



Shingles Vaccine for Older Adults

Protect yourself against shingles. Adults aged 50 and older should get the shingles vaccine.

Shingles (herpes zoster) is a viral disease of nerves and skin that causes a blistering rash and pain in the area of the rash. It usually strikes older adults. It is caused by the chickenpox virus. If you had chickenpox when you were younger, you can get shingles because the virus lives in your nerves even after you recover.

All people aged 50 or older should get two doses of the shingles vaccine called Shingrix (recombinant zoster vaccine). This will help prevent shingles and its complications.

Get the second dose 2 to 6 months after the first dose. If you have a weakened immune system, you can get the second dose 1 to 2 months after the first dose.

You should get Shingrix even if in the past you:

- Have already had shingles
- Received a previous shingles vaccine called Zostavax*
- Received varicella (chickenpox) vaccine

If you have had shingles in the past, Shingrix can help prevent you from getting it again. There is no specific length of time that you need to wait after the acute stage of shingles is over before you can get Shingrix.

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Medicare coverage for the vaccine

Medicare Part B does not cover the shingles shot. Starting in 2023, Medicare prescription drug plans ([Part D or Medicare Advantage plans](#)) do cover the shingles vaccine without out of pocket costs. [Contact your Medicare drug plan](#) for more information.

Medicaid

The shingles vaccine could be covered by Medicaid. Contact your insurer for more information.

Vaccines are available at:

- Most drug stores
- Some health care providers

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The AGS Health in Aging Foundation is dedicated to improving the health, independence, and quality of life of all older people. We aim to empower older adults and caregivers to actively participate in their health care and decision-making.

DISCLAIMER: This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other healthcare provider. Always consult your healthcare provider about your medications, symptoms, and health problems. November 2024

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