

Quick Tips on Zostavax™ for GPs and Practice Nurses

- *is contraindicated in pregnancy*
- *is contraindicated* for those who have anaphylaxis to a vaccine component or VZV-containing vaccine
- *is contraindicated* for severe immunocompromise (refer AIH 4.24.9 or 4.24.10 for criteria on contraindications and precautions)
 - **Must not be given to patients who have had a renal transplant**
- can be given to those who have less severe immunocompromise (refer to AIH 4.24.9 or 4.24.10 for details) on a case by case basis (consult with the treating specialist)
 - also refer to 3.3.3 Vaccination of immunocompromised persons
- *is not recommended* to those who have previously received a varicella vaccine (VZV – Varivax® or Varilrix®)
- *is not registered or recommended for* under 50 years of age
- vaccination recommended for ≥ 50 years household contacts of immunocompromised person
 - assess which vaccine appropriate Zostavax or Varicella vaccine
- reconstitute immediately before administering (must be discarded if not used within 30mins)
- can be given at the same time as other vaccines including Pneumovax 23® (note: variation from PI & CMI).
- the *live vaccine rule* applies: *live vaccines can be given on the same day in separate sites or at least 1 month apart.*
- can be given any time before or after immunoglobulin or any antibody-containing blood product
- should be given at least 12 months after an episode of Herpes Zoster (HZ)
- should be given at least 24 hours after systemic antivirals have ceased. Resume antivirals at least 14 days after vaccination.
- If indicated can be given to those on long-term salicylate therapy (aspirin)

Serological testing

- no serology routinely recommended pre-vaccination
 - exceptions below (on a case by case basis, consult with treating specialist)
 - anticipated future significant immunocompromised e.g. requiring future organ transplant
 - asymptomatic HIV
 - immunocompromised (refer 3.3.3 AIH)
- lab testing post vaccination not recommended
- if proven to be seronegative do not give Zostavax instead give Varicella vaccine x 2 doses at least one month apart.

Use the electronic version of the Immunisation Handbook for the current recommendations as there have been significant updates to many chapters. It's available at: www.immunise.health.gov.au/

NCIRS has two comprehensive fact sheets on Herpes Zoster available at www.ncirs.edu.au/