

Shingles Vaccine Wise Choice for Adults... *By Shari Alguire PA-C*

Are you at risk of illnesses that could be prevented? Many Americans are felled by illnesses that could otherwise be prevented through use of vaccines.

The vaccine most adults are familiar with is for influenza. This annual vaccine, created to counter flu strains most likely to spread during the coming season, can help prevent the respiratory influenza type flu.

Another important vaccine, not as well known, is the one that guards against shingles, an infection caused by reactivation of the chicken pox virus. This means that one must have had chicken pox in order to develop shingles. Once infected with this

common childhood infection, the virus remains in the body lying dormant in the spinal nerves.

While a well-functioning immune system can suppress the virus' return, the virus can come back with a vengeance during times of excessive stress or during the normal course of aging. The virus comes back to life and runs through the spinal nerve causing a blistering type chicken pox rash localized to that affected nerve. Unfortunately this painful rash is just part of the problem.

The pain for some patients only will last a few weeks. In some cases, the searing, burning nerve pain can last for months or years. The occurrence risk of this

long lasting pain, called post herpetic neuralgia, is less than 2% for patients less than 60 years of age but drastically increases up to almost 20% in those over age 79.

Fortunately, a shingles vaccine can reduce the chance of developing shingles by more than half. In cases in which one has the vaccine and shingles develops, the chance of post herpetic neuralgia is reduced by more than 60%.

The shingles vaccine is a pretty good trade off for a few seconds of discomfort. Talk to your health care provider to see if you are a candidate for either of these vaccines.

Quick Facts on the Shingles Vaccine

Who should get it?

The current recommendation is anyone 60 years of age or older.

Who should not get it?

Anyone with immune system diseases, on medications that suppress the immune system (such as chemotherapy) or with an allergy to gelatin should not receive the vaccine.

What are the side effects?

No serious problems have been identified with the shingles vaccine.

Best Wishes to a True Leader!

Practice administrator Alanna Stelzer is retiring this month after more than 20 years of leadership. Alanna's organization and commitment has played a key role in the success and growth of Thunderbird Internal Medicine and she will be greatly missed!

Gayle Petrillo has joined the practice as the new Executive Director. She has extensive experience in practice administration and comes to us from Banner Health in Phoenix.



Thunderbird Internal Medicine – Glendale
5620 W. Thunderbird Rd #C-1, #F-1 & #G-2
Glendale, Arizona 85306

Thunderbird Internal Medicine - Estrella
9150 W. Indian School Rd #118
Phoenix, Arizona 85037