

# Zostavax Zoster Vaccine

## Zoster (Shingles)

Zoster (Shingles) is caused by the varicella-zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox. After varicella sores heal, the virus lies dormant in nerves and may later become shingles. Shingles will be developed if the virus reactivates when your immune system weakens.

## **High-risk Groups**

- People who have had varicella and aged 50 or above.
- People with diabetes, high blood pressure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, renal failure, rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus.

## **Symptoms**

- Shingles usually causes a cluster of painful and blistering rash that is commonly found at either the left or the right side of the body (the back and waist), or possibly found at head, neck and face.

## **Impact**

- The pain caused by shingles can last for 4 weeks which severely affect usual daily activities.
- If the rash extends to the eyes and ears that may lead to visual loss and deafness.
- Out of every 4 patients who get shingles may experience post-herpetic neuralgia, nerve pain can persistently last for several months or years even after the recovery. The risk of persistent nerve pain increases with the age.

## **Prevention**

- Getting vaccinated can reduce the risk of developing shingles by 70%.

## Zostavax Zoster Vaccine

- Target: people who aged 50 or above (suitable for people who have had shingles).
- Injection: single dose under the skin (subcutaneous injection).
- Mild and transient side-effects: swelling at the injection site, itching, hard lump, skin redness, headache, pain in the limbs, etc.
- People should not get the vaccine: people who are allergic to components in the vaccine, people with tuberculosis, leukaemia, lymphoma, people who are on immunosuppressive therapy, women who are pregnant or plan to get pregnant, people who are having shingles, etc.

**\*Please consult your doctor before getting vaccinated\***