

Ramsay Hunt syndrome (RHS) is a rare neurological disorder characterized by paralysis of the facial nerve (facial palsy) and a rash affecting the ear or mouth. Ear abnormalities such as ringing in the ears (tinnitus) and hearing loss may also be present. Ramsay Hunt syndrome is caused by the varicella zoster virus (VZV), the same virus that causes chickenpox in children and shingles (herpes zoster) in adults. In cases of Ramsay Hunt syndrome, previously inactive (dormant) varicella-zoster virus is reactivated and spreads to affect the facial nerve. Ramsay Hunt syndrome is caused by the varicella-zoster virus, which is the same virus that causes chickenpox and shingles. The virus can remain dormant for decades in a person who has had chickenpox as a child. Reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus results in shingles and, in some cases, develops into Ramsay Hunt syndrome. The reason why the virus reactivates and affects the facial nerve in Ramsay Hunt syndrome is unknown.