



## Shingles vaccine? – all year round!

Public Health England

As you get older shingles can be very painful and really affect your quality of life.

**NHS**

Are you **70-75** or **78-79** years of age?

Then you are eligible for your **shingles vaccination**

Speak to your GP practice today about having your shingles vaccination

Immunisation The safest way to protect children and adults

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### The shingles immunisation programme: evaluation of the programme and implementation in 2018.

We have developed a new checklist and an improved portfolio of patient facing materials to help you to implement the shingles programme and administer the vaccine to your eligible patients.

The first evidence from the evaluation of the shingles immunisation programme<sup>[1]</sup> demonstrates a marked impact on GP consultations for shingles and post herpetic neuralgia (PHN) in those individuals eligible for vaccination, and therefore emphasises the importance of this programme.

Patients can now be offered the shingles vaccine (Zostavax®) as soon as they reach eligible age (70 or 78). Previously in 2017/18, in order to ensure sufficient vaccine supply, practices were asked to maintain the existing approach with the majority of patients being immunised in the autumn months during the flu season. However, the shingles vaccine should now be offered to patients throughout the year as they become of eligible age, preferably from April onwards to align with increased central vaccine availability.



<sup>[1]</sup> Amirthalingam, G., et al. Evaluation of the effect of the herpes zoster vaccination programme 3 years after its introduction in England: a population-based study. *Lancet Public Health*. 2017 Dec 21. pii: S2468-2667(17)30234-7. doi: 10.1016/S2468-2667(17)30234-7. [Epub ahead of print].

## The vaccine should be offered to:

- patients aged **70 years, on or after their 70th birthday**
- patients aged **78 years, on or after their 78th birthday**
- patients who were **eligible for immunisation in the previous programme years but have not yet been vaccinated against shingles**. These are anyone in their 70s who was born on or after 2/9/1942, and 79 year olds (until their 80th birthday)



## Use the shingles calculator

Care must be taken **not to miss** the patients who have already turned 70 or 78 years of age since 2 September 2017.

Patients remain eligible until their 80th birthday, the programme does not offer patients the vaccine after they become 80 due to the reducing efficacy of the vaccine as age increases<sup>[2]</sup>.

By the end of August 2017 just under half of eligible 70 and 78 year olds had been vaccinated against shingles<sup>[3]</sup>. We are seeing a year on year decline in shingles vaccine uptake, but hope that simplifying eligibility will assist in helping practices to identify eligible patients (including those who have missed out previously).

<sup>[2]</sup> Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (2010) Statement on varicella and herpes zoster vaccines 29 March 2010: [webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/www.dh.gov.uk/ab/JCVI/DH\\_094744](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/www.dh.gov.uk/ab/JCVI/DH_094744)

<sup>[3]</sup> Herpes zoster (shingles) immunisation programme 2016 to 2017 evaluation report: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/herpes-zoster-shingles-immunisation-programme-2016-to-2017-evaluation-report](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/herpes-zoster-shingles-immunisation-programme-2016-to-2017-evaluation-report)

<sup>[4]</sup> Shingles vaccine (Zostavax®) PGD template: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-vaccine-zostavax-patient-group-direction-pgd-template](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-vaccine-zostavax-patient-group-direction-pgd-template)

### Patient information materials

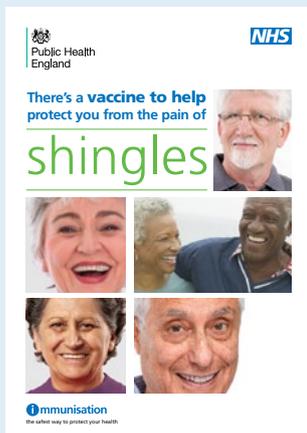
The shingles vaccine leaflet and poster can be ordered free of charge from the DH/PHE Orderline:



Poster (weblink 12)  
Product code:2942856D



Poster (weblink 12)  
Product code:2942856B



Leaflet (weblink 11)  
Product code: 2942856



Social media banner 1 (weblink 9)



Postcard (weblink 11)  
Product code: 2942856C



Social media banner 2 (weblink 10)

## Use our new checklist!

This checklist has been designed to help immunisation practitioners plan their shingles immunisation programme. You can download and print it from [weblink 13](#).

### 1. Prepare your shingles information pack and order your free resources from the health and social care orderline: Tel 0300 123 1003 or visit the health and social care orderline.

