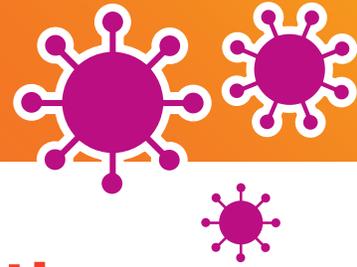


# Shingles Media Factsheet

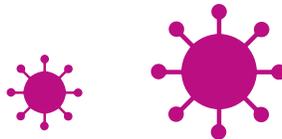


## What is Shingles?

- Shingles is caused by the **reactivation of the varicella zoster virus (VZV)**, the same virus that causes chickenpox.<sup>1</sup>
- **99% of those over 50 are infected** with the virus.<sup>1</sup>
- For reasons that are not fully known, the virus **can reactivate years later** causing shingles.<sup>1</sup>
- Shingles typically presents as a **painful, itchy rash** that develops on one side of the body and **can last for two to four weeks**.<sup>2,3</sup> Other symptoms of shingles, outside of the rash, include fever, headache and sensitivity to light.<sup>1</sup>
- **Complications of shingles include** postherpetic neuralgia (PHN), scarring, vision complications, secondary infection and nerve palsies.<sup>1</sup>

## Aging and the Immune System

- The risk and severity of shingles increases with age because **aging causes a natural decline in the body's VZV immunity**.<sup>1</sup>
- As immune function declines with age, there is a **reduction in the number and function of immune cells** to prevent the reactivation of the virus that causes shingles.<sup>4,5</sup>
- A person's **risk for shingles increases after 50 years of age**, as does the risk of complications.<sup>1</sup>
- Age-related decline in immunity is recognized as an **important risk factor** for shingles.<sup>1</sup>
- The individual lifetime risk of developing shingles is approximately **one in three** and, for those who live to 85, it is **one in two**.<sup>1,6</sup>



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4. Chlibek R, Smetana J, Pauksens K, Rombo L, Van den Hoek JAR, Richardus JH et al. Safety and immunogenicity of three different formulations of an adjuvanted varicella-zoster virus subunit candidate vaccine in older adults: a phase II, randomized, controlled study. *Vaccine*. 2014 Mar;32(15):1745-53.

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