

VACCINE FACTS

Herpes Zoster (Shingles) Vaccine (Shingrix® - RZV)

Herpes Zoster (Zos) vaccine protects against shingles. Shingles is the reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus, which is the virus that causes varicella (chickenpox). Shingrix®, which is the Zos vaccine currently publicly funded (free) in Ontario, is a non-live recombinant vaccine (RZV).

There was a different Shingles vaccine available previously called Zostavax® II. Shingrix® vaccine is more effective than the previous Zostavax® II vaccine.

Who should get this vaccine? ¹

- This vaccine is recommended for everyone 50 years of age and older, however it is currently only publicly funded (free) in Ontario for adults aged 65-70 years. People wanting protection earlier than 65 years would need to purchase the vaccine through their local pharmacy. It may be covered by extended health plans.
- It is a 2-dose series (2-6 months between doses).
- It is recommended for:
 - Adults ≥ 50 years without contraindications - the incidence and severity of shingles begins to increase with age beyond 50 years.
 - Adults ≥ 50 years of age without contraindications who have previously been immunized with Zostavax® II, should be offered a 2-dose series of Shingrix®. Re-immunization with Shingrix® may be considered at least one year after Zostavax® II.

- Adults with history of shingles may have lower recurrence rates following vaccination. For this reason, Zos vaccine may be given to those over the age of 50 with a history of shingles. 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 (chickenpox) 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 shingles.

How well does this vaccine work? ^{1,3}

Studies have shown that the Shingrix® vaccine reduced the risk of shingles by 90% and the risk of post-herpetic neuralgia (the most frequent complication of shingles) by 88-91%. Waning of protection against shingles appears to occur at a slower rate among recipient of Shingrix® vaccine.

Is there an alternative to this vaccine?

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.

Is this vaccine safe?

The risk of a serious reaction or side effect from this vaccine is much less than the risk of shingles. 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 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.
- 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 a severe acute illness.

What is in this vaccine? ²

| Shingrix® | Also found in... |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Sucrose | Table Sugar |
| AS01 _B | AS01 _B is made of up of monophosphoryl lipid A (MPL), an immune-boosting substance isolated from the surface of bacteria, and QS-21, a natural compound extracted from the Chilean soapbark tree (<i>Quillaja saponaria</i> Molina) |
| Dipotassium phosphate | Imitation dairy creamers, dry powder beverages, mineral supplements, and starter cultures as an additive. |
| Polysorbate 80 | Ice cream, cosmetics |
| Sodium dihydrogen phosphate dihydrate | Toothpaste, evaporated milk, processed cheese, bowel prep |

We ask you to:

- Check:** Your child's yellow immunization card or health
- 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; Accessed January 2023.
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; Accessed January 2023.
3. Ontario Ministry of Health. Ontario Publicly Funded Shingles (Herpes Zoster) Immunization Program: Shingrix® Vaccine Information for Patients. (August 25, 2022).