



Shingrix[®] vaccine for people with weakened immune systems

From 1 September 2021, people who are 70 to 79 years of age, who have weakened immune systems will be offered the Shingrix vaccine to help protect them against shingles

What is shingles?

Shingles is caused by the same virus as chickenpox. Anyone who has had chickenpox can develop shingles and all older people will have had chickenpox in the past (even if they don't remember having it).

A localised rash usually appears a few days after some initial pain and tingling, lasting for about a week. The older you are, the more likely you are to have pain after the rash goes. Most people recover fully, but for some, the pain goes on for several months or even years – this is called post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN).

This is a particularly unpleasant condition with severe burning, throbbing or stabbing nerve pain. The vaccine reduces the risk of getting shingles and PHN.

Sometimes shingles develops in the eye and may also affect the eyelid. This can cause severe pain and can affect the vision.

Why am I being offered the Shingrix vaccine?

Shingrix, a non-live vaccine, is now available as an alternative to the current vaccine – Zostavax – which is not suitable for people who have weakened immune systems. Your doctor can advise whether this applies to you.

By having the Shingrix vaccination you will significantly reduce your chance of developing shingles. And, if you do go on to have shingles the symptoms are likely to be milder and the illness shorter, than if you had not had the vaccination.



How many doses will you need?

You will need 2 doses at least 8 weeks apart to get the best protection. Like most vaccinations, the vaccine will be given in your upper arm.

Side effects

Side effects are usually quite mild and don't last very long. The most common side effects, are pain where you had the injection, aching muscles, fatigue and headache. If the side effects persist for more than a few days you should discuss this with your GP or practice nurse.

Like all licensed vaccines, the Shingrix vaccine has been thoroughly tested and meets UK safety standards. It has been used extensively in several countries including the United States of America and Canada.

Who is eligible for the vaccine?

You become eligible for the shingles vaccine as you turn 70 and remain eligible up to the age of 79.

If you are worried about shingles speak to your GP. You can read more information about the shingles vaccine here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-vaccination-for-adults-aged-70-or-79-years-of-age-a5-leaflet

Or visit: www.nhs.uk/conditions/shingles/

How to get the vaccination

If you are eligible, contact your GP practice to make an appointment to have your vaccination.

People who shouldn't have the vaccination

If you've had a severe reaction to any of the substances that go into the vaccine, you shouldn't have it. Again, your GP will advise you.

If you miss a vaccination

If you missed one of your shingles vaccines, you can still have them up until your 80th birthday.

Please contact your GP practice to make an appointment. It's important that you do not leave it too late to have the vaccinations.

Further information

Speak to your GP or practice nurse, for more information before or after you've had the vaccination.

You can also visit [shingles vaccine on NHS.UK](http://shingles.vaccine.on.nhs.uk).

You can read the shingles vaccine Shingrix patient information leaflet here: www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/12054/pil#graf