

# SHINGLES MATTERS

Shingles is a painful viral infection caused by the same virus as chickenpox, which may reactivate years later to cause a blistering rash and intense pain, typically on one side of the torso.<sup>1</sup>



## Protecting Those Most Vulnerable

Certain groups are more vulnerable to shingles, including those who are:

- Older adults (especially those 50 years and older)
- People with chronic conditions (like diabetes or respiratory illnesses)
- Immunocompromised (e.g., people undergoing chemotherapy, organ transplant recipients, or those with HIV)

These individuals may have a higher chance of complications, such as postherpetic neuralgia — a long-lasting pain after the rash has healed.<sup>1</sup>



## About the Shingles Vaccine

The shingles vaccine is a powerful tool in preventing this painful condition. The shingles vaccine is shown to be over **90% effective** in preventing shingles in adults 50 years and older.<sup>2</sup> However, only **36.3% of older Canadians** have received at least one dose of the vaccine.<sup>3</sup>



## Accessing the Shingles Vaccine

In Canada, several provinces and territories (e.g., PEI, Ontario, Quebec, Yukon) offer the shingles vaccine for free to older adults and high-risk individuals, such as those with weakened immune systems. However, eligibility criteria and age requirements vary by region.

Publicly funded vaccine programs are crucial in ensuring all Canadians, especially those most at-risk, have equitable access to the shingles vaccine, reducing health disparities by removing cost barriers and promoting public health nationwide.

## CALL TO ACTION

If you're 50 or older, protect yourself from the pain of shingles by speaking to your primary care provider about the shingles vaccine. Don't let this preventable disease impact your health. Encourage your loved ones to do the same—early action can make all the difference.

For more information, visit the [Public Health Canada website](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/vaccines-and-immunization/shingles-vaccine.html) or contact your local health department.

**#ShinglesAwarenessWeek #OurShinglesStories**

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### References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, June 27). Clinical Overview of Shingles (Herpes Zoster). <https://www.cdc.gov/shingles/hcp/clinical-overview/index.html>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2024, July 19). Shingles vaccines. <https://www.cdc.gov/shingles/vaccines/index.html>
3. Statistics Canada. (2024, February 5). Shingles in Canada: A public health perspective. Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-003-x/2024001/article/00002-eng.htm>