



Shingles (zoster) vaccine

About shingles

Shingles is a viral infection caused by varicella zoster virus (VZV), the same virus which causes chickenpox. This virus stays dormant in the body's nerves after chickenpox infection, but can reactivate years later, causing shingles.

Recombinant zoster vaccine (RZV) can prevent shingles and its related complications.

Shingles causes a painful, usually itchy rash that most commonly covers 1 side of the face or body. The rash consists of blisters that typically scab over in 7 to 10 days, and fully clear up within 2 to 4 weeks. Symptoms of shingles can also include fever, headache, chills, and upset stomach.

About 1 in every 3 people in the U.S. will have shingles in their lifetime. As you get older, your risk for having shingles and serious complications increases.

About 10-18% of people who have shingles will develop nerve pain that lasts for months or years after the rash goes away. This nerve pain is called postherpetic neuralgia, or PHN, and is the most common complication of shingles. Shingles can also lead to eye complications (including vision loss), pneumonia, hearing loss, brain inflammation (encephalitis), or death.

Before vaccine was available, about 1 million cases of shingles occurred in the US each year. Shingles vaccine is the best form of protection against contracting and spreading the disease.

Important details

CDC recommends that adults 50 years and older get 2 doses of zoster vaccine (*Shingrix*) to prevent shingles and related complications.

- Doses should be separated by 2 to 6 months.
- In adults 50 and older with healthy immune systems, *Shingrix* is more than 90% effective at preventing shingles and PHN.

Shingrix is also recommended for adults 19 years and older who have weakened immune systems because of disease or therapy

- These patients may receive their second dose 1 to 2 months after their first.
- When possible, patients should be vaccinated before becoming immunosuppressed.

Shingles vaccine can be given with other needed vaccines.

You should get shingles vaccine even if you had shingles in the past, as it can prevent future occurrences.



What to expect after vaccination

It's normal to experience immune response after vaccination— this is how you know the vaccine is working. The side effects of shingles vaccine are temporary, and usually last 2 to 3 days. While you may experience pain for a few days after you get a shingles vaccine, the pain will be less severe than having shingles and related complications. Some normal immune responses after the shingles vaccine include:

- pain, redness, or swelling at the injection site
- tiredness
- muscle pain
- headache
- fever
- chills
- stomach pain
- nausea

Side effects were more commonly seen in younger people.

Shingrix should not be administered to individuals who:

- have ever had a severe allergic reaction to any component of the vaccine, or after a dose of *Shingrix*
- currently have shingles
- are pregnant
- currently have moderate to severe illness

People do not consistently react to both doses of vaccine in the same way, and CDC encourages people to receive a second dose of shingles vaccine, even if a strong reaction occurs with their first dose.

If *Shingrix* is indicated for a person known to be pregnant, CDC recommends waiting until after the pregnancy to give the vaccine. If it is indicated for a person who is lactating, CDC recommends giving the vaccine and continuing to breastfeed as usual.

Shingles vaccination statistics

97%

reduction in occurrence of shingles among people 50 years and older

68-91%

vaccine effectiveness in preventing shingles in adults with weakened immune systems, depending on the condition

100%

of vaccine cost covered with Medicare Part D starting in 2023

For more vaccine information, go to immunize.utah.gov or scan the QR code!

