

# Herpes Zoster (Shingles) Vaccine

Vaccines help to prevent illness from bacteria and viruses. They reduce disease spread and can prevent complications and deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases.

## What is shingles?

Shingles, also known as herpes zoster, is a disease caused by reactivation of the varicella zoster virus. This is the same virus that causes chickenpox (varicella).

## How is shingles spread? Am I at risk?

People who have had chickenpox in the past can get shingles later in life because the virus stays in the body. You can't get shingles from someone who has shingles, however, if you have not had chickenpox or the chickenpox vaccine, you can get chickenpox from someone with shingles (only if you have direct contact with fluid from a shingles rash).

**People over the age of 50 and immunocompromised people are at greater risk for getting shingles.** People who have had shingles in the past and people who have previously received a live shingles vaccine can still develop shingles.

## What are the symptoms of shingles?

People with shingles commonly have a very painful skin rash with blisters on one side of the face or body. Before the rash, people sometimes have fever, headache, nausea, and chills.

## How can shingles be prevented?

**Get vaccinated if you are at risk.** It is non-live and cannot cause shingles. You should receive the shingles vaccine if you:

- Are not sure if you have had chickenpox or the chickenpox vaccine before.
- Have had shingles (wait at least one year).
- Received a live shingles vaccine (wait at least one year). The live shingles vaccine is no longer available in Canada.

## What are the benefits of the shingles vaccine?

The vaccine helps you build strong protection against the development of shingles. Vaccination can reduce pain for those who do still get shingles after receiving the vaccine, including lasting nerve pain in the areas you had shingles (also called post-herpetic neuralgia). Vaccination can also help to prevent other shingles complications such as bacterial skin infections, weakness, facial or muscle paralysis, loss of hearing, or vision problems leading to blindness.

## Can I get this vaccine for free?

The shingles vaccine is not available for free in Saskatchewan. People at risk for shingles should talk with their health care provider about purchasing a shingles vaccine. Some private insurance may cover some or all of the cost of the vaccine. **The Saskatchewan Ministry of Health does not reimburse any costs associated with privately purchased vaccines.**

## Who should *not* get the shingles vaccine?

- People who currently have shingles
- People who have had a serious or life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of shingles vaccine, or any ingredient in the vaccine
- People who are seriously ill, with or without a fever, should postpone immunization
- People who are pregnant

Talk to your health care provider if you have a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome.

## What are possible reactions to the shingles vaccine?

Temporary pain, redness, and swelling at the injection site are common reactions to the shingles vaccine. Other reactions may include tiredness, headache, fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, muscle pain, and joint pain. A neurological syndrome called Guillain-Barré syndrome may rarely occur after shingles vaccination.

You can treat a fever (at least 6 to 8 hours after immunization) if you are uncomfortable and not sleeping.



### TREATING FEVERS AND PAIN:

**All ages:** acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol®, Tempra®)

**6 months & older:** ibuprofen (e.g., Advil®, Motrin®)

**DO NOT give acetylsalicylic acid (ASA) to anyone younger than 18 years due to the risk of Reye's syndrome.**

It is recommended to stay on-site for at least 15 minutes after vaccination in case you develop anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a rare, life-threatening allergic reaction that can be treated. Symptoms may include hives, swelling of the tongue, lips, or throat, and difficulty breathing. Call 911 immediately if you develop anaphylaxis after you

have left the vaccination appointment.

### Who should I report reactions to?

Report any unexpected or adverse reactions to your doctor, nurse practitioner, pharmacist, or call 811 or 911 as soon as possible.

### What does the shingles vaccine contain?

SHINGRIX contains a non-infectious protein found in the varicella zoster virus (glycoprotein E powder) mixed with AS01B adjuvant suspension. The powder contains: dipotassium phosphate, polysorbate 80, sodium dihydrogen phosphate dihydrate and sucrose. The adjuvant contains: cholesterol, dioleoyl phosphatidylcholine, disodium phosphate anhydrous, potassium dihydrogen phosphate, sodium chloride, and water for injection.

### Important to Know

#### Storage:

SHINGRIX must be refrigerated before use. DO NOT FREEZE.

#### How to take:

Shingrix is given as a series of 2 injections into a muscle with 2 to 6 months between doses. It is recommended for some people to receive the second dose sooner than 2 months after the first. Your

health care professional will tell you when you should receive your second dose.

### Immunization Records

Immunization records are stored in many different places in Saskatchewan. Your pharmacy vaccination may not appear on [MySaskHealthRecord](#) or other registries. Visit [medSask.usask.ca](http://medSask.usask.ca) for tips for locating your immunization records.

**Keep printed immunization records** provided by the pharmacy in a safe place for future reference and bring them to each vaccination visit.

#### REFERENCES:

Product monograph for [SHINGRIX](#)

Canadian Immunization Guide (CIG): [Herpes zoster \(shingles\) vaccine](#)

CDC [Shingles \(Herpes Zoster\)](#)

ImmunizeBC [Shingles vaccine](#)

HealthLinkBC [Shingles vaccine](#)

CIG: [Anaphylaxis and other acute reactions following vaccination](#)

CIG: [Immunization in pregnancy and breastfeeding](#)