

**National PBM Interim DRAFT Guidance
Zoster Vaccine
Varicella Virus Vaccine Live (Oka/Merck)**

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VHA Pharmacy Benefits Management Strategic Healthcare Group and the Medical Advisory Panel

This Interim Draft Guidance on the use of adult zoster vaccine is based on currently available information. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has posted Provisional Recommendations (http://www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/provisional_recgs/zoster-11-20-06.pdf); however, official Center for Disease Control policy has not yet been issued. Final VHA national criteria for use will be made available after the final CDC policy on zoster vaccine is published in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (anticipated in June 2007).

Zoster vaccine (ZOSTAVAX) SHOULD BE STORED FROZEN at an average temperature of -15°C (+5°F) or colder until it is reconstituted for injection. Any freezer, including frost-free, that has a separate sealed freezer door and reliably maintains an average temperature of -15°C or colder is acceptable for storing zoster vaccine. THE VACCINE SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED IMMEDIATELY AFTER RECONSTITUTION TO MINIMIZE LOSS OF POTENCY. DISCARD RECONSTITUTED VACCINE IF IT IS NOT USED WITHIN 30 MINUTES. DO NOT FREEZE reconstituted vaccine.

Consider zoster vaccination in individuals who

Are age 60 years and older and immunocompetent at the time of vaccination, whether or not they report a prior episode of herpes zoster (HZ).

Zoster vaccine should not be administered to individuals who

- (1) Have a life-threatening disease likely to limit survival to less than 1 year
- (2) Have a history of anaphylactic/anaphalactoid reaction to gelatin, neomycin, or any other component of the vaccine
- (3) Have a history of primary or acquired immunodeficiency states including leukemia; lymphomas of any type, or other malignant neoplasms affecting the bone marrow or lymphatic system; or AIDS or other clinical manifestations of infection with human immunodeficiency viruses
- (4) Are on immunosuppressive therapy, including high-dose corticosteroids.
Consider other patient factors when deciding whether to vaccinate patients on 5 to 15 mg of prednisone or equivalent.
- (5) Have active untreated tuberculosis
- (6) Are or may be pregnant
- (7) Have an acute febrile illness
- (8) Are on antiviral therapy that inhibits varicella zoster virus replication (e.g., acyclovir, valacyclovir, famciclovir, and certain anti-HIV agents; however, individuals with HIV infection should not receive zoster vaccine)

Consider benefits versus risks

Since the duration of auto-boosting protection from a prior episode of HZ is unknown, discuss the potential benefits versus risks of zoster vaccine with individuals who have a prior physician-diagnosed HZ rash.