

Protect yourself



from the pain of shingles

For people aged 70 to 79 on
1 September 2022



Shingles can be very painful and is more common among older people.

The shingles vaccine can reduce your risk of getting shingles or, if you do get shingles, the symptoms are usually milder.

This leaflet describes shingles and the benefits of the vaccine.



If you were aged 70 to 79 on 1 September 2022, you will be contacted when you're eligible to be immunised.



If you are showing symptoms of COVID-19 before your vaccination, please contact your health professional to reschedule your appointment. More information on the symptoms can be found at:

www.nhsinform.scot/covid19



the benefits of **getting the vaccine**

Helps you
stay healthy
as you get
older.

Helps protect
you from
getting
shingles.

Reduces your risk
of experiencing
long-term pain
from shingles if
you get it.

For more information or advice, speak to your health professional or visit www.nhsinform.scot/shingles

What causes shingles?

Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. Most adults in Scotland have had chickenpox. When you recover from chickenpox your body destroys most of the virus, but some stays in your body's nervous system. The virus can then affect you again later in life. This can happen when your immune system has been weakened by age, stress, illness or certain treatments that can reduce your immunity.

The World Health Organization states that the two things that have had the biggest impact on the world's health are clean water and vaccines.

**Vaccines
work**

The shingles vaccine helps to protect you by boosting your immunity.



How common is shingles?

Most adults in Scotland have had the chickenpox virus. One in four go on to develop shingles, and it's much more common in older adults.

What are the symptoms of shingles?

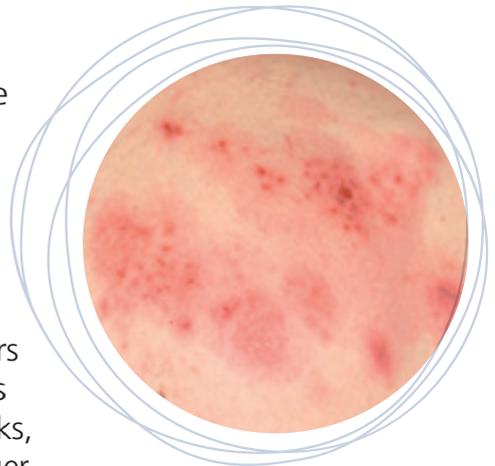
When you get shingles, it usually affects a specific nerve and the area of skin around it, causing a rash with very painful blisters and often long-term pain.

These blisters usually appear on a specific part of one side of the body, usually on the chest, but sometimes they also affect the head, face and eyes. This can cause severe pain and even blindness.

The shingles rash usually appears a few days after the pain begins and lasts between 2 and 4 weeks, but the pain can last much longer.

And the older you are, the more likely you are to have long-lasting pain. In some cases, the pain persists for several months or even years – this is called post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN). One in five people with shingles go on to develop longer-lasting pain.

This pain can be very difficult to treat, but the shingles vaccine reduces the risk of getting shingles and the long-term painful side effects.



How do you get shingles?

It's caused when the chickenpox virus (often caught when you were younger) reactivates from its dormant state and affects your nerves later in your life. We do not know exactly why, but older people might be at higher risk of developing shingles because their immunity (protection against infection and disease) is lower. Immunity is also lower in those who are stressed, have a condition that affects the immune system, such as cancer, or who are taking some medications, for example long-term steroids.

You cannot get shingles from someone who has chickenpox or shingles. But if you have shingles blisters, someone who has not had chickenpox (usually a child) can get chickenpox from you.

Anyone who thinks they may have shingles should contact their GP practice for an urgent appointment. Early treatment reduces the risk of long-term pain.

Who can get the shingles vaccine?

People aged 70 to 79 on 1 September 2022 can get the shingles vaccine. You will be contacted when you're eligible to be immunised. People who have a severely weakened immune system (sometimes known as severely immunosuppressed) should ask their health professional for advice on getting an appropriate vaccine. See page 6 for more information.

To find out more visit:
www.nhsinform.scot/shingles

How does the vaccine work?

The shingles vaccine contains a weakened form of the virus that causes shingles. Because it's weakened it does not cause the illness. It helps to build up your immunity to the virus, so your body will fight it off more easily if it affects you again. This can reduce your risk of developing shingles or, if you do get shingles, it can make the symptoms milder. People who have severely weakened immune systems may be offered a different type of vaccine which is not live. Your health professional will be able to advise on which vaccine is right for you.

The vaccine will reduce your risk of developing shingles. If you do go on to have shingles, the symptoms will be milder and will not last as long as they would have if you had not had the vaccine.



Vaccines
work

How is the vaccine given?

Like most vaccines, it will be given as an injection in your upper arm. During vaccination, strict infection prevention and control measures will be in place. The vaccine is given as one dose, unless you have a severely weakened immune system in which case you will be given a second dose at least 8 weeks after your first dose.



You can get the shingles vaccine at any time of the year.

Is there anyone who should not get the vaccine?

There are some people who cannot get the shingles vaccine. For example if you have had a severe reaction to any of the ingredients in the vaccine or to a previous dose of the chickenpox vaccine.

Most medications can be taken at the time you get the shingles vaccine. Your health professional will tell you whether any of this applies to you and can answer any questions you have about this.

If you do not have a severely weakened immune system, the shingles vaccine you'll be offered contains a very small amount of pork gelatine. Gelatine is a common and essential ingredient in many medicines, including some vaccines. It's your choice whether or not you get the shingles vaccine.

For more information on vaccine ingredients, and links to the product information leaflets, visit www.nhsinform.scot/shingles



A health professional will check that you can have the vaccine.

Will there be any side effects?

Side effects from having the vaccine are usually quite mild and do not last very long. The most common side effects are redness, itching, pain, swelling, bruising, a rash, warmth and hardness around the injection site as well as muscle pain, fatigue, headache and pain in the arm or leg.

If you have side effects that last for more than a few days, speak to a health professional.

You can report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines by visiting **www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard** or by calling the Yellow Card hotline on **0800 731 6789** (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday).

Visit **www.nhsinform.scot/shingles** or call **0800 22 44 88** (available from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday) for more information.

How safe is the vaccine?

All medicines, including vaccines, are tested for safety and effectiveness before they're allowed to be used. Their safety continues to be checked while in use.

I've had shingles before, should I still get the vaccine?

Even if you've already had shingles, you could still get it again. The vaccine will reduce your risk of getting shingles again. Or, if you do get shingles, it can reduce how serious the symptoms will be. It's important to let your health professional know if you've had shingles before.

When will I get the vaccine?

You can get the vaccine at any time of year if you were aged 70 to 79 on 1 September 2022.

Can the shingles vaccine be given at the same time as other vaccines?

Speak to your health professional about getting other vaccines at the same time so they can advise what is best for your individual circumstances. You should ideally wait seven days between the COVID-19 vaccination and shingles vaccination.



For more information, or to get any advice about the shingles vaccine, talk to your health professional or visit www.nhsinform.scot/shingles

How the NHS handles your information

You have rights in relation to the access and the use of your personal health information. For more information about your rights or how the NHS uses your personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) visit:

www.nhsinform.scot/confidentiality

www.nhsinform.scot/data-protection

www.informationgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/use-of-your-immunisation-data



Translations



Easy read



BSL



Audio



Large print



Braille

For more information, or for translations and other formats:



www.nhsinform.scot/shingles



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Information correct at time of publication.
Please visit www.nhsinform.scot/shingles for
the most up-to-date information.

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