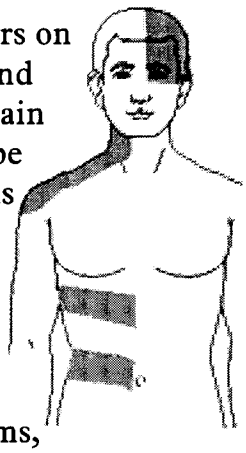
SHINGLES VACCINE

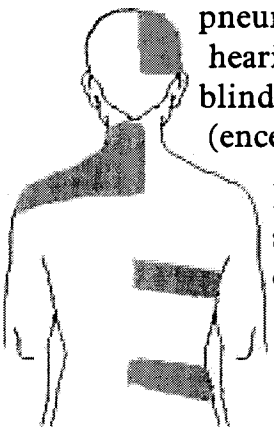
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1 What is shingles?

Shingles is a painful skin rash, often with blisters. It is also called Herpes Zoster.



A shingles rash usually appears on one side of the face or body and lasts a week to 10 days. Its main symptom is pain, which can be quite severe. Other symptoms of shingles can include fever, headache, chills and upset stomach. Very rarely, a shingles infection can lead to pneumonia, hearing problems, blindness, brain inflammation (encephalitis) or death.



For about 1 person in 5, severe pain can continue even after the rash clears up. This is called **post-herpetic neuralgia**.

Shingles is caused by the Varicella Zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox. Only someone who has had a case of chickenpox – or gotten chicken-pox vaccine – can get shingles. The virus stays in your body. It can reappear many years later to cause a case of shingles.

You can't catch shingles from another person with shingles. However, a person who has never had chickenpox (or chickenpox vaccine) could get **chickenpox** from someone with shingles. This is not very common.

Shingles is far more common in people 60 and older than in younger people. It is also more common in people whose immune systems are weakened because of a disease such as cancer, or drugs such as steroids or chemotherapy. At least 500,000 people a year in the United States get shingles.

2 Shingles vaccine

A vaccine for shingles was licensed in 2006. In clinical trials, the vaccine prevented shingles in about half of people 60 years of age and older. It can also reduce the pain associated with shingles.

A **single dose** of shingles vaccine is indicated for adults **60 years of age and older.**

3 Some people should not get shingles vaccine or should wait

A person should not get shingles vaccine who:

- has ever had a life-threatening **allergic reaction** to **gelatin**, the antibiotic **neomycin**, or **any other component of shingles vaccine**. Tell your doctor if you have any severe allergies.
- has a **weakened immune system** because of
  - HIV/AIDS or another disease that affects the immune system,
  - treatment with drugs that affect the immune system, such as steroids,
  - cancer treatment such as radiation or chemotherapy,
  - a history of cancer affecting the bone marrow or lymphatic system, such as leukemia or lymphoma.
- has active, untreated **tuberculosis**.

- is **pregnant**, or might be pregnant. Women should not become pregnant until at least three months after getting shingles vaccine.

Someone with a minor illness, such as a cold, may be vaccinated. But anyone who is moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting the vaccine. This includes anyone with a temperature of 101.3°F or higher.

4 What are the risks from shingles vaccine?

A vaccine, like any medicine, could possibly cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. However, the risk of a vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.

No serious problems have been identified with shingles vaccine.

Mild Problems

- Redness, soreness, swelling, or itching at the site of the injection (about 1 person in 3).
- Headache (about 1 person in 70).

Like all vaccines, shingles vaccine is being closely monitored for unusual or severe problems.

5 What if there is a moderate or severe reaction?

What should I look for?

- Any unusual condition, such as a high fever or behavior changes. Signs of a serious allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness. These usually occur within the first few hours after vaccination.

What should I do?

- **Call** a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away.
- **Tell** your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.
- **Ask** your doctor, nurse, or health department to report the reaction by filing a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) form.

  Or you can file this report through the VAERS web site at www.vaers.org, or by calling 1-800-822-7967.

  VAERS does not provide medical advice.

6 How can I learn more?

- Your provider can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Call your local or state health department. 1-888-767-4687
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
  - Call **1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO)**
  - Visit CDC's website at **www.cdc.gov/nip**

To allow medical care provider(s) accurate immunization status information, an immunization assessment, and a recommended schedule for future immunizations, information will be sent to the Michigan Care Improvement Registry. Individuals have the right to request that their medical care provider not forward immunization information to the Registry.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION
NATIONAL CENTER FOR IMMUNIZATION AND RESPIRATORY DISEASES

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