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FDA Approves New Shingles Vaccine

The Food and Drug Administration recently approved a new vaccine which will provide significantly more protection against shingles, a blistering skin eruption that typically affects people over age 50. Shingrix, produced by GlaxoSmithKline, is the first new shingles vaccine in more than a decade and the second to ever be approved.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, ACIP, came out with three recommendations for the new vaccine which will be formalized in the early weeks of 2018. ACIP advised that Shingrix, a two dose vaccine, be recommended for people starting at 50. The committee also advised that Shingrix should be the preferential vaccine over Zostavax. If people have already received the Zostavax, they should also receive the Shingrix. Shingrix is a two dose series. For people who have received the Zostavax vaccine, the Shingrix series can be administered two months later.

Shingles occurs when the chickenpox virus reawakens later in life. Almost all adults over age 40 carry the chickenpox virus, and the older we get, the more the risk of getting shingles climbs. According to the CDC, the infection strikes about 1 million people in the U.S. each year and nearly one in three adults will experience a bout of shingles in their lifetime. The two to four weeks of shingles, marked by a blistering and painful rash on one side of the body is difficult to bear, but one in five people with shingles develop postherpetic neuralgia which is nerve pain that can linger for months or even years.

The Shingrix vaccine offers 97% protection in people in their 50's and 60's and roughly 91% protection in those in their 70's and 80's according to clinical trials. This new vaccine contains a nonliving viral particle as opposed to Zostavax which contained a live herpes zoster virus. Side effects of Shingrix include pain during injection, injection site redness and swelling, muscle pain and headache.

For more information about the Shingrix vaccine, contact Lisa Bohrer, R.N.,BC, Community Health and Wellness Manager for PharmaCare at 301-689-2909 or [lbohrer@3ipc.com](mailto:lbohrer@3ipc.com). The Shingrix vaccine is available at all seven retail pharmacy locations of The PharmaCare Network. Information is also available at the Centers for Disease Control at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

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