, but I cannot afford the cost, as my insurance does not cover it. Do you know of a place where I can get the vaccine at little or no cost? — M.B.

ANSWER: It is frustrating that a recommended and potentially cost-saving measure like a vaccine costs so much out of pocket. However, the drug company (Merck) does have a rebate program that covers much of the cost for people with insurance that

does not cover the shot. You can find out more at www.rebate4zostavax.com or at 1-888-ZOSTA-INFO. You have to pay for the vaccine, then get your rebate.

Shingles questions are among the most frequently asked by readers. The booklet on the shingles virus answers many of them. Readers can obtain a copy by writing: Dr. Donohue — No. 1201W, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. Enclose a check or money order (no cash) for \$4.75 U.S./\$6 Canada with the recipient's printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have had allergies for the past 50 years. Every morning, my nose runs for approximately 15-30 minutes. I can't take antihistamines due to heart issues. Any suggestions? — E.A.K.

ANSWER: Most people with heart and blood pressure issues who are warned about allergy medicines are warned about decongestants, not antihistamines. It may be safe for you to take an antihistamine, so you should ask your internist or cardiologist. I also have had good results using an antihistamine nasal spray such as levocabastine in people who can't tolerate antihistamines by mouth.

SALOME'S STARS

thought had been resolved. Keep an open mind about possible changes that you might have to consider.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) With a potential revision of an old agreement, you can't beat the Big Cat for knowing how to sharpen a "clause" to the best advantage. Someone close could have the news you've been waiting for.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Certain issues in the workplace could put you in the middle of a dispute you'd rather not deal with. Express your honest feelings before the pressure to take sides builds up.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) You might feel uneasy disagreeing with someone you've been close to. But your relationship should be able to withstand and even thrive when confronted with your true feelings.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) A romantic situation seems to be creating more confusion than you can handle. If so, own up to your feelings. The sooner you do, the better your chances are for working

things out.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) With change directing the Archer's aim, consider a second look at your plans and see where they might benefit from a revision. A workplace matter is close to a resolution.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) New contacts help you learn some important information about upcoming developments. The week calls for the Sea Goat to be more flexible than usual in a number of matters.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) With both change and uncertainty in your aspect, you might feel less confident in a previous decision. That's OK. Check it out and see where it could be modified, if necessary.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Old relationships that seemed to be sinking are buoyant again, and new relationships are benefiting from Cupid's loving care. This could be a good time to make a major move.

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King Crossword

ACROSS

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King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 27 mins.

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