

What is shingles?

A shingles infection is caused by a reactivation of the varicella zoster virus—the same virus that causes chickenpox—and presents as a painful skin rash with blisters.

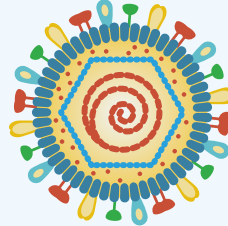
The rash most commonly occurs in a strip on one side of the torso, but can appear virtually anywhere on the body. It may last several weeks.



Who gets shingles?^{1,2,3}

Anyone who has had chickenpox can get shingles.

After recovery from chickenpox, the varicella zoster virus remains dormant in the body.



varicella zoster virus

Shingles occurs when the virus reactivates, often due to a weakened immune system or certain medical conditions.

Shingles is more common after **age 50.**



More than 90% of Canadians over age 50 have had chickenpox.⁴

Lifetime risk of shingles is estimated to be as high as **30%.**⁵



How many Canadians get shingles every year?

130,000
new cases

20
deaths⁶

2,000
hospitalizations

Incidence is increasing as the population ages.^{7,8,9}

What's the impact on the individual?

Acute shingles pain has been ranked as greater than labour pain and post-surgical pain.¹⁰


Up to **40%** of people with shingles report at least one complication.¹¹

About **10% to 18%** get postherpetic neuralgia (PHN), nerve pain that may last for weeks to years.^{12,13}

Shingles can have a substantial impact on physical, psychological, social and health-related aspects of everyday life.^{14,15.}

What's the impact in the workplace?¹⁹

In a pooled analysis of 428 employees 50 and older with shingles:

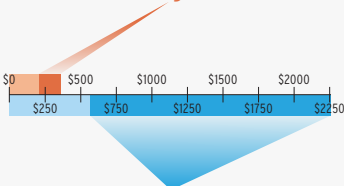
57.7% missed work 

9.1 days off on average 

89.1% were less productive at work

What's the total cost of every infection?²⁰

\$211.20 to \$361.20
for a shingles case



\$571.20 to \$2,261.83
for a PHN case

Prevention is the best option

NACI recommends herpes zoster vaccination for adults age 50 and older without contraindications.²¹

How many are vaccinated?

27% of Canadians age 50 and older have received a shingles vaccine.²²

No public funding or programs are available to adults age 50 to 64.²³

The primary reasons for not getting vaccinated are thinking it's unnecessary and the cost.²⁴

Protect your employees

There's an opportunity for plan sponsors to enhance private coverage by offering plan members the shingles vaccine, helping to prevent this painful condition.

This material was sponsored and supported by a leading pharmaceutical manufacturer.

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3 <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/r5705a1.htm>
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7 <https://bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12879-016-1898-z>
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10 Katz, J. and R. Melzack, Measurement of pain. *Surg Clin North Am*, 1999, 79(2): p. 231-52

11 National Advisory Committee on Immunization. An Advisory Committee Statement (ACS) National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI): Updated Recommendations on the Use of Herpes Zoster Vaccines, 2018, June 2018; Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/publications/healthy-living/updated-recommendations-use-herpes-zoster-vaccines.html#a3>
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