

Shingrix® Vaccine

Herpes zoster virus (Shingles)

The **Shingrix® vaccine** is provided free for Yukon residents aged 65 to 79 years of age to prevent shingles disease and its associated complications. The same virus that causes chicken pox also causes shingles. Although shingles and chickenpox are caused by the same virus, they are not the same illness. Chickenpox is the primary infection, historically a childhood illness. Shingles results from a reactivation of the herpes zoster virus, most frequently among older adults and immunocompromised persons.

The **Shingrix® vaccine** is a two-dose series, administered 2 to 6 months apart.

Shingles can cause:

- A rash occurring in a single strip around one side of the body
- Pain, itching, or tingling in area of rash
- Fever
- Headache
- Chills
- Upset stomach

Complications from shingles may include:

- Post-herpetic neuralgia (severe, long-lasting nerve pain)
- Vision or hearing loss
- Scarring
- Bacterial infection
- Nerve damage
- Pneumonia
- Brain inflammation (encephalitis)

Why is the shingles vaccine recommended?

Nearly 1 in 3 people will develop shingles in their lifetime. It is also more common in those with weakened immune systems. Both the risk of developing shingles and the severity of the infection increase sharply after the age of 50.

The treatment options for shingles and its complications have limited effectiveness.

Shingrix® is 90% effective at reducing the risk of developing shingles and lessens the severity of the infection if it does develop.

Possible side effects of the vaccine:

Common reactions to the immunization may include redness, tenderness, and swelling at the injection site. Some may develop a fever, headache, fatigue, or digestive problems. These are generally mild and last 1 to 2 days.

Side effects of the immunization are easily relieved by:

Applying a cold or damp compress to the site and administering a pain-relieving medication such as acetaminophen if needed. Talk to health care provider if your symptoms are severe or last longer than 48 hours.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any immunization because there is a rare possibility of developing a severe allergic reaction, which is treatable at the clinic. This happens to less than 1 in 1 million people. If it happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number.

Talk to your health care provider for more information.

Yukonimmunization.ca