

## Shingrix vaccination in diabetes

Shingles is a skin condition, otherwise known as Herpes Zoster, caused by reactivation of the varicella zoster virus (VZV). VZV infection is typically first acquired in childhood at the time of a bout of chickenpox.

Shingles is associated with a painful rash that typically lasts 3-5 weeks. The rash is sometimes associated with fever, headache and fatigue. After the rash has healed one in five people develop ongoing nerve pain which can last for months or years, a condition called postherpetic neuralgia (PHN). PHN is much more common and more severe in the elderly .

The lifetime risk of developing shingles is 30%. Shingles is 20% more common in individuals living with diabetes than those who do not have diabetes. Studies of individuals with diabetes over the age of 50 show that the risk of getting shingles over a period of several years is around 1%. Vaccination with Shingrix prevents 90% of cases of shingles, thus the incidence of shingles in vaccinated individuals 50+ years over several years is around 0.1% or 1 in 1000.

Shingles is rarely fatal in non-immune compromised patients, but because it is painful and not infrequently debilitating,

Once-in-a-lifetime vaccination with Shingrix is recommended for all individuals over the age of 50, whether or not they have diabetes.

Interestingly, a recent study from Wales suggested that Shingrix vaccination reduces the incidence of dementia by 20%.

Shingrix vaccination is a two-step process (2-6 months between shots) and costs around \$365 total + mark-up + dispensing fee (Costco has no mark-up) total if paying out-of-pocket. Shingrix is covered by a majority of third party plans, depending on the type of coverage and the employee plan.

Shingrix is covered by First Nations Health Authority for patients 60 and older

Shingrix is covered by Veterans Affairs Canada Federal Plan for all members 50 and up.

For a full list of vaccinations recommended by Diabetes Canada [click here](#).

Short URL = <https://bit.ly/ShingrixBCD> last updated 2025-Apr-30