

ZOSTAVAX  
HERPES ZOSTER VACCINE

# FOXHALL

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**Z**OSTAVAX is a newly licensed vaccine from Merck & Co. pharmaceuticals. This new vaccine was formulated to reduce the risk of shingles in people 60 years of age and older. It is a live attenuated virus vaccine given as a single subcutaneous injection. Zostavax works by helping the immune system protect you from getting shingles and the painful symptoms associated with it.

In clinical studies the vaccine was shown to prevent shingles by about 50% in all patients studied; however, for individuals 60-69 years of age it reduced the incidence by 64%. For those who developed shingles even though they were vaccinated, the Zostavax vaccine significantly reduced the severity and duration of pain from shingles. The vaccine was not studied as a treatment for shingles or in persons with a previous history of shingles.

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HERPES ZOSTER  
VACCINE IS A  
NEW VACCINE  
FORMULATED  
TO REDUCE  
THE RISK OF  
SHINGLES

### What is shingles?

Shingles is caused by a virus called herpes zoster, the same virus that causes chicken pox. Once a person has had chicken pox, the virus can live in one or more nerve roots in the body for many years. Currently more than 90% of adults in the United States have had chicken pox (varicella) and are at risk for shingles. For reasons that are not fully understood, the virus may become active and reappear in the form of shingles, which is estimated to affect two in every 10 people in their lifetime.

Shingles is a rash that usually appears on one side of the body. The rash begins as a cluster of small red spots that often blister. The rash can be very painful as a result of intense inflammation and often neuralgia (nerve pain). Shingles rashes usually last up to 30 days, and for most people the pain associated with the rash lessens as it heals. However, a further complication called postherpetic neuralgia occurs in about one-third of the population over 60 with herpes zoster. This sometimes debilitating neuropathic pain syndrome can persist for months or even years after the initial rash resolves.

It is estimated that more than one million new cases of herpes zoster will occur in the United States each year, and that half of those will be in people 60 years old and older. The incidence and severity of herpes zoster infection, as well as its complications, increase with age.

### What are the side effects of the Zostavax vaccine?

Side effects from the Zostavax vaccine are generally mild. The most common side effects are headache and a reaction at the injection site, which may include redness, pain, swelling, itching, or warmth. These symptoms are usually short in duration, and generally mild. A varicella-like rash at the injection site occurred in less than 1% of the recipients in the clinical study. Your medical provider should be contacted if any medical condition you have gets worse or if you develop any new or unusual symptoms after receiving the Zostavax vaccine.

### Who should not receive the Zostavax vaccine?

The vaccine is not indicated for persons with the following conditions:

- History of allergic reaction to gelatin, neomycin, or any other component in the vaccine
- Persons with immune system suppression due to leukemia, lymphomas of any type, or other malignant neoplasms affecting the bone marrow or the lymphatic system.
- HIV with AIDS or other clinical manifestations of infection
- Active untreated tuberculosis
- Treatment with cytotoxic chemotherapy or systemic corticosteroids

### What should you tell your health care provider before you receive Zostavax?

Please tell your health care provider if you:

- Have had a past history of shingles
- Are caring for a newborn infant or a pregnant family member who has not had chicken pox or been vaccinated for chicken pox
- Are taking medications that may weaken your immune system
- Have any serious medical conditions
- Have any allergies to medications or other components

Please be advised that due to increased development and production costs, this vaccine is priced higher than most standard vaccines we offer. Also please note that this vaccine is not always covered by health insurance, so please check with your insurance carrier about your coverage.