

PREMIER'S OFFICE/HEALTH/WELLNESS--Free Shingles Vaccine Available This Month

Starting today, May 20, Nova Scotians aged 65 and older can book their free shingles vaccine appointment. The first appointments will be May 28.

"Across Canada, nearly one in three people develop shingles, despite the availability of the vaccine," said Premier Tim Houston. "That's why we are delivering on our promise of removing barriers to access and making the shingles vaccine free."

The vaccine costs about \$400 but will be free for seniors starting May 28. People can book an appointment by calling their primary health care provider or at <https://novascotia.ca/routinevaccine>

Shingles is a viral infection that causes an extremely painful, burning skin rash and nerve pain that can last 90 days or more. For many people, it is debilitating. Anyone who has had chickenpox or has been exposed to the virus is at risk of developing shingles later in life.

Quotes:

"We are committed to investing in things that matter and that make a real impact on the day-to-day lives of Nova Scotians. We know how severe the symptoms of shingles are, and the good news is that it can be easily prevented."

— *Michelle Thompson, Minister of Health and Wellness*

"The free shingles vaccine is life changing for older Nova Scotians. For many people, the high cost made the vaccine out of reach. By breaking down barriers to care, we are protecting more older Nova Scotians from the needless suffering that comes with this awful virus."

— *Barbara Adams, Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care*

"CARP is extremely pleased to hear this announcement. The free shingles vaccine is great news for older Nova Scotians, who are at risk for developing this awful life-impacting disease. By removing the cost, this will open the door for more seniors to have access to the vaccine."

— *Bill VanGorder, Advocacy and Education Officer, Canadian Association of Retired Persons*

"Seniors of Nova Scotia welcome the announcement of free shingles vaccine available to all people over 65. We recognize the impact of this debilitating and disabling virus, the effects of which can last weeks, months and can cause lifelong nerve pain. This vaccine will enable seniors to protect themselves from such serious life-altering effects and decrease their vulnerability to chronic problems, enabling seniors to enjoy a higher quality of life."

— *Alyson Hillier, co-Chair, Seniors Advisory Council of Nova Scotia*

Quick Facts:

- the government is investing more than \$26 million in fiscal 2025-2026 in the rollout of the free shingles vaccine
- people aged 65 and older are at highest risk for severe disease, and that age group has the highest hospitalization rates
- the vaccine, called Shingrix, prevents shingles complications, which can ease pressure on emergency departments, primary care and the overall health system
- two doses are needed for full protection

Additional Resources:

Information on shingles vaccine eligibility is available at: <https://www.nshealth.ca/public-health/immunizations>