

Contraindications and Precautions

- Contraindicated if previous anaphylactic reaction to any component of the zoster vaccine (e.g., gelatin, neomycin)
- Contraindicated in immunocompromised condition; HIV infection with <200 CD4 cells/μl.
- Persons with chronic medical conditions may be vaccinated unless the condition is among contraindications listed above
- Use caution in cases of moderate or severe acute illness
- If patient is known to be varicella zoster virus (VZV) seronegative, then a 2-dose series of varicella vaccine should be administered
- Not indicated to treat herpes zoster or ongoing post-herpetic neuralgia

Vaccine Dosing and Administration

- Subcutaneous administration in upper arm (0.65 ml dose)
- Lyophilized zoster vaccine stored frozen, at 5°F (-15°C)
- Should be given within 30 minutes of reconstitution to maintain potency

Side Effects

- Redness, soreness, swelling or itching at injection site
- Headache

Talking Points with Patients

- Herpes zoster infection is more common in older adults
- Devastating effects of postherpetic neuralgia more frequent among older adults
- Vaccine reduces the risk of herpes zoster by approximately 50%
- Vaccine reduces risk of significant postherpetic neuralgia by 66%
- Persons receiving zoster vaccine that have susceptible, pregnant or immunocompromised contacts do not need to take any precautions following vaccination except in the rare situation that a rash envelops, in which case standard contact precautions are adequate.

TETANUS/DIPHTHERIA (Td) VACCINE

Indications

- Complete vaccine series is indicated for older adults with uncertain vaccine history or with fewer than 3 recorded doses.

Contraindications and Precautions

- Prior anaphylaxis with Td vaccine; acute illness

Administration

- Primary: 3 doses of tetanus and diphtheria toxoid; 1st 2 doses at least 4 weeks apart, 3rd dose 6-12 months later; boosters at 10-year intervals; more often with high-risk injuries (burns, puncture wounds, extensive soft tissue injury)

TRAVELER'S VACCINATIONS

MEASLES, MUMPS, RUBELLA (MMR) VACCINE

PRECAUTION: Contraindicated in cases of immune deficiency; previous anaphylaxis with MMR, neomycin, or gelatin; wait for resolution of acute severe or moderate illness; use caution in cases of cancer, recent transfusion, steroids.

ADMINISTRATION: 1 dose MMR vaccine

MENINGOCOCCAL VACCINE

PRECAUTION: Previous anaphylaxis with this vaccine; wait for resolution of acute severe or moderate illness

ADMINISTRATION: 1 or more doses MPSV vaccine

HEPATITIS A VACCINE

PRECAUTION: Prior anaphylaxis with alum or 2-phenoxyethanol; acute severe or moderate illness; produces protective antibody in only 67% of older adults.

ADMINISTRATION: Single-antigen formulations require a 2-dose schedule. With combined hepatitis A and B vaccine, administer 3 or 4 doses according to product instructions.

HEPATITIS B VACCINE

PRECAUTION: Prior anaphylaxis with baker's yeast; acute severe or moderate illness; protective antibody in only 50% of older adults.

ADMINISTRATION: Single antigen formulation requires 3 doses; combined A+B vaccine described above.

YELLOW FEVER

PRECAUTION: Adults ≥ 65 are at higher risk of severe neurological and multi-organ failure reactions. Risks and benefits of vaccination should be weighed against the destination-specific risk of exposure. Endemic areas include S. America, Africa, and other areas.

ADMINISTRATION: single subcutaneous injection of 0.5 ml of reconstituted vaccine

For international travel: Countries with relevant endemic diseases can be identified at the following website:
www.cdc.gov/travel/content/diseases.aspx.

Talking Points for Improving Compliance in Older Patients

- Older adults are more susceptible to serious disease caused by common infections than are younger people
- Newer vaccines are more effective than earlier versions
- Immunity can begin to fade over time as immunized people age
- Some adults, particularly those born outside the US, were never vaccinated as children
- Influenza vaccine and PPSV covered by Medicare Part B; Zoster vaccine covered by Medicare Part D

References

- Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP): www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/acip-list.htm
- CDC: Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule—US 2009. MMWR 2008;57(53). www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5753-Immunization.pdf
- Immunization of Older Adults. In: *Hazard's Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology*, 6th Ed. Halter JB, et al. McGraw-Hill Professional. 2009.
- Immunization Action Coalition: www.accessmedicine.com.
- Vaccination Information for Health Professionals: www.immunize.org/acip.



American Geriatrics Society

The Empire State Building
350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 801
New York, NY 10118

800-247-4779 or 212-308-1414

www.americangeriatrics.org
info.amger@americangeriatrics.org

*Supported by an educational grant from
Merck & Co. Inc.*