



# Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Facility

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[www.promptsuccor.com](http://www.promptsuccor.com)

August 11, 2021

Re: Annual Influenza Vaccinations

Dear Resident and/or Responsible Party,

The 2021-2022 flu season is quickly approaching! The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older. The flu vaccine is the first and most important step in protecting yourself and your loved one against this serious disease. Influenza is particularly dangerous for people 65 years of age or older, people with weakened immune systems and people with certain health conditions, such as heart, lung or kidney disease. A dose of the flu vaccine is recommended by your physician every year and in order to receive the vaccine, we must obtain your consent.

Again this year we will be faced with the flu during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Both the flu and COVID-19 present with many of the same symptoms. Protecting your loved ones from the flu has never been more important.

We will begin administering the vaccines to our residents when they are available and we have signed consents.

The Vaccine Information Sheets on Flu, Pneumococcal and Shingles from CDC are yours to keep for review.

It is our sincerest hope that you will consent to the influenza vaccination to protect you or your loved one during the upcoming flu season. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this paperwork or the flu vaccine, feel free to call or e-mail me to discuss. Resources for influenza education and facts are available at [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).

Best regards,

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Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Facility

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# Influenza (Flu) Vaccine (Inactivated or Recombinant): *What you need to know*

Many vaccine information statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See [www.immunize.org/vis](http://www.immunize.org/vis)

Hojas de información sobre vacunas están disponibles en español y en muchos otros idiomas. Visite [www.immunize.org/vis](http://www.immunize.org/vis)

## 1. Why get vaccinated?

**Influenza vaccine can prevent influenza (flu).**

**Flu** is a contagious disease that spreads around the United States every year, usually between October and May. Anyone can get the flu, but it is more dangerous for some people. Infants and young children, people 65 years and older, pregnant people, and people with certain health conditions or a weakened immune system are at greatest risk of flu complications.

Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections, and ear infections are examples of flu-related complications. If you have a medical condition, such as heart disease, cancer, or diabetes, flu can make it worse.

Flu can cause fever and chills, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue, cough, headache, and runny or stuffy nose. Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

In an average year, **thousands of people in the United States die from flu**, and many more are hospitalized. Flu vaccine prevents millions of illnesses and flu-related visits to the doctor each year.

## 2. Influenza vaccines

CDC recommends everyone 6 months and older get vaccinated every flu season. **Children 6 months through 8 years of age** may need 2 doses during a single flu season. **Everyone else** needs only 1 dose each flu season.

It takes about 2 weeks for protection to develop after vaccination.

There are many flu viruses, and they are always changing. Each year a new flu vaccine is made to protect against the influenza viruses believed to be likely to cause disease in the upcoming flu season.

Even when the vaccine doesn't exactly match these viruses, it may still provide some protection.

**Influenza vaccine does not cause flu.**

Influenza vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines.

## 3. Talk with your health care provider

Tell your vaccination provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- Has had an **allergic reaction after a previous dose of influenza vaccine**, or has any **severe, life-threatening allergies**
- Has ever had **Guillain-Barré Syndrome** (also called "GBS")

In some cases, your health care provider may decide to postpone influenza vaccination until a future visit.

Influenza vaccine can be administered at any time during pregnancy. People who are or will be pregnant during influenza season should receive inactivated influenza vaccine.

People with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated. People who are moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting influenza vaccine.

Your health care provider can give you more information.



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



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## 4. Risks of a vaccine reaction

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- Soreness, redness, and swelling where the shot is given, fever, muscle aches, and headache can happen after influenza vaccination.
- There may be a very small increased risk of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) after inactivated influenza vaccine (the flu shot).

Young children who get the flu shot along with pneumococcal vaccine (PCV13) and/or DTaP vaccine at the same time might be slightly more likely to have a seizure caused by fever. Tell your health care provider if a child who is getting flu vaccine has ever had a seizure.

People sometimes faint after medical procedures, including vaccination. Tell your provider if you feel dizzy or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.

As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a severe allergic reaction, other serious injury, or death.

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## 5. What if there is a serious problem?

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An allergic reaction could occur after the vaccinated person leaves the clinic. If you see signs of a severe allergic reaction (hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, or weakness), call **9-1-1** and get the person to the nearest hospital.

For other signs that concern you, call your health care provider.

Adverse reactions should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Your health care provider will usually file this report, or you can do it yourself. Visit the VAERS website at [www.vaers.hhs.gov](http://www.vaers.hhs.gov) or call **1-800-822-7967**. *VAERS is only for reporting reactions, and VAERS staff members do not give medical advice.*

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## 6. The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

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The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) is a federal program that was created to compensate people who may have been injured by certain vaccines. Claims regarding alleged injury or death due to vaccination have a time limit for filing, which may be as short as two years. Visit the VICP website at [www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation](http://www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation) or call **1-800-338-2382** to learn about the program and about filing a claim.

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## 7. How can I learn more?

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- Ask your health care provider.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Visit the website of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for vaccine package inserts and additional information at [www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines](http://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines).
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
  - Call **1-800-232-4636** (**1-800-CDC-INFO**) or
  - Visit CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).



