

# Herpes zoster vaccine pocket guide for immunizers

## Herpes Zoster Vaccine – Recommended Usage

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization<sup>1</sup> recommends the herpes zoster (HZ) vaccine for:

- adults 60 years of age and older without contraindications
- adults without a prior history of varicella or documented prior varicella infection
- adults 50-59 years of age may benefit from this vaccine
- adults with inflammatory disorders receiving low-dose immunosuppressive therapy, such as prednisone (<20mg/day), methotrexate (≤0.4mg/kg/week), azathioprine (≤ 3.0 mg/kg/day) and 6 mercaptopurine (≤1.5 mg/kg/day), may receive the vaccine following review by a health care provider<sup>2</sup>
- adults on anti-TNF biologics may receive the vaccine on a case-by-case basis after review with an expert in immunodeficiency
- adults 50 years of age and older with a prior history of herpes zoster. It is recommended that the vaccine be given at least one year following the last episode of herpes zoster.

## Dosage

The herpes zoster vaccine is a single-dose regimen of 0.65 mL given as a subcutaneous injection in the deltoid region of the upper arm.

## Contraindications and Precautions

Do NOT give the herpes zoster vaccine to:

- adults with anaphylactic hypersensitivity to any of the vaccine's components
- adults with congenital or acquired immune deficiency
- adults using immune-suppressive medications, but may be administered to individuals on low-dose immunosuppressive therapy
- pregnant women or adults less than 50 years of age
- adults with active untreated tuberculosis

Deferral should be considered in acute illness, for example, in the presence of fever.

## Potential Adverse Reactions

- erythema
- pain or tenderness
- swelling and rash at injection site
- headache

## Simultaneous Administration with Other Vaccines

- Trivalent influenza vaccine and the pneumococcal vaccine may be administered concomitantly with the herpes zoster vaccine at a different injection site.
- In general, HZ vaccine may be administered concomitantly with other live vaccines given by the parenteral, oral, or intranasal routes. If two live parenteral vaccines are not administered concomitantly, there should be a period of at least 4 weeks before the second live parenteral vaccine is given.

## References

<sup>1</sup> National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). Update on the Use of Herpes Zoster Vaccine (2014). An Advisory Committee Statement (ACS).

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/naci-ccni/hzv-vcz-eng.php>

<sup>2</sup> For additional information on the immunization of immunocompromised persons, see the Canadian Immunization Guide, Immunization of Immunocompromised Persons:

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/p03-07-eng.php>

## More Information

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