

Why is this vaccination being offered to me?

Shingles is uncomfortable and for most people lasts for a few weeks. It appears as a rash, which develops into fluid-filled blisters that can be painful and itchy. Most people recover, but some go on to develop chronic nerve pain called post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN). The risk of developing PHN increases as someone gets older. In some people, shingles can also affect the eye (known as ophthalmic shingles), which in a small number of people can lead to long-term damage to the eye.

Vaccination is available at your local medical practice all year round and is usually one vaccination appointment. This may help reduce the chances of you developing shingles, and even if you do develop shingles then the disease may affect you less severely.



Are there any side effects with the vaccination?

Like all vaccines and medicines, vaccines are associated with certain side effects, although not everybody gets them. Your healthcare professional can advise on this.

Where can I find more information?

- Before deciding whether you want to be vaccinated or not, ask your healthcare professional for more information about this national immunisation programme (incl. eligibility).
- Shingles vaccination within the current shingles immunisation programme is not suitable for people with certain medical conditions. Your healthcare professional will be able to advise on this.
- Visit NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk/conditions/shingles

This website is totally independent from MSD and is signposted here for your information only



www.shinglesaware.co.uk

Website developed and fully funded by the pharmaceutical company MSD

Reporting of side effects: If you get any side effects with any medicines, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the medicines package leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk> or by searching for MHRA Yellow Card in the Google Play or Apple App Store. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of medicines.

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In your 70s? Don't let shingles disrupt your routine



You may be eligible for a vaccination under the shingles national immunisation programme –

Ask your GP or practice nurse for more information

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How likely am I to get shingles?

It's estimated around **1 in 4** people will have at least one episode of shingles during their life. As we get older, we are much more likely to develop shingles due to changes and natural weakening of the immune system.

Who is eligible for the shingles national immunisation programme?

If you are aged between 70 and 79, you may be eligible for a vaccination as part of the national shingles immunisation programme.

What about people who are not aged 70 to 79?

People under 70 will become eligible for the shingles national immunisation programme from their seventieth birthday. People aged 80 and over are not part of the current shingles national immunisation programme, because the shingles vaccination seems to be less effective in this age group.

What causes shingles?

Shingles is caused by the reactivation of the chickenpox virus. After people have chickenpox – usually as a child – the virus travels up a nerve root and lies dormant (inactive inside you), near the

spine. Later in life the virus can reactivate and cause shingles. Why this happens is not completely clear, but the immune system weakens as we get older, making it more likely for the virus to reactivate.

Can shingles be treated?

Shingles and its complications can be difficult to manage. The treatment options vary from person to person, depending on the area affected by shingles. It is important to see your GP as soon as possible after the rash occurs, as treatments, if needed, should be started as soon as possible. Your GP may prescribe painkilling and/or anti viral medication.

If I've had shingles before can I still get vaccinated?

Unfortunately some people do get shingles more than once, although the risk is low. Vaccination as part of the shingles national immunisation programme is still recommended for those who have had shingles in the past. The vaccine does not treat shingles or the pain associated with shingles.

Can I catch shingles from someone with chickenpox?

Shingles can NOT be caught from someone with chickenpox. Shingles is caused by the reactivation of your own chickenpox virus, so you cannot catch it from anyone else. It is possible to catch chickenpox

from someone who has shingles, if you have never had chickenpox. If you have shingles you are contagious until the last blister has dried and scabbed over. Until then, you should avoid contact with at-risk groups of people to whom chickenpox could pose particular danger. This includes pregnant women, people with a weak immune system (e.g. someone with HIV or AIDS) and babies less than one month old.



If I've never had chickenpox can I get shingles?

You can only get shingles if you have had chickenpox. However, chickenpox can be so mild in some people, they may only have a few spots and not be aware of it. Even such a mild infection can leave you at risk of shingles later in life.