# SHINGLES (HERPES ZOSTER)

## *Questions and answers*

### ► **What is shingles?**

Shingles, also called herpes zoster or zoster, is a painful skin rash caused by the varicella zoster virus (VZV). VZV is the same virus that causes chickenpox. After a person recovers from chickenpox, the virus stays in the body. Usually the virus does not cause any problems; however, the virus can reappear years later, causing shingles. Herpes zoster is not caused by the same virus that causes genital herpes, a sexually transmitted disease.

### ► **What does shingles look like?**

Shingles usually starts as a rash on one side of the face or body. The rash starts as blisters that scab after three to five days. The rash usually clears within two to four weeks. Before the rash develops, there is often pain, itching or tingling in the area where the rash will develop. Other symptoms of shingles can include fever, headache, chills and upset stomach.

### ► **Are there any long-term effects from shingles?**

Very rarely, shingles can lead to pneumonia, hearing problems, blindness, brain inflammation (encephalitis) or death. For about one person in five, severe pain can continue even after the rash clears up. This pain is called post-herpetic neuralgia. As people get older, they are more likely to develop post-herpetic neuralgia and it is more likely to be severe.

### ► **How common is shingles in the United States?**

In the United States, there are an estimated one million cases of shingles each year. About one of every three people in the United States will get shingles during their lifetime. Approximately half of those who live to be 85 years old will have one or more encounters with shingles.

### ► **Who gets shingles?**

Anyone who has recovered from chickenpox may develop shingles, including children. However, shingles most commonly occurs in people 50 years old and older. The risk of getting shingles increases as a person gets older. People who have medical conditions that keep the immune system from working properly, like cancer, leukemia, lymphoma and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), or people who receive immunosuppressive drugs, such as steroids and drugs given after organ transplantation, are also at greater risk to get shingles.

### ► **How often can a person get shingles?**

Most commonly, a person has only one episode of shingles in their lifetime. Although rare, a second or even third case of shingles can occur.

### ► **Can shingles be spread to others?**

Shingles cannot be passed from one person to another. However, the virus that causes shingles, VZV, can be spread from a person with active shingles to a person who has never had chickenpox through direct contact with the rash. The person exposed would develop chickenpox, not shingles.

The virus is not spread through sneezing, coughing or casual contact. A person with shingles can spread the disease when the rash is in the blister phase. Once the rash has developed crusts, the person is no longer contagious. A person is not infectious before blisters appear or with post-herpetic neuralgia (pain after the rash is gone).

### ► **What can be done to prevent the spread of shingles?**

The risk of spreading shingles is low if the rash is covered. People with shingles should keep the rash covered, not touch or scratch the rash, and wash their hands often to prevent the spread of VZV. Once the rash has developed crusts, the person is no longer contagious.

### ► **Is there a treatment for shingles?**

Several medicines, acyclovir (Zovirax), valacyclovir (Valtrex) and famciclovir (Famvir) are available to treat shingles. These medications should be started as soon as possible after the rash appears and will help shorten how long the illness lasts and how severe the illness is. Pain medicine may also help with pain caused by shingles. Call your doctor as soon as possible to discuss treatment options.

*Continued on Page 2*



## SHINGLES (HERPES ZOSTER): *Questions and answers*

### ► Is there a vaccine to prevent shingles?

Yes. There are two vaccines that prevent shingles. One for use in people ages 60 and older which is a single dose and another for ages 50 and older that requires two doses to prevent shingles. Neither vaccine is used to treat shingles or post-herpetic neuralgia (pain after the rash is gone) once it develops.

### ► Does the shingles vaccine work?

Yes. Both vaccines work. Shingrix protected almost 100% of people from getting the shingles rash and about 90% from the long-lasting pain associated with shingles. Zostavax protected more than half of the recipients from getting the shingles rash and about two-thirds from getting long-lasting shingles pain. Because of the dramatic difference between these two vaccines, the committee of experts that advises the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended a preference for Shingrix vaccine.

### ► Can the shingles vaccine be given to people who have already had shingles?

Yes. People who have had shingles can receive the shingles vaccine to help prevent future occurrences of the disease.

### ► Why is the shingles vaccine only recommended for people 50 years and older?

A person's risk for getting shingles begins to rise around age 50.

### ► How are vaccine recommendations made?

Once a vaccine is licensed by the FDA. The Federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) votes on whether to recommend this vaccine, and if so, who should get it and at what ages. Neither ACIP nor the federal government makes mandates or laws requiring immunization for adults. Recommendations made by ACIP will be reviewed by the CDC director and the Department of Health and Human Services. Recommendations become official when published in the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR).

### ► Has ACIP recommended the FDA-approved vaccine?

Yes. The shingles vaccine was recently recommended by ACIP to reduce the risk of shingles and its associated pain in people 60 years old or older. See MMWR: Prevention of Shingles (ACIP Recommendations).

### ► Is the FDA-approved vaccine safe?

The FDA has licensed the vaccine as safe. The vaccine has been tested in about 20,000 people ages 60 and older. The most common side effects were redness, soreness, swelling or itching at the shot site, and headache. The CDC, working with the FDA, will continue to monitor the safety of the vaccine after it is in general use.

