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*“Working Together for a Healthier Community”*

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## **-BULLETIN-**

### New Vaccine Released for Shingles

#### What is Shingles?

Shingles, also called herpes zoster or zoster, is a painful skin rash caused by the varicella zoster virus (VZV). VZV is the same virus that causes chickenpox. After a person recovers from chickenpox, the virus stays in the body. Usually the virus does not cause any problems; however, the virus can reappear years later, causing shingles. Herpes zoster is not caused by the same virus that causes genital herpes, a sexually transmitted disease.

#### Who gets Shingles?

Anyone who has recovered from chickenpox may develop shingles, including children. However, shingles most commonly occurs in people 50 years old and older. The risk of getting shingles increases as a person gets older. People who have medical conditions that keep the immune system from working properly, like cancer, leukemia, lymphoma, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), or people who receive immunosuppressive drugs, such as steroids and drugs given after organ transplantation are also at greater risk to get shingles.

#### Is there a Vaccine to Prevent it?

Yes. Zostavax, made by Merck, was licensed May 25, 2006 by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in people 60 years old and older to prevent shingles. Zostavax does not treat shingles or post-herpetic neuralgia (pain after the rash is gone) once it develops.

#### Does CCHD Offer the Vaccine?

Yes. Persons who wish to get the vaccine can make an appointment in one of the [Health Services Unit's immunization clinics](#).

#### How Much does it Cost?

The price of Zostavax is \$175 - \$180, depending on the type of appointment scheduled. At the present time Medicare does not cover the cost of Zostavax.

Links and information >

**Resources:**

**Shingles (Herpes Zoster)**

General Questions about shingles (from Chickenpox virus)

National Immunization Program

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/shingles/dis-faqs.htm>

**Herpes Zoster Vaccine (Shingles)**

Frequently asked questions about Zostavax

National Immunization Program

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/shingles/vac-faqs.htm>

**Shingles: An Unwelcome Encore**

By Evelyn Zamula

FDA Consumer magazine

May-June 2001 issue (article contains revisions made in June 2005)

[http://www.fda.gov/FDAC/features/2001/301\\_pox.html](http://www.fda.gov/FDAC/features/2001/301_pox.html)

**NINDS Shingles Information Page**

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/shingles/shingles.htm>

**Shingles Interactive Tutorial**

Medline Plus

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/shingles/htm/index.htm>