

**Herpes zoster vaccine effective in older adults**

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<b>Clinical Question</b>	Compared to placebo or no vaccine, how effective is vaccination for preventing herpes zoster in older adults?
<b>Bottom Line</b>	<p>Moderate quality evidence suggested that in persons of 60 years of age or older the herpes zoster vaccine reduced the incidence of herpes zoster for at least three years post-vaccination (NNT* 50). The vaccinated group had a higher incidence of mild to moderate intensity adverse events (mild to moderate symptoms at the injection site). Refrigerated vaccines caused fewer injection site adverse effects than frozen vaccines. The injection of the vaccine into the muscle caused fewer adverse effects when it was injected subcutaneously.</p> <p><i>*NNT = number needed to treat to benefit one individual.</i></p>
<b>Caveat</b>	All included studies were conducted in high-income countries and included only healthy elderly Caucasians ( $\geq 60$ years) without any immunosuppressive problems. Pharmaceutical companies that produce the vaccines funded all of the included studies.
<b>Context</b>	The natural process of aging is associated with a reduction in cellular immunity and this predisposes older people to herpes zoster. Vaccination with an attenuated form of varicella zoster virus activates specific T cell production avoiding viral reactivation.
<b>Cochrane Systematic Review</b>	<a href="#">Gagliardi AMZ et al. Vaccines for preventing herpes zoster in older adults. Cochrane Reviews, 2016, Issue 3. Art. No.: CD008858.DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD008858.pub3.</a> This review contains 13 studies involving 69,916 participants.

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