

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST SHINGLES



WHAT IS SHINGLES?

Shingles or herpes zoster is a disease caused by the varicella zoster virus (VZV), the same virus that causes varicella (chickenpox). Initial infection with the VZV causes varicella. The virus will then lie dormant in spinal nerve cells for years. Reactivation of the virus causes a painful rash called shingles.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON COMPLICATIONS OF SHINGLES?

In addition to a painful rash, shingles causes:

- itching and tingling
- skin infections and scarring
- burning or pain in a specific area of the body

For most people, the pain associated with shingles lessens as it heals. But for some, shingles can cause severe pain, which can last for months or even years, and interfere with normal day-to-day activities such as walking, sleeping, and social activities.

ARE YOU AT RISK FOR SHINGLES?

People who had varicella (chickenpox) can develop shingles, and the risk of shingles increases with age.

DID YOU KNOW?

Immunization against shingles is safe and effective at preventing the reactivation of the varicella zoster virus (VZV).

WHO SHOULD GET THE VACCINE?

- Adults 60 years of age and older
- Adults 50 to 59 years of age may receive the vaccine
- Adults 50 years of age and older with a prior history of shingles may receive the vaccine at least one year following the last episode of shingles
- Adults on low-dose immunosuppressive therapy may receive the vaccine following review by a health care provider



Talk to your health care provider about the shingles vaccine and visit immunize.ca.

¹ National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). Update on the Use of Herpes Zoster Vaccine (2014). An Advisory Committee Statement (ACS). <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/naci-ccni/hzv-vcz-eng.php>

² National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). Statement on the Recommended Use of Herpes Zoster Vaccine, CDR Volume 36, ACS-1, January 2010. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/10vol36/acs-1/index-eng.php>

³ Canadian Immunization Guide. (2014). Part 4 - Active Vaccines: Herpes Zoster (Shingles) Vaccine. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/p04-herp-zona-eng.php>