



Why You Don't Want Shingles *By Angela Felix, DO*

Shingles, or herpes zoster, is a condition that occurs when the dormant chickenpox virus, varicella zoster, is reactivated in the nerve tissues. It is most common in individuals age 60 plus. Early signs of shingles include tingling and localized pain often followed by a painful rash that appears as a stripe of blisters on the trunk of the body.

The pain can continue long after other symptoms have receded.

Post-herpetic neuralgia is pain that persists beyond four months after the shingles rash has resolved. It can be described as burning, stabbing, or sharp and be constant or intermittent. Frequently there is significant pain caused by just light touch to the area that is affected. Those at risk for post-herpetic neuralgia are older adults who experienced severe pain and rash from the shingles. The pain from this type of neuralgia is often chronic, but there

are medications that can help: oral medications Gabapentin and Lyrica as well as topical medications with capsaicin and lidocaine.

The New Shingles Vaccination

Shingrix® is a relatively new vaccine for shingles that became available in the United States earlier this year. It is an inactivated vaccination, meaning it will not cause an outbreak of shingles. While the previous vaccine option called ZOSTAVAX® was about 50% effective, Shingrix is about 90% effective in preventing a shingles outbreak. Shingrix is:

- recommended for adults 50 years and older, although some insurance may only pay for it once individuals turn 60.
- a two-part vaccination -- one given immediately and the second one given two to six months later.
- recommended for adults even if they have had shingles in the past, because it can reoccur.

- recommended even if Zostavax was given in the past.

Side effects that most commonly occur from the vaccination are: fatigue, muscle aches, headache, shivering, fever, upset stomach, and pain at the injection site.

While you can receive the Shingrix vaccination with minor illnesses like a cold, it should not be given to those:

- experiencing a moderate or severe illness.
- with a temperature above 101.3.
- who have had a severe reaction to the vaccination in the past.
- currently experiencing a shingles outbreak.
- with lab testing showing no immunity to chicken pox (no testing of this is required prior to the vaccination).

Talk to your doctor about getting vaccinated for shingles. Thunderbird Internal Medicine does carry the Shingrix vaccine.

Better Hearing: An Investment in Yourself

Almost half of people age 65 + have hearing loss. Unfortunately, people take an average of seven years to seek treatment. If you suspect you may have hearing loss, schedule an appointment with our audiologist by calling 602-938-6960.

LOCATIONS

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