



Shingrix – a new shingles vaccine

A new herpes zoster (shingles) vaccine has just been approved for use in Canada.¹ It is an adjuvanted non-live recombinant zoster vaccine indicated for prevention of shingles in people aged 50 years of age and older.^{1,2}

Benefits:

- The adjuvant increases the immune response leading to longer lasting and greater immunogenicity to the herpes zoster virus. Clinical trials showed greater than 90% efficacy in adults aged 50 and older and in those aged 70 and older. No loss of efficacy during the 4-year follow-up period has been observed.^{1,2}
- It is not a live vaccine. Although there are limited data available on the use in immunocompromised adults 50 years of age or older, immunosuppression is not a contraindication for its use.²
- In clinical trials, Shingrix showed 89% efficacy in preventing postherpetic neuralgia in patients 70 years and older.²

Limitations:

- Requires 2 doses. The second to be administered 2-6 months after the first.^{1,2}
- Must be stored in refrigerator.²
- Injection site reactions may be more severe than with Zostavax®.³

Dosing:

- 0.5 ml IM – preferably in the deltoid. Administer at 0 and 2-6 months.²

Side effects^{1,2}:

- Most common: pain, redness, and swelling at the injection site. Most reactions in clinical trials were transient and mild to moderate in intensity, lasting fewer than 3 days.
- headache
- nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain
- muscle pain
- fatigue
- chills, fever

Availability:

- Available as of Jan 2, 2018⁴

Cost:

- Wholesale: \$132.35/injection⁵

Can Shingrix be given to someone who has previously received Zostavax®?

- Based on expert opinion, the U.S. Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) indicates that Shingrix can be administered to people who have previously received the Zostavax vaccine.⁶ Shingrix may be given as early as eight weeks after Zostavax [Evidence Level C], but would definitely be indicated if it has been more than five years since Zostavax was given, as most immunity is lost by then.⁷

References:

1. GSK Shingles Vaccine Shingrix Gets First Okay in Canada - Medscape - Oct 13, 2017.
2. Product monograph for Shingrix. GlaxoSmithKline Inc. Mississauga, ON L5N 6L4, 13 Oct 2017.
3. Canadian Pharmacist's Letter; December 2016; Vol: 32 Vaccines
4. Phone communication with GSK Customer Service Jan 2, 2018
5. McKesson Canada; c2018 [cited 2018 Jan 2] PharmaClik; Available from <http://clients.mckesson.ca>. Account required.
6. CDC. Shingles (Herpes Zoster) Vaccination Information for Healthcare Providers. Updated December 5, 2017. available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/shingles/hcp/index.html> Accessed January 12, 2018
7. Clinical Resource, Shingles Vaccine: FAQs. Pharmacist's Letter/Prescriber's Letter. December 2017