



Common Questions About the Shingles Vaccine (Zostavax®)

What is shingles?

Shingles is a painful skin rash, often with blisters. A shingles rash usually appears on one side of the face or body and lasts a week to ten days. The main symptom of shingles is pain, which can be quite severe. For about 1 person in 5, severe pain can continue even after the rash clears up.

Am I at risk for developing shingles?

Shingles is caused by the varicella-zoster virus – the same virus that causes chickenpox. If you have had chickenpox, or received the chickenpox vaccine in the past, you are at risk for developing shingles.

What is the shingles vaccine and does it work?

The shingles vaccine may prevent shingles or reduce the risk of prolonged pain associated with shingles. It is recommended that adults 60 years of age and older receive a single dose of shingles vaccine in their life time. In clinical trials, the vaccine prevented shingles in about half of people 60 years of age and older.

Should I receive the shingles vaccine?

You should talk with your doctor to determine whether to receive this vaccine.

Who should not receive the shingles vaccine or should wait to be vaccinated?

Some people should not receive the vaccine. You should not get shingles vaccine if you:

- Have ever had a severe allergic reaction to gelatin, neomycin or any component of the shingles vaccine
- Have a weakened immune system because of HIV/AIDS, cancer treatment or medications that affect the immune system
- Have a history of cancer that affects bone marrow or the lymphatic system (like leukemia or lymphoma)
- Have active, untreated tuberculosis
- Are pregnant or might be pregnant

If you have a fever ≥ 101.3 F on the day of your shot, you will be asked to receive the vaccine at another time.

Can I receive the shingles vaccine at my doctor's office?

Yes, if your physician prescribes the shingles vaccine for you, you may receive the shot at a University of Michigan primary care clinic.

What is the cost of the shingles vaccine at a University of Michigan clinic?

The cost of the shingles vaccine is \$236 plus an administration fee of \$28.

Will my insurance cover the cost of the shingles vaccine?

The best way to find out whether you have coverage for the vaccine is to contact your insurance company directly. Ask how much they will pay and how much you will be expected to pay for this vaccine. Your insurer might ask you to provide the following codes: CPT-4 Codes 90736 (vaccine) and 90471 (administration), diagnosis code V04.89 or V05.8.

Shingles vaccine is not covered by Medicare Part B, the part of Medicare that covers doctors' fees. The administration fee **is** covered under Medicare Part B. The vaccine is covered by most Medicare Part D pharmacy plans but coverage and co-pays vary. **If you have Medicare Part D pharmacy coverage, you must have your Part D card available at the time of your visit so that your plan can be appropriately billed for the vaccine.** The following table may help you to understand coverage questions for your particular situation:

Patients Age 60-65:	Coverage for this vaccine will depend on your individual health insurance plan. Contact your insurance company to determine your coverage for the vaccine and administration fee.		
Patients 65 and Older with Medicare:	Medicare Part B ONLY	Medicare Part B AND Medicare Part D Pharmacy Plan	Medicare Part B AND Secondary Insurance
Administration Fee (\$28)	Covered (Part B)	Covered (Part B)	Covered (Part B)
Shingles Vaccine (\$236)	No coverage	Coverage varies by Part D plan and current spending—contact your Part D plan to determine your coverage	Coverage depends on immunization benefit through your secondary insurance. Contact your insurer to determine coverage.
Uninsured Patients 60 and Older:	If you have no insurance, you may self pay at the time of the visit or you may apply for coverage through the Merck Vaccine Assistance Program (a program sponsored by the vaccine manufacturer to assist patients). Please ask the patient representative at your clinic for application materials. Approval must be received from Merck before the vaccine is given.		

Please be aware: If you choose to receive the shingles vaccine through a University of Michigan clinic, you will be asked to assume responsibility for any cost not covered by your insurance or pharmacy plan.

If you do not have health insurance or pharmacy coverage for the vaccine, you may be able to receive the medication through your local county public health department for a small administrative fee or lower price. Eligibility guidelines, fees and vaccine availability differ by county. Please call your county health department to find out what's available to you:

Livingston County: #517.546.9850 Washtenaw County: #734.544.3066 Wayne County: #734.727.7100