



San Diego Immunization Branch, Mail Stop P573
3851 Rosecrans Street, Suite 704
San Diego, Ca 92110-3115

Phone: 866-358-2966
Fax: 619-692-5677

Immunization Bulletin

Topic: Summary of MMWR Recommendations: Zoster vaccination

Background: The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) released recommendations for vaccination of Zoster vaccine in the MMWR 57: on May 15, 2008. Persons 60 years of age and older should receive a dose of zoster vaccine to prevent or reduce the severity of zoster. The life time prevalence of zoster is 1 in 3 persons with 1 million new cases developing every year. Postherpetic neuralgia (PHN) is a common complication of zoster. It is a debilitating painful condition that can last for months and occurs in 10-18% of cases. Zoster ophthalmicus occurs in 10-25% of zoster cases and may result in loss of vision and facial scarring. Vaccination reduces the incidence and severity of zoster as well as PHN. Recurrent episodes of zoster occur at the same rate as first cases. Therefore, vaccination of patients with a history of zoster is recommended.

While all age groups showed a reduction in zoster and PHN incidence and severity, vaccine effectiveness was reduced with increasing age. For ages 60-69, the vaccine reduced zoster and PHN by 64 and 66%, respectively. For ages 70-79 the reductions for zoster and PHN were 41% and 67%, respectively. Zoster is not indicated for treatment of acute zoster, acute PHN, or to prevent PHN in a patient with acute zoster.

ACIP Recommendations:

1. Routinely **immunize persons** aged ≥ 60 years including those with a history of zoster disease and chronic medical conditions.
2. Persons anticipating immunosuppressive therapy should receive zoster vaccine at least 14 days prior.
3. Zoster can be administered at any time before, during, or after blood products.
4. Antiviral medications for treatment of herpes (acyclovir, famciclovir, & valacyclovir) may interfere with the zoster vaccine. Discontinue medications 24 hours prior to and at least 14 days after immunization.

Contraindications for Zoster vaccine :

- Allergic reaction to vaccine components including gelatin and neomycin.
- Immunocompromised persons -leukemia, lymphomas, neoplasms of bone marrow and lymph, AIDS with $Cd4+ \leq 200$, immunosuppressive therapy including high dose steroids, and hematopoietic stem cell transplantation patients, persons receiving recombinant human immune mediators and immune modulators.

Precautions for Zoster vaccine:

- Delay vaccination for moderate to severe illness.

Additional Information: see MMWR for complete details

MMWR Summary of ACIP recommendations of Zoster prevention

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr57e0515a1.htm?s_cid=rr57e0515_e

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