

Experts recommend New Shingles Vaccine

On October 20, 2017, the FDA approved the new shingles vaccine, called Shingrix. On October 25, 2017, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) makes recommendations to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that suggests Shingrix for adults over 50 to prevent shingles and related complications instead of old vaccine, Zostavax, and even if they have already been vaccinated with Zostavax, and also people who have already had shingles once can get the vaccine. The old vaccine, Zostavax, uses a live but weakened version of the actual virus. The new one, Shingrix, uses a piece of DNA from the virus to stimulate the immune system. Also, Shingrix contains a new ingredient called an adjuvant, which stimulates the immune system to act more effectively when the vaccine is given. In one study of 15,000 people, two doses of Shingrix reduced the risk of shingles by 97% compared to 70% for Zostavax.

Shingles, also known as zoster or herpes zoster, is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. It is painful rash that usually develops on one side of the body. The rash consists of blisters that typically scab over in 7 to 10 days and clears up within 2 to 4 weeks. For some people the pain can last for months or years after the rash goes away and this long lasting pain is called post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN), which is the most common complication of shingles. CDC website provided new ACIP vote for Shingrix to prevent shingles and related complications. However, the most of recommendations are based on Zostavax. Zostavax was approved by the FDA in 2006. This vaccine reduces the risk of developing shingles by 51% and PHN by 67%. CDC recommends single dose of shingles vaccine for people 60 years old or older even though Zostavax can be used for people age 50 years and older. In adults vaccinated at age 60 years or older, vaccine efficacy wanes within the first 5 years after vaccination, and protection beyond 5 years is uncertain; therefore, adults receiving the vaccine before age 60 years might not be protected when their risks for shingles and its complications are highest.

References

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