

Quick Answers: Recombinant Zoster Vaccine, rZV (Shingrix)

Zoster (herpes zoster/shingles) is a reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus in an individual who has previously had varicella disease (chickenpox). There is an increasing incidence of zoster reactivation with age; with a lifetime risk of approximately 1 in 3. For those aged over 85 years, the risk is 1 in 2.

Up until July 2022, Zostavax was the funded vaccine for shingles, from August 2022 as stock of Zostavax is depleted, Shingrix will be the replacement funded vaccine.

Who is eligible for funded Shingrix?

Shingrix is funded for those patients 65 years of age only (i.e. for the 12 months following the 65th birthday). The second dose is given 2–6 months after the first dose and can be given at 66 years of age.

Are people over the age of 65 years funded for Shingrix?

No, Shingrix is only funded for 12 months after the 65th birthday, including a second dose given 2–6 months after the first dose.

Can Shingrix be given early?

Shingrix is only funded for those aged 65 years only. For private purchase, Shingrix is approved for use from the age of 50 years, due to age and comorbidities, and from 18 years, for those at increased risk of zoster, due to immunocompromise.

Can Shingrix be given as a non-funded vaccine?

Yes, Shingrix can be prescribed by a GP, and given as a non-funded vaccine from age 50 years, and from 18 years for those at increased risk of zoster due to immunocompromise. There is no upper age limit. Non-funded Shingrix must be ordered from HCL.

How many doses of Shingrix does a patient require?

Shingrix is a two-dose course. The second dose is given 2–6 months after the first dose. If a longer interval occurs between the two doses, there is no need to restart the course.

Will a Shingrix booster be required?

There is currently no recommendation for a Shingrix booster. Two doses provide good protection for at least 8 years, with no evidence of waning.

How effective is Shingrix?

Shingrix showed efficacy against both zoster and post herpetic neuralgia of over 90% in participants aged over 50 years and over 70 years, including those with comorbidities, maintained at 84% for at least 7 years.

What if the patient cannot recall having varicella disease or vaccination?

It is not necessary to ask about a history of varicella disease or vaccination. Adults can have Shingrix regardless of whether they can recall having had varicella disease or vaccination.

What if the patient has had Zostavax? Can they still have Shingrix?

A patient who has received Zostavax can receive Shingrix. It is recommended to wait a minimum of 12 months between Zostavax and Shingrix vaccines. Two doses of Shingrix are still required, regardless of Zostavax history.

Can other vaccines be given at the same time as Shingrix?

Yes, provided they are given at a separate site. The exception to this is Novavax Nuvaxovid COVID-19 vaccine or FludQuad influenza vaccine, which are also adjuvanted vaccines. A 3–day interval is recommended between these vaccines and Shingrix.

Can a person who has had shingles have Shingrix?

It is recommended to wait 12 months following a shingles episode before having Shingrix, since the zoster episode will have boosted immunity. This can be shortened to 3 months if they are at high risk of developing zoster again, for example, if severely immunocompromised or likely to undergo planned immunosuppressive therapy.

Can an immunocompromised patient receive Shingrix?

Yes, Shingrix is not a live vaccine, therefore it can be given to an immunocompromised individual.

Can a patient on zoster antivirals receive Shingrix?

Yes, because Shingrix is not a live vaccine, it can be given to patients on zoster antivirals.

Who cannot receive Shingrix?

Shingrix is contraindicated to individuals with a history of hypersensitivity to a previous dose, or to any component of the Shingrix vaccine. As with all vaccines, it should not be given to a patient who is acutely unwell or febrile with a temperature $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$. Due to a lack of data for Shingrix in pregnancy, please contact IMAC if Shingrix is indicated for a pregnant individual.

What are the common responses to Shingrix?

Shingrix is generally well tolerated. Common responses include pain at the injection site, myalgia and fatigue, headache, shivering, fever and gastrointestinal symptoms. These are usually mild to moderate and last 1–3 days.

References:

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