

# Shingles vaccine cuts chronic pain, hospitalizations

March 17 2017

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(HealthDay)—Vaccination greatly reduces the risk of serious

complications from shingles, a new study finds.

Shingles occurs when the same virus that causes chickenpox is reactivated later in life. Nearly one-third of people in the United States will develop shingles. The risk increases with age, researchers said.

The new study showed the [vaccine](#) was 74 percent effective in preventing hospitalizations for shingles during the three years after vaccination. That number dropped to 55 percent effective after four or more years.

The immunization was 57 percent effective for preventing lasting pain in the three years after vaccination. The rate dropped to 45 percent after four years, the researchers said.

The findings were published recently in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*.

"The fact that we found relatively high effectiveness against serious outcomes, such as hospitalization and [lasting pain], and that protection from these outcomes was sustained over time, adds to the considerable evidence that the vaccine is beneficial and that seniors should be encouraged to be vaccinated in higher numbers than what is happening currently," study author Dr. Hector Izurieta said in a journal news release.

Izurieta is with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. The FDA funded the research.

The study looked at information collected between 2007 and 2014. The data included about 2 million Medicare beneficiaries. The researchers found that the vaccine seems most effective against severe cases of shingles requiring hospitalization and against chronic pain.

There didn't seem to be much difference in how effective the vaccine was between age groups. But protection declined over time after vaccination, the researchers said.

The [shingles vaccine](#) was approved in the United States in 2006. At the time, studies showed that the vaccine reduced the risk of shingles by about half in people aged 60 and older.

In the United States, the [shingles](#) vaccine is recommended for people 60 and older. But in 2014, just 28 percent of adults in this age group said they'd received the vaccine, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [shingles vaccination](#).

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Citation: Shingles vaccine cuts chronic pain, hospitalizations (2017, March 17) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-03-shingles-vaccine-chronic-pain-hospitalizations.html>

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