

# About 1 out of 3 people 60 years old or older will get shingles.

“I have never, after 46 years of marriage, heard Jackie in so much pain. I sat up all night with tears streaming down my face,” Mac remembers. One night, Jackie had a tingling feeling on her back, which then became a painful, burning sensation. By morning, a horrible red rash covered her lower back and legs. The rash soon became large blisters, and the pain was almost unbearable. Jackie recalls, “Right away, being a nurse, I thought: shingles,” and she was right.

Shingles, also called herpes zoster, is a painful disease affecting about one million people annually in the United States. Shingles is caused by the varicella zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox. Once a person is infected, the virus remains in the body for life and can reappear, causing shingles. Nearly all adults, by age 60 are at risk for shingles, because most have had chickenpox during their lifetime. In fact, up to half of all Americans will have had shingles by the time they are 85 years old.

Shingles usually starts as a tingling or painful feeling on one side of the body or face, followed by a blistering rash. The main concern with shingles, however, is severe pain. Jackie agrees, “[Shingles] was up there with a really bad root canal, and I’ve had eight!” Even after a month, Jackie still felt miserable, “I didn’t want to see anybody or do anything.” After the rash clears up, one in five people with shingles will experience severe, long-term pain (postherpetic neuralgia, or PHN), which can last for months or years and is difficult to treat. “I have known people who ended up in the hospital on morphine drips because of shingles pain,” Jackie adds.

Fortunately, there is a safe and effective vaccine for shingles recommended by CDC. In a clinical trial involving 38,000 adults 60 years old or older, the vaccine prevented shingles in about half (51%) and prevented long-term pain

in 67% of the people who received the vaccine. The shingles vaccine cannot be used to treat shingles or long-term pain.

CDC recommends that healthy adults 60 years old or older receive one dose of the shingles vaccine to reduce the risk of shingles and long-term pain. “My feeling is,” says Jackie, “that anybody who can either prevent getting shingles or can reduce the severity of the disease should definitely take that step!”

“I feel so much better having had the vaccine,” Mac remarked. “Maybe I won’t have to go through what Jackie did.” **Protect your golden years; ask your healthcare provider about the shingles vaccine.**



## Shingles vaccine — protect your golden years. GET VACCINATED

For more information, ask your healthcare provider, call **800-CDC-INFO** (800-232-4636), or visit [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/shingles/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/shingles/default.htm)

