

Livingston, NJ Health Department to offer the Zoster Vaccine Against Shingles for Senior Residents

People age 60 sixty or older should be vaccinated against herpes zoster or shingles, a condition often marked by debilitating pain, the Centers of Disease Control recommends. Over 95 percent of people are infected by the varicella virus (VZV) during their lifetime.

This virus causes the common childhood disease, chickenpox. This virus than becomes dormant within the nerves. If it reactivates later in life, the result will be shingles. This disease is characterized by clusters of blisters, which develop on one side of the body causing severe pain that may last for weeks, months or years.

Merck has manufactured a vaccine called Zostavax for people 60-69 and older to help prevent shingles. In the 70-79 age groups, it is most effective in preventing pain. Side effects reported have been headaches and at the injection site redness and tenderness.

This vaccine will be available in the near future through the Livingston Health Department. The vaccine will cost \$175.00. People will be reimbursed through Medicare D and we encourage you to contact your insurance plan for information on your individual coverage. Merck makes this vaccine available to some individuals without insurance and who cannot afford it. More information on this program is available at Merck directly. Contact them at www.merckhelps.com or call **1-800-NSC-MERCK**.

Please call the **Nursing Office at (973) 535-7961 ext. 226, 227 or 228** for further information or to put your name on the reserved list.