- Bookmark the [PHE shingles vaccination programme webpage](#)
- Green Book chapter – [shingles chapter](#)
- PGD [shingles live vaccine PGD](#) (All PGDs must be appropriately authorised before use)
- Shingles wheel poster – product code: 2942856D, [who's eligible for shingles vaccine?](#)
- Information document for HCWs, [shingles information document](#)
- Leaflet – product code: 2942850A, [shingles vaccination leaflet](#)
- Shingles vaccination postcard – product code: 2942856C, [shingles postcard](#)
- Consider including shingles information on patient TV systems in waiting rooms, [download the two banners](#) to use on your digital displays.

### 2. Check your knowledge

- Complete the shingles learning in the vaccine preventable diseases module of the new [e-learning for health immunisation course](#).
- Share learning with all those involved in the programme, including reception staff booking appointments, consider using the [national slideset for shingles](#).

### 3. Plan your programme: remember shingles vaccination can now be offered all year round. Plan to offer the vaccine as soon as your patient has turned 70 or 78 years old.

- Review your surgery vaccine uptake for 2016/17 and identify patients not vaccinated but previously eligible (anyone in their 70s who was born on or after 2nd September 1942, use the [shingles eligibility calculator](#) if in doubt)






**Name of shingles vaccination lead:**

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- Bookmark the PHE shingles vaccination programme web page: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/shingles-vaccination-programme](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/shingles-vaccination-programme)
- Green Book chapter – [shingles chapter](#)
- PGD [shingles live vaccine PGD](#) (All PGDs must be appropriately authorised before use)
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**2** Check your knowledge

- Complete the shingles learning in the vaccine preventable diseases module of the new e-learning for health immunisation course [www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/immunisation/](http://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/immunisation/)
- Share learning with all those involved in the programme, including reception staff booking appointments, consider using the national slideset for shingles: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-vaccination-training-slideset-for-healthcare-professionals](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-vaccination-training-slideset-for-healthcare-professionals)



Shingles infection is not related to season but it is related to age so don't let your patients wait. The shingles vaccine may be their best birthday present this year.

- Inform your patient participation group of previous years vaccine uptake and renewed focus for this year
- Identify your eligible patients, including those previously eligible but unvaccinated
  - i. Identify patients reaching 70 or 78 years of age during each month and those previously eligible (born after 1st September 1942)
  - ii. Identify eligible housebound patients/patients in care homes
- Ensure in-date authorised PGD available and that a prescriber has prepared a PSD and a protocol if non-registered staff are administering the vaccine
- It is recommended that immunisers have a paper copy of the [shingles PGD](#) available when discussing vaccination with their patients and checking their medical history. This will allow easier identification of patients for whom the vaccine may be contraindicated
- Ensure eligible patients are flagged on the system to promote opportunistic vaccination (for example at chronic disease clinics, routine appointments, flu clinic)
- Each month/quarter, update your list of patients still eligible on the shingles vaccination planner and feedback progress made at practice meetings
- Remember to add your requirement for shingles vaccine in with your childhood vaccine order through ImmForm. Aim to hold no more than two weeks' worth of stock
- Celebrate your success

## Vaccine supply

Simplification of the eligibility criteria creates challenges for PHE around managing the supply of vaccine from central stock to the NHS. Please ensure **every effort is made to vaccinate throughout the year as people become of eligible age**, which will support us in this task.

Zostavax<sup>®</sup> can continue be ordered online via the ImmForm website ([weblink 4](#)).

It is recommended that practices hold no more than two weeks' worth of stock. The shelf life of this vaccine can sometimes be shorter than anticipated, so taking a little and often approach to vaccine ordering is recommended. Please make sure that locally held stocks of vaccine are rotated in fridges so that any wastage is minimised.

Where possible, orders for Zostavax<sup>®</sup> through ImmForm should be placed with those for childhood vaccines to ensure an efficient delivery service is maintained.

As we have seen such a positive impact from the immunisation programme we want to make this better still. Please help us in achieving this by taking every opportunity to offer shingles vaccine to eligible patients **throughout the year** to help protect as many elderly people as possible from this devastating illness. Please make use of the free patient information materials (details above) to help to promote this important programme to encourage eligible individuals to come forward.

## Inadvertent vaccination of immunosuppressed individuals

### Clinical guidance

We continue to receive reports of immunosuppressed individuals receiving the vaccine inadvertently. Zostavax<sup>®</sup> vaccine contains live herpes zoster virus and should not be given to certain patient groups.

