

# Protect yourself against **Shingles**

A **FREE VACCINE** is now available  
for people aged 70–79 years old



Shingles can be  
very painful and lead  
to serious, long-term  
complications

Talk to  
your doctor or  
nurse about the  
**FREE** Shingles  
**VACCINE**



Vaccinations don't  
stop at childhood.

[www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au)

## **What is shingles?**

Shingles is a painful blistering rash caused by reactivation of the varicella zoster virus-the same virus that causes chicken pox.

Sometimes pain in the affected region can be severe and prolonged. When it lasts more than three months it is called post herpetic neuralgia.

Other complications may include scarring, skin infections, loss of vision or hearing, pneumonia and/or neurological complications.

## **Am I really at risk of shingles?**

One in three people will develop shingles in their lifetime. As a person gets older, the risk of getting shingles and neurological complications increases.

## **Who can have a free shingles vaccine?**

All people aged 70 years old, with a five- year catch up program for people aged 71–79 years old until 31 October 2021.

Those who are not eligible for a free vaccine can purchase it with a prescription from their general practitioner or vaccination provider.

## **Where can I get the shingles vaccine?**

The vaccine is available from your general practitioner

## **If I've had shingles before should I still get vaccinated?**

Discuss with your general practitioner. Vaccination is still recommended for those who have had shingles infection in the past. However, you should wait at least a year between an episode of shingles and having the vaccine.

## **Is the vaccine safe?**

The shingles vaccine is safe for most people aged 70–79 years of age, including those people with chronic diseases.

Certain people may be unable to have the vaccine, particularly those who have a very weakened immune system. Please speak with your general practitioner for advice. The most common vaccine side effects occur around the injection site including redness, swelling and/or pain. Occasionally, headache, itching or a rash around the injection site may occur.

## **How many vaccine doses do I need?**

A single dose of shingles vaccine is currently recommended.