Shingles Vaccine

**What is shingles?**
Shingles (also known as herpes zoster) is a viral illness caused by reactivation of the chicken pox virus.

- The virus does not leave the body after chickenpox disease; it becomes inactive in the body’s nerve cells.
- The virus can become active later in life; and may occur years after chickenpox infection.
- Shingles is more common in older adults, in people who had chickenpox before 18 months of age, and in people with a weakened immune system.
- A person who has never had chickenpox can get chickenpox from coming into direct contact with the fluid of a shingles blister.
- Shingles is not spread from person to person.
- Symptoms include painful skin blisters on one side of the body.
- Shingles can lead to scarring, secondary bacterial infections, pneumonia, loss of hearing or vision, inflammation of the brain, and death.
- About 20% of those with shingles will experience a complication called post-herpetic neuralgia which involves burning, shooting or stabbing pain that can persist for months or even years.

**What does shingles vaccine contain?**
Shingles vaccine contains the varicella-zoster virus.

**Zostavax II™ also contains:**
- Sucrose, pork gelatin, sodium chloride, monosodium L-glutamate monohydrate, sodium phosphate dibasic, potassium phosphate monobasic, potassium chloride, urea.
- Trace amounts of neomycin and bovine calf serum.
- Manufactured on MRC-5 cells.

**How effective is the vaccine?**
51% effective against shingles. 
66% effective in reducing the incidence of long-lasting and severe pain associated with Shingles.

**How long does the protection last?**
- At least 7 years. Duration of protection beyond 7 years is unknown.
- The need for a booster is not currently established.

**Who should receive shingles vaccine?**
- The vaccine is indicated for adults 50 years of age or over only for purchase.

**Who should not receive shingles vaccine?**
- Persons who have a serious illness, with or without a fever, should delay immunization.
- Anyone who has had a life-threatening allergic reaction to the vaccine or any of its components.
- Anyone with leukemia, lymphoma or cancer affecting bone marrow or lymphatic system.
- Those with weakened immune systems from a disease or medical therapy unless they have a doctor’s permission.
- Persons under 50 years of age.
- Those who may be pregnant
- Persons with active untreated tuberculosis.
- Person taking certain antivirals.
- Anyone who has received blood products or immune globulin preparations in the last 11 months.
- Anyone who has had shingles in the last year.

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Before Vaccine is Given, Screening Includes These Questions:

- Are you well today?
- Are you age 50 years or older?
- Have you had a case of Shingles in the last 12 month? Including shingles on the eye.
- Have you had any vaccines in the last 4 weeks?
- Have you had a blood transfusion in the last 11 months?
- Do you have any allergies?
- Have you had any reaction to previous immunizations?
- Do you have any medical problems? Or weakened immune system?
- Do you take medications that lower your immune system?
- Are you pregnant, do you think you might be pregnant, or are you planning a pregnancy in the next 4 weeks?
- Are you pregnant or breastfeeding?
- Do you have a weakened immune system?
- Do you have active untreated tuberculosis?

When is the vaccine given

- As a single dose, for adults 50 years and over.
- Should be administered on the same day or separated by 28 days from other live vaccines.

What might be felt after receiving the vaccine?

Very Common (Greater than 10%):
- Soreness, redness or swelling at injection site.

Common (Between 1% and 10%):
- Warmth, bruising or itchiness at the injection site.
- Headache.

Uncommon (Between 0.1% and < 1%):
- Rash.

Very Rare (Less than 0.01%)
- Severe allergic reactions.

After Immunization

Canadian immunization guidelines recommend a 15 minute wait after immunization.

Seek medical attention if you become moderately or severely ill. Take your immunization record and tell them of the recent immunization.

Speak to a Public Health Nurse at Immunization as soon as possible about any moderate to severe reaction. Call (306) 766-7904.

Your immunization information is recorded in a computerized system. Information collected may be used to:

- manage your immunization records;
- notify you if you or your child needs an immunization; and
- monitor how well vaccines work in preventing vaccine preventable diseases.

Your immunization records may be shared with health care professionals in order to provide public health services; assist with diagnosis and treatment; and to control the spread of vaccine preventable diseases.