

# ADVISORY: Herpes Zoster Vaccine

September 20, 2016



## Attention: Local Healthcare Providers

### Publicly Funded Herpes Zoster Immunization Program

On September 15, 2016, Ontario introduced herpes zoster (shingles) vaccine for individuals 65 to 70 years of age, as part of Ontario's publicly funded immunization program. Also, until December 31, 2016, individual who are born in 1945 are also eligible for this vaccine.

**What is herpes zoster?** The varicella zoster virus (VZV) causes two distinct clinical syndromes: varicella (chicken pox), and zoster (shingles). Herpes zoster (HZ) infection arises from the reactivation of latent varicella zoster virus from a previous chicken pox infection.

**Who is eligible for the publicly funded herpes zoster immunization program?** Individuals 65 to 70 years of age are eligible as part of Ontario's publicly funded immunization program. NOTE: Between September 15, 2016 and December 31, 2016, individuals born in 1945 (i.e., those who have turned or will be turning 71 years of age in 2016), will be eligible for publicly funded herpes zoster vaccine through a one-time catch-up program. This one-time catch up program will end on December 31, 2016, after which individuals ages 65 to 70 years will be eligible for publicly funded herpes zoster vaccine. Individuals aged 65 to 70 will be able to receive herpes zoster vaccine through their primary care provider. Primary care providers are encouraged to identify and offer the herpes zoster vaccine to their eligible patients.

**How do I order herpes zoster vaccine?** Healthcare providers are able to order herpes zoster vaccine through Peterborough Public Health using the updated Vaccine Order Form (call to have the form faxed to you or check on-line at [www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca))

**Who should not receive the herpes zoster vaccine?** Zostavax® II is a live attenuated vaccine and should not be given to:

- Individuals with primary and acquired immunodeficiency states due to conditions such as: acute and chronic leukemias; lymphoma; other conditions affecting the bone marrow or lymphatic system; immunosuppression due to HIV/AIDS
- Individuals on immunosuppressive therapy (including high-dose corticosteroids)
- Individuals with a history of anaphylaxis after previous administration of the vaccine
- Individuals with proven immediate or anaphylactic hypersensitivity to any component of the vaccine or its container, including gelatin or neomycin
- Individuals with active herpes zoster
- Individuals with active untreated tuberculosis
- Individuals that are pregnant

Administration of HZ vaccine should be postponed in persons suffering from severe acute illness, however, immunization should not be delayed because of minor acute illness, with or without fever. Further information on who should not receive the herpes zoster vaccine can be found in the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#) or by visiting [www.healthycanadians.gc.ca](http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca) and searching for keywords "Canadian Immunization Guide"..

**How should herpes zoster vaccine be stored?** In order to ensure optimal protection, herpes zoster vaccine must be maintained at a temperature between +2°C to +8°C from the time of manufacture until the vaccine is administered to individuals. This temperature must be monitored and maintained at all times.

**Where can I get more information?** For more information on Ontario's publicly funded immunization program including herpes zoster vaccine, please visit: [www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/immunization](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/immunization) or call Peterborough Public Health Vaccine Preventable Disease Nurses at (705) 743-1000, ext. 131.

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