Due to the complex clinical exclusion criteria for this vaccine, we recommend that immunisers have a paper copy of the shingles PGD<sup>[4]</sup>, found at [weblink 1](#), available when discussing vaccination with their patients and checking their medical history.

This will allow easier identification of patients for whom the vaccine may be contraindicated. Detailed clinical guidance on administering shingles immunisation is contained in Chapter 28a of immunisation against infectious disease (the Green Book), [weblink 2](#). Information for healthcare professionals is available at [weblink 3](#).

Zostavax<sup>®</sup> is a live attenuated vaccine which is contraindicated in individuals with certain immunosuppressive conditions and/or on specific immunosuppressive therapies ([link to GB chapter](#)). PHE are aware of several reports of inadvertent vaccination of immunosuppressed patients, some of which have resulted in severe outcomes (including one fatal infection) due to extensive replication of the vaccine virus strain. Healthcare professionals are reminded that most eligible adults can be immunised without complication and an assessment should be made prior to vaccination. Older adults are at increased risk of shingles and its complications and evaluation of the programme has demonstrated a significant impact on shingles and PHN consultations in its first three years at [weblink 6](#)<sup>[5]</sup>. It is therefore important that all those who can benefit from the vaccine are appropriately immunised.

It is estimated that around 3% of eligible cohorts are immunosuppressed and contraindicated to receive the vaccine. It is important for all healthcare professionals to be familiar with the contraindications and special precautions associated with the shingles vaccine before proceeding with immunisation. Where there is any doubt about the functional integrity of the immune system, immunisation should be deferred until secondary care specialist advice has been sought. Additionally, patients who have undergone immunosuppressive chemotherapy or radiotherapy for malignant disease should be clinically assessed by an appropriate specialist for their suitability to receive the vaccine.

Detailed information on the use of the shingles vaccine and its contraindications and special precautions can be found in the disease specific chapter of the Green Book at [weblink 2](#), PHE's Information for healthcare professionals guidance at [weblink 7](#), or in the manufacturers summary of product characteristics (SmPC) at [weblink 8](#).

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<sup>[5]</sup> Amirthalingam G, Andrews N, Keel P, Mullett D, Correa A, de Lusignan S, Ramsay M. Evaluation of the effect of the herpes zoster vaccination programme 3 years after its introduction in England: a population-based study. *Lancet Public Health*. 2018 Feb;3(2):e82-e90. doi: 10.1016/S2468-2667(17)30234-7. Epub 2017 Dec 22.

## Importance of healthcare professionals

We know that the healthcare professional is the most trusted advocate for vaccination. The PHN that many patients suffer from can be very debilitating and disruptive and this can go on for many months, even years. Pain can be difficult to manage and quality of life dramatically impaired. This disease can affect sight, sleep, confidence and independence very negatively, stopping people from enjoying all the things they usually do. We want to improve the uptake of the vaccine and reduce the burden of this disease and help protect everyone eligible from the pain of shingles.

Public Health Wales have produced an excellent short film about shingles and how it affects quality of life, called 'Protect yourself from the pain of shingles', seen at [weblink 5](#).

Remember to advise patients that having their routine shingles vaccine is a good way of looking after their health so that they can get on with enjoying life without the pain of shingles.

### Web links

- web link 1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-vaccine-zostavax-patient-group-direction-pgd-template>
- web link 2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-herpes-zoster-the-green-book-chapter-28a>
- web link 3 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-vaccination-guidance-for-healthcare-professionals>
- web link 4 <https://portal.immform.dh.gov.uk/Logon.aspx?returnurl=%2f>
- web link 5 <https://vimeo.com/216182963>
- web link 6 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5846879/>
- web link 7 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-vaccination-guidance-for-healthcare-professionals>
- web link 8 <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/25927>
- weblink 9 <https://publichealthengland-immunisati.box.com/s/ox4qi4gy0zxywcm17oi116incqjvskbq>
- weblink 10 <https://publichealthengland-immunisati.box.com/s/m7yinrge0bi4qqke6zb60a2mn8z5vfye>
- weblink 11 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-vaccination-for-adults-aged-70-or-79-years-of-age-a5-leaflet>
- weblink 12 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-vaccination-eligibility-poster>
- weblink 13 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-vaccination-guidance-for-healthcare-professionals>