Protect yourself from the pain of shingles

Easy Read 2018 version

This leaflet has some difficult words and ideas in it
We have made this leaflet as accessible as possible. There are still some difficult ideas in it. You might need to ask a friend, family member, carer or health professional to help you read this booklet.

Leaflets with the green thumbs up symbol on the cover have a small number of difficult words and ideas in them.

Leaflets with the orange thumbs up symbol on the cover have a few difficult words and ideas in them.

Leaflets with the red thumbs down symbol on the cover have quite a lot of difficult words and ideas in them.

If you see the symbol on the left it means there is a difficult medical word. This is a word that you might hear when you visit your doctor. You might also see it on letters and leaflets you get from your doctor.
Virus. This is what we call the tiny bugs that can cause illnesses like flu.

Vaccine. This means a treatment that helps to stop people catching a disease.

Shingles can be very painful and is more common among older people.

What causes shingles?

Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox.

After you get better from chickenpox, some of the virus stays in your body. The virus can then make you ill again later in life.

The shingles vaccine protects you by helping your body fight the virus.
Symptoms. This is the word we use to describe how an illness makes people feel.

What are the symptoms of shingles?

Shingles infects an area of skin and causes very painful blisters that are filled with fluid.

The blisters can burst and will eventually crust over and heal.

These blisters usually appear on part of one side of the body, usually on the chest, but sometimes they also affect the head, face and eyes.
How long does shingles last?

The shingles rash usually appears a few days after the pain begins and lasts for about a week, but the pain can last much longer.

Sometimes, the pain can last for several months or even years. The shingles vaccine reduces the chance of this happening.

How do you catch shingles?

You cannot catch shingles from someone else. It is caused when the chickenpox virus makes you ill again.

If you have shingles you can give chickenpox to anyone who has not had chickenpox yet.

If you think you have shingles call your GP and make an emergency appointment to get treatment.
Who will get the vaccine?

70 to 79 years old

People can get the vaccine if they are between 70 years old and 79 years old.

Contact your GP to find out if you should have the vaccine.

How well does the vaccine work?

• If you have the vaccine you are much less likely to get shingles.

• If you do catch shingles it will be worse if you have not had the vaccine.

Where is the vaccine given?

The vaccine will be given as a jag in your upper arm.
How safe is the vaccine?

All vaccines are tested to make sure they are safe.

I have had shingles before, should I still get the vaccine?

Yes. Tell your GP or practice nurse if you’ve had shingles before.

When will I get the vaccine?

Contact your GP practice and make an appointment to get the vaccine.

Do I need the vaccine every year?

No. You only get the vaccine once and you do not need to get it again.
Immune system. This is what we call a person’s natural ability to fight off illness and disease.

Are there reasons why I should not have the vaccine?

You should not have the shingles vaccine if you:

- have a weakened immune system. Ask your hospital specialist or GP if this affects you
- have had a bad reaction to vaccines before

Most other medicines can be taken at the same time as the shingles vaccine.

Ask your GP if you are taking medicines and have any questions.

The shingles vaccine contains a very small amount of pork gelatine. This comes from the bodies of pigs.
If you do not want to have the vaccine with pork gelatine in it this means you will not be vaccinated against shingles.

**Side effects.** This is what we call it when some people get ill after having immunisations or medicine.

**Will there be any side effects?**

Side effects are usually quite mild and do not last very long. The most common side effects include:

- headaches
- redness or tenderness where the injection was given.

If you have side effects that last for more than a few days, make an appointment to see your GP or practice nurse.
Where can I get more information?

Talk to your practice nurse or GP.

Call the NHS inform helpline on **0800 22 44 88**
(textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88) open every day from 8 am to 10 pm and also provides a translation service.

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www.healthscotland.com and

www.nhsinform.scot/shingles

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