



QUESTIONS

Q & A

FOR PARENTS

ANSWERS

ZOSTER VACCINES

ACVIP : 2020 - 2021

What is Herpes Zoster (HZ)?

- ❖ Herpes Zoster (HZ) or Shingles usually presents as painful skin rash with vesicles occurring in groups. This rash usually appears on one side of the face or body, generally does not cross the midline and lasts for 2 to 4 wks. Its main symptom is pain, which can be quite severe. Other symptoms can include fever, headache and burning sensation of rashes.
- ❖ The most common complication of shingles is prolonged and recurrent pain, occurring at the site of rash, even after the rash clears up. This is called postherpetic neuralgia (PHN) and can last for months or years. The pain from PHN can be severe and debilitating.
- ❖ Zoster is caused by the Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV), the same virus that causes chickenpox. Only someone who had chickenpox can develop zoster. The virus remains dormant in the body and many years later, when immunity is low due to old age or disease, can present as zoster.
- ❖ Zoster is far more common in people 50 yrs. of age and older. It is also more common in people whose immunity has declined.

Which are the vaccines available against HZ and who should receive the vaccine?

2 vaccines are available against HZ.

1. Live, attenuated zoster vaccine (LZV): This vaccine is recommended in individuals 50 years of age and older as a single dose of 0.65 ml given subcutaneously.
2. Recombinant vaccine (RZV). This vaccine is recommended in individuals 50 years of age and older in a 2-dose schedule at 0 and 2-6 months (2nd dose given 2-6 months after the 1st dose). RZV is the preferred vaccine. However, LZV may be preferred for persons allergic to recombinant shingles vaccine or prefers live shingles vaccine, or if recombinant shingles vaccine is not available.

The RZV vaccine can be administered to individuals who have had HZ in the past and who have received the LZV in the past.

There is no maximum age for getting the RZV.

These vaccines are presently not available in India.

How safe are these vaccines?

Redness, soreness, swelling, or itching at the site of the injection and headache can happen after live shingles vaccine. Headache may occur in some. Rarely, the live vaccine can cause herpes-like rashes.

Who should receive this vaccine?

All adults age 50 years and older, irrespective of previous HZ infection or receipt of LZV.

Who should not receive this vaccine?

This vaccine should not be given to those who had a severe allergic reaction after a previous dose of RZV/LZV or to any component of the vaccine or, currently have shingles. LZV should not be administered to individuals with weak immune systems.

For more information, please contact your doctor.