### ► Will zoster vaccine be covered by Medicare for Medicare beneficiaries?

While the details are evolving, it is anticipated that zoster vaccine will not be covered under Medicare Part B (which covers influenza and pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine as well as hepatitis B for moderate and high risk people). The vaccine will instead be reimbursed through the Medicare Part D program. Beneficiaries should contact their Part D plan for more information.

### ► Where can I get more information?

- Your doctor, nurse, and clinic, a pharmacist, or your local public health unit.
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [cdc.gov/shingles/about/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/shingles/about/index.html).

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# What is pneumococcal disease?

Pneumococcal disease is an illness caused by bacteria (germs) that can infect the lungs (pneumonia), the blood (bacteremia), and the membrane that covers the brain (meningitis).

The disease is most likely to strike in the winter and spring, but there are cases year round.

The most common symptoms are chills, fever, chest pain, shortness of breath, and a severe cough. Some people vomit or have seizures. Pneumococcal disease kills thousands of older people in the United States each year.

## How is pneumococcal disease spread?

The germ is in many people's noses and throats, and is spread by coughing, sneezing, or contact with respiratory secretions. The germs that cause the disease can live in the nose and throat of healthy children and adults without causing disease.

## Who gets pneumococcal disease?

Anyone can get pneumococcal disease. People at highest risk are very young children, people 65 years and older, people of any age who have certain chronic medical problems, and people with weakened immune systems.

## Is pneumococcal disease dangerous?

Yes. It can be. Pneumococcal disease is one of the most common causes of vaccine-preventable death in this country. Every year thousands of people need hospital treatment and more than 4,400 people die because of pneumococcal disease. Pneumococcal infection is the most common cause of bacterial pneumonia. It is also a leading cause of meningitis, blood infection and ear infection in children.

## How is pneumococcal disease treated?

Pneumococcal disease is treated with antibiotics. However, some pneumococcal infections are resistant to some antibiotics, making treatment more difficult. People with more severe cases may need to be treated in the hospital, sometimes in intensive care.

## Can pneumococcal disease be prevented?

Yes. There are two vaccines to prevent it. Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV23) protects against the 23 pneumococcal types most likely to cause disease in older children and adults, but is only approved for people 2 years of age and older. A new pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13), protects against the 13 types of pneumococcal bacteria most likely to cause infection in young children, and is approved for infants and children younger than 5 years of age. (An earlier pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, PCV7, was used before 2010 and protects against 7 common types of pneumococcal bacteria.)

## Who should get pneumococcal vaccine (PPV23)?

There are many reasons why someone could be at increased risk for getting pneumococcal disease and should receive pneumococcal vaccine. Adults should review their need for vaccination at every visit with their health care provider, especially at 50 and 65 years of age.

## PPV23 is recommended for:

- ▶ Everyone 65 years of age and older
- ▶ People who live in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities
- ▶ People 19 – 64 years of age with asthma
- ▶ People 19 – 64 years of age who smoke cigarettes
- ▶ People 2 – 64 years of age with the following medical conditions:
  - Chronic heart or lung problems, diabetes, liver problems, cochlear implants or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leaks
  - Weakened immune systems caused by conditions such as sickle cell disease, having the spleen removed, kidney failure, cancer, organ transplants, drugs that weaken the immune systems, and HIV infection or AIDS.

## What is pneumococcal disease? Q&A (continued)

Most people need only one dose of pneumococcal (PPV23) vaccine. If you are 65 years of age or older, or if you have a chronic health problem, talk to your doctor or nurse to find out if you need a booster. It is a good idea to keep careful records of the vaccines you receive so you will know when you need another. If you are 65 years of age or older and you are not sure if you have ever received the pneumococcal vaccination, you should be vaccinated.

### Who should get pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13)?

- ▶ All infants and children younger than 2 years of age
- ▶ Older children and adolescents
- ▶ Healthy children 2 through 5 years of age who have not completed the PCV series
- ▶ Children 2 through 5 years of age with underlying medical conditions (including cochlear implants) who have not completed the PCV series
- ▶ Healthy children 2 through 4 years of age who have received only PCV7
- ▶ Children 5 through 6 years of age with underlying medical conditions who have received only PCV7
- ▶ Children 6 through 18 years of age who have functional or anatomic asplenia; HIV infection or other immunocompromising condition; cochlear implant; or cerebral spinal fluid leak.

Ask your doctor if your child needs another dose of this vaccine.

### How safe are the pneumococcal vaccines?

Any vaccine can cause side effects in some people. Some people who get pneumococcal vaccine have a

little swelling and pain in the arm where the shot was given. This usually lasts for less than two days. Some children getting PCV13 may have a fever that lasts a few days. Other side effects like aching muscles and severe side effects like allergic reactions are rare.

PPV23 and PCV13 can be given at the same time as all other vaccines, but should not be given with each other.

### Where can I get more information?

- ▶ Your doctor, nurse or clinic, a community pharmacist, or your local public health unit
- ▶ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at: [cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/pneumo/hcp/recommendations.html](http://cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/pneumo/hcp/recommendations.html)

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