

December 5, 2017

COM # 2017 - 009

Dear provider of pharmaceutical services,

Receive kind greetings from PharmPix. This communication summarizes an Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) update on the recommendations for the use of herpes zoster vaccine.

Herpes zoster, also known as shingles, is caused by the varicella zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), almost 1 out of every 3 people in the United States (US) will develop shingles in their lifetime. The CDC also estimates that there are approximately 1 million cases of shingles each year in the US.

Anyone who has recovered from chickenpox may develop shingles; even children can get shingles. However, the risk of shingles increases with age. About half of all cases occur in people 60 years old and older. In addition, it is of note that, among persons who experience herpes zoster, older persons are much more likely to experience complications.

Vaccination offers durable effective protection against the burden of this disease. Now, it is recommended that people 60 years old and older should get shingles vaccine if no contraindication is present. They should get the vaccine whether they recall having had chickenpox. In addition, even if they have had shingles, they can still receive the vaccine to help prevent future re-occurrences of the disease.

On October 20, 2017, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Shingrix™, a non-live, recombinant subunit vaccine, for adults 50 years old and older to prevent shingles. For more information regarding Shingrix™, its Full Prescribing Information is available at: <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/biologicsbloodvaccines/vaccines/approvedproducts/ucm581605.pdf>.

After this approval, the advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted in favor of the following recommendations for the use of Shingrix™ for the prevention of shingles:

Signs and Symptoms

Shingles is a **painful rash** that most commonly occurs in a single stripe around either the left or the right side of the body.

Other symptoms of shingles can include: fever, headache, chills, and stomach upset.

Complications

The most common complication of shingles is **post-herpetic neuralgia**. In addition, shingles may lead to serious complications involving the eye. Very rarely, shingles can also lead to pneumonia, hearing problems, blindness, encephalitis or death.



1. Shingrix™ is recommended for the prevention of shingles and related complications for immunocompetent adults aged 50 years and older.
2. Shingrix™ is recommended for the prevention of shingles and related complications for immunocompetent adults who previously received Zostavax™ (herpes zoster live vaccine).
3. Shingrix™ is preferred over Zostavax™ for the prevention of shingles and related complications.

It is of note that Zostavax™ is approved by the US FDA for adults ages 50 years and older, but recommended by the ACIP for adults aged 60 years and older.

The new ACIP recommendations will be forwarded to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director for review and approval. Once approved, the final recommendations will be published in a future Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). At that time, the ACIP recommendations will become an official policy. You can keep track of the MMWR at: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/index.html>. In addition, you can find more information regarding ACIP vaccine recommendations and guidelines in the following link: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/index.html>.

On PharmPix we are compromised with the health and wellness of our insured. It is our priority to offer high quality services and to promote practices for health promotion and diseases prevention. If you have any doubt or wish to have more information regarding this document, you can call us to 787-522-5252, extension 138.

Regards,

Pharmacy Department

References:

- CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends Shingrix as the preferred vaccine for the prevention of shingles for adults aged 50 and up | GSK. (2017). Gsk.com. Retrieved from: <https://www.gsk.com/en-gb/media/press-releases/cdc-s-advisory-committee-on-immunization-practices-recommends-shingrix-as-the-preferred-vaccine-for-the-prevention-of-shingles-for-adults-aged-50-and-up/>
- Lowes, R. (2017). ACIP Narrowly Recommends Shingrix for Shingles Over Zostavax. Medscape. Retrieved from: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/887626?pa=3RDzA%2BduW4TdinvgVJh%2BaCd3kDif3ZhqZeSyt%2B2IffGjceHKN3Y1Ge45rt6g3R%2BDNFsYxDuz%2Fz2hge3aAwEFsw%3D%3D>
- Shingles Vaccination | What You Should Know | CDC. Cdc.gov. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/shingles/public/index.html>

