



MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Your public health team, connecting with our communities to achieve healthier outcomes

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Health department offering shingles vaccine

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- If you've had chickenpox, the shingles virus is quietly lying in wait inside your body, and can make an appearance at any time. While not life-threatening, shingles can be very painful and can lead to some pretty serious complications. Fortunately, you can help keep shingles at bay by getting vaccinated.

Shingles is a sneaky illness. After a bout of chickenpox, the virus goes dormant in the spinal cord and can re-emerge later in life as shingles. Anyone who has had chicken pox is at-risk for getting shingles, but it is most common in those over 50, and the risk increases with age.

Ask anyone who has had shingles and they'll tell you it's not a pleasant experience. The first clue that something is wrong is feeling pain, itching, or tingling on one side of the face or body. This is followed by a blister-type rash that scabs over and clears up within two to six weeks. Other symptoms can include fever, headache, chills, fatigue and upset stomach.

The most common complication of shingles is lingering pain, even after the rash is gone. This pain may be severe and debilitating, and lasts a few weeks, or as long as a several months. As people get older, they are more likely to experience lingering pain and it is more likely to be severe. Shingles may also lead to serious complications including loss of vision, neurological problems and skin infections.

Shingles cannot be passed from one person to another, but can spread from a person with active shingles to someone who has never had chickenpox. In such cases, the person exposed to the virus might develop chickenpox, but not shingles.

Chickenpox can be dangerous for those with weak immune systems, newborns or pregnant women, so those with shingles should avoid physical contact with these groups.

If you think you may have shingles, contact your doctor right away. If you are over the age of 60 or have had a previous episode of shingles, you should consider getting vaccinated.

Mid-Michigan District health department (MMDHD) is offering the vaccine to individuals over 60 years old in Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties who do not have insurance, or whose plan does not cover the Zoster vaccine.

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2- Shingles vaccine

People with Medicare Part D should check with their doctor or pharmacy to see if the vaccine is covered. Those with Medicare Part A and/or B can receive the vaccine at the health department, as well as those over 50 with certain insurances. If you are unsure of your coverage, contact your insurance carrier.

If you would like more information or would like to make an appointment, please call the MMDHD branch office nearest you:

Montcalm County: 989-831-5237, option 5 and then option 2

Gratiot County: 989-875-3681, option 5 and then option 2

Clinton County: 989-224-2195, option 5 and then option 2

An administration fee up to \$20 may apply and is based on income.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

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