



TO YOUR HEALTH

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Welcome Spring

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Shingles Vaccine Update

by Susan Cusson

Anyone who's known a person with shingles, particularly one involving the face, knows how this disease is capable of changing people's lives. Complications such as long lasting nerve pain can be debilitating. Until now, the only vaccine to prevent shingles and postherpetic neuralgia has been a live vaccine called Zostavax. Immunization with Zostavax reduced the incidence of shingles by about 51 percent. Unfortunately it is significantly less effective in adults over 70 compared with those ages 60 to 69. The newer vaccine approved in October 2017 is now available. This new vaccine called Shingrix decreases the risk of shingles by about 90 percent, even among individuals over the age of 70. The body's response to Shingrix is much stronger than Zostavax.

What is shingles?

Shingles, also known as herpes zoster, is a painful rash that is shaped like a band or a belt and is typically limited to one side of the body. It is caused by the varicella virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox. After someone has chickenpox, the virus can stay dormant in the body. Years later, it can reactivate and cause shingles. The first time a person is infected with the varicella virus, he or she gets chickenpox, not shingles. Shingles can affect people of all ages, but it is most common in those older than 50. By the time you're 80, you have a 50 percent chance of developing shingles.

Why get immunized?

Shingles can be serious. About 1 out of 5 adults over the age of 70 with shingles will get nerve pain called postherpetic neuralgia (PHN). People with PHN keep feeling pain or discomfort even after their rash goes away. This pain can last for months or even years. Shingles can also cause skin infections, eye problems if the rash is near the eye and ear problems if the rash is near the ear.

Who should get immunized?

Experts encourage everyone over 50 to get the new vaccine even if you had shingles in the past or were already vaccinated for shingles as an adult. The new vaccine, Shingrix, requires two doses spaced two to six months apart. If you recently got the existing shingles vaccine (Zostavax), you should wait at least eight weeks before getting this new version.

Local soreness at the site of injection is to be expected, a small price to pay for preventing the potentially devastating consequences of this illness. Most insurances are expected to be covering Shingrix in the next few months.

Shingrix Clinic
Thursday, April 12
10:00am - 12:00pm
Meeting Room
Village Center

Call the Clinic to sign up in advance



Health Education Lecture

Dr. Maureen O'Connor will give a talk about memory loss, how much is to be expected as one gets older and what should trigger a visit to the doctor. As you age, you may find yourself worrying about your memory. Where did I put those car keys? What time was my appointment? What was her name again?

Dr. O'Connor is Assistant Professor of Neurology at Boston University, Director of Neuropsychology at the Bedford Veterans Affairs Hospital

and the author of a recent book

Seven Steps to Managing Your Memory.

Please join us for some real life examples on how to successfully manage age-related memory loss.



Wednesday, March 14, 2018

10:30 am — 11:30 am

Auditorium Center



Audiology Services

Dr. Louis Femino, AuD., CCC-A

Lou is available in the Clinic on the first and third Tuesday of the month from 9:00am—12:00pm by appointment for these services:

- ◆ Full Audiological testing
- ◆ Hearing Aid dispensing with a free 30 day trial of hearing aids
- ◆ Minor modifications and repairs of hearing aids
- ◆ Maintenance and care of other manufactured hearing aids

Walk-in assistance from 12:00pm-12:30pm for brief Product Questions and Hearing Aid Batteries.

New Medicare Cards are coming soon!

The "Medicare & You" handbook is mailed to all Medicare households each fall. It includes information about benefits, rights, health and drug plans. The 2017 issue also had information about the new Medicare cards. The new cards were designed to keep your information more secure and help protect your identity. You'll get a new Medicare Number that's unique to you, and it will only be used for your Medicare coverage. Social Security numbers will not be on the new Medicare cards. The new card won't change your coverage or benefits. Below is an example of what the new Medicare card looks like.

Understanding Your Medicare Card

The image shows a sample Medicare card with the following details:

- 1** 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)
- 2** NAME OF BENEFICIARY: MIA JONES
- 3** MEDICARE CLAIM NUMBER: 000-00-0000-A
- SEX: FEMALE
- IS ENTITLED TO: HOSPITAL (PART A) and MEDICAL (PART B)
- EFFECTIVE DATE: 07-01-1986
- 4** SIGN HERE: _____

- ① How to contact Medicare
- ② Your Medicare claim number
- ③ What parts of Medicare you have (A/B)
- ④ When your coverage starts

Beware of anyone who contacts you about your new Medicare card. There is no need for anyone to ask you for personal or private information to get your new Medicare Number and card. Mailing everyone a new card will take some time. Medicare will be sending cards in the mail between April 2018 – April 2019. Your card might arrive at a different time than your friend's or neighbor's.

When you receive your new card, please bring it to the Clinic to be scanned.