

VACCINE FACTS

Herpes Zoster (Shingles) (Zostavax®II)

The herpes zoster (HZ) vaccine protects against the shingles virus.



Who should get this vaccine? ¹

This vaccine is only publicly funded (free) for adults aged 65-70 years.

It is recommended (but not publicly funded) for:

- Adults ≥ 50 years without contraindications - the incidence and severity of Herpes Zoster (HZ) begins to increase with age beyond 50 years.
- Adults with history of HZ disease may have lower recurrence rates following vaccination. For this reason HZ vaccine may be given to those over the age of 50 with a history of HZ disease. Clients should wait at least 1 year between their last episode of shingles, and receiving the vaccine.
- Shingles vaccine should be administered to individuals eligible for the vaccine regardless of whether or not the person has a history of varicella infection. Nearly all Canadians eligible for shingles vaccine will have had prior varicella exposure, even if a diagnosis of varicella cannot be recalled. Therefore, the vaccine should still be offered to individuals to protect against herpes zoster.

How well does this vaccine work? ¹

- This vaccine significantly reduces the incidence of HZ and Post-herpetic Neuralgia (PHN) as well as the duration and severity of HZ.
- Research shows that protection following this vaccine remains up to 3 years following immunization.

Is there an alternative to this vaccine? ¹

At this time there are no other ways to prevent this disease (aside from vaccination). Hand washing and covering the mouth and nose while coughing/sneezing can help reduce the spread of disease.

There is another shingles vaccine available in Canada, however it is not currently publicly funded (free). Shingrix® is not a live vaccine so it can be given to people who are immunocompromised (from medication or a medical condition). This vaccine costs approximately \$150 per dose. 2 doses are required for full protection. For more information about this vaccine, please follow up with your Health Care Provider or local pharmacist.

Is this vaccine safe? ¹

The risk of a serious reaction or side effect from this vaccine is much less than the risk of HZ. If you experience any side effect worse than what is listed below, please seek medical advice and notify the health unit.

Common side effects of this vaccine ^{1,3}	Rare side effects ¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain, swelling and redness where needle was given• Fatigue• Myalgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anaphylaxis

Who should not receive this vaccine? ¹

- Adults with a history of HZ Ophthalmicus (shingles affecting the eye) should only be immunized in consultation with their ophthalmologist.
- Anyone with an allergy to any of the vaccine components or who has had an allergic or anaphylactic reaction to this vaccine.
- Any immunocompromised person – see health care provider for further recommendations.
- Anyone with blood disorders or cancers affecting the bone marrow, blood or lymphatic system.
- Anyone who is pregnant. Women should delay pregnancy 3 months after receiving this vaccine.
- Anyone with active, untreated tuberculosis (TB).
- Anyone who has had another live vaccine in the last 4 weeks.
- Anyone who has active HZ disease. Clients should wait at least 1 year between an episode of HZ and receiving the HZ vaccine
- Anyone who is suffering from severe acute illness.

What is in this vaccine? ¹

Zostavax®II	Also found in...
Neomycin	Antibiotics
Porcine gelatin	Lunch meats, frozen desserts
Bovine calf serum	Antibiotics/Anti-inflammatories
Monosodium L-glutamate	Tomatoes, parmesan cheese
Potassium chloride	Chocolate milk, yogurt
Potassium phosphate monobasic	Food additive
Sodium chloride	Table salt
Sucrose	Table sugar
Sodium phosphate dibasic	Laxatives, food additive-emulsifier, leavening agent for baked goods

We ask you to:

Check: Your child's yellow immunization card or health record.

Contact: Your child's family physician or health-care provider to obtain records, or to get missing vaccinations.

Share: Visit our website to share your immunization record with us.



References:

1. Canadian Immunization Guide. Part 4-Active Vaccines. Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada; 2019.
2. Canadian Immunization Guide. Part 1-Key Immunization Information. Table 1: Types and contents of vaccines available for use in Canada. Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada; 2019.