



# Shingles (Herpes Zoster) Vaccine

## What is it?

Shingles vaccine protects against shingles, an infection caused by the chickenpox virus. This infection happens only in people who have been exposed or had chickenpox in the past. For more information, see [Facts About... Shingles](#).

In Canada, Shingrix® vaccine is the only vaccine authorized for use to protect against shingles (also known as herpes zoster). Zostavax® II vaccine was discontinued in 2023.

Shingrix® is **free** for people between the ages of 65 and 70 years old.

## How effective is the shingles vaccine?

The shingles vaccine is more than 90% effective at preventing shingles and 88-91% effective at preventing post herpetic neuralgia (a painful nerve condition people can get after having shingles).

## Who should get the vaccine?

- People 65 to 70 years old for free.
- People aged 65 to 70 years who previously paid for Zostavax® II vaccine can get the Shingrix® vaccine for free.

The shingles vaccine may be recommended for others at risk for shingles, but the vaccine would need to be purchased. Talk to your health care provider or check with your private health insurance if you are not able to get the vaccine for free.

## What is the schedule for the vaccine?

The Shingrix® vaccine is given in 2 doses, 2 to 6 months apart.

## Are there side effects with the vaccine?

- Shingles vaccine is safe and well tolerated. Side effects are usually mild and last a short time.
- The most common side effects are redness, pain and swelling where the needle was given.
- If you think you are having a serious reaction, see a health care provider right away. Any new or important changes in your health after a vaccine should be reported to a health care provider and the Durham Region Health Department.

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# Who should NOT get the vaccine?

You should talk with a health care provider before getting the vaccine if you:

- Have had a reaction to any vaccine, or to any part of a vaccine.
- Are pregnant, trying to get pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Are sick with a high fever or infection worse than a cold. You should wait until you feel better before getting the vaccine.
- Have had a shingles infection within the last year. You should wait 1 year before getting the shingles vaccine.

For more information on contents of the vaccine, refer to the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#).

## Don't forget to update your immunization record!

After you get a vaccine, update your immunization record (yellow card). Keep your records in a safe place.

January 16, 2025

905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | [durham.ca/health](https://durham.ca/health)

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

