

Millions eligible for free shingles vaccine urged to come forward

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UKHSA data shows that fewer than half take up the free shingles jab.

Fewer than half of adults are taking up their free shingles vaccine in the first year of being eligible, according to latest UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) data.

Figures published today show that 42.1% of those turning age 66, who had been eligible since their 65th birthday, had received their first Shingrix dose by October 2025. Among those turning age 71 who have been eligible since turning 70, vaccine uptake coverage stands at 53.5%.

Shingles is a painful condition caused by reactivation of the chickenpox virus. It can cause weeks of severe pain and long-term complications including nerve damage.

The Shingrix For All immunisation programme began on 1 September 2023. The programme offers 2 doses of the Shingrix vaccine to all immunocompetent individuals turning 65 or 70 and severely immunosuppressed individuals turning 18 and over.

Dr Julie Yates, UK Health Security Agency's Deputy Director for Immunisation Programmes, said:

Many of us will know someone who has suffered from shingles and spoken of just how painful it can be. Shingles can also have debilitating effects for months even after the rash has gone, and we know that 2 doses of this vaccine is highly effective in preventing shingles and its serious complications.

We understand people are busy, and it can be easy to put things off, but this is a vaccine that can make a real difference to your quality of life. If you are eligible and contacted by your GP, please don't put it off — make that appointment.

Caroline Temmink, Director of Vaccinations at NHS England, said:

Shingles can be extremely dangerous for older adults and those with weakened immune systems. That's why the NHS shingles vaccination programme was extended and now includes people turning 65 as well as those in their 70s and anyone aged 18 and over with a severely weakened immune system.

Please check if you or a loved one has had their vaccine if they are eligible to help protect them from this painful and potentially serious condition.

The shingles vaccine is part of an all-year-round programme with all older adults becoming eligible when they turn age 65 or 70. Those aged between 70 and 80 years should already have been offered a shingles vaccine but should catch-up if they have missed out. It is also offered to all severely immunosuppressed people aged 18 years and over.

Eligible people can check if they qualify and book their vaccine through their GP or by visiting

NHS.uk. More information can be found on our shingles blog page.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/millions-eligible-for-free-shingles-vaccine-urged-to-come-forward>