



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH BENEFITS

Shingles

Shingles – the common name for herpes zoster – is a painful blistering rash caused by a re-activation of the varicella-zoster virus (the same virus that causes chicken pox). The pain of shingles can persist after the rash has healed – for weeks, months, or even longer. Shingles can occur in anyone who has had chickenpox, however it is more common – and more likely to cause complications and long term effects – in older people.

“Shingles can be extremely painful and it is preventable. When it happens, treatment requires immediate medical care and antiviral drugs. Many First Nations clients live in remote areas where it’s difficult to get this quick treatment. We also know that there are cultural safety issues with some of our Elders that impede them from seeking the urgent response this condition requires.”

- Dr. Evan Adams, Chief Medical Officer, First Nations Health Authority

SHINGRIX® VACCINE COVERAGE

- Coverage is for eligible Health Benefits clients (<https://www.fnha.ca/benefits/eligibility>) who are 65 years old and older.
- The 65-year-old and above age group was selected for the benefit coverage because the vaccine has a high impact on this age group. People in this age group are more likely to get shingles and to have higher rates of hospitalization from it.
- The vaccine may be administered by a pharmacist, community health nurse (CHN) or physician. It requires two doses to be fully effective.

ACCESSING COVERAGE

Shingrix® is available at your local pharmacy. Pharmacy providers can process the claim through Pacific Blue Cross for clients who meet the eligibility criteria.

Talk to your physician, nurse practitioner, pharmacist, or CHN about the risks and benefits of this vaccine.

NURSING PROCESS

BC First Nations health service organizations with Registered Nurses (RNs) who have current Immunization Competency Program (ICP) certification are encouraged to work with their local pharmacist to support access to the vaccine for their eligible community members.

In cases where the Shingrix® vaccine dose is being shipped, the pharmacist, client, and the health care professional administering the injection should be aware of the storage and refrigeration requirements of the vaccine.

For clinical immunization support, RNs and CHNs can contact the Communicable Disease Population & Public Health (CDPPH) team at immunize@fnha.ca

For coverage and benefits information, please contact Health Benefits at healthbenefits@fnha.ca

Exceptional review for clients under 65 years old.

For case-by-case review, the request must:

- include supporting medical documentation with rationale from the prescriber indicating why you are at increased risk from getting shingles or receiving complications from the disease; and
- be faxed to FNHA Health Benefits at 1.888.299.9222 in its entirety.

Clients with any questions about this or any other aspect of the coverage are encouraged to contact First Nations Health Benefits at 1.855.550.5454 or email healthbenefits@fnha.ca