

**Rheumatology Advice Line: 0117 323 3528**



## MEMORANDUM

**From: Rheumatology Team at North Bristol NHS Trust**

**To: All adult rheumatology patients being treated with immunosuppressant therapy**

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

**Subject: Shingles Vaccination Programme**

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Dear Patient,

The Department of Health have recommended a vaccine in older adults to prevent shingles and shingles-related pain. It is available on the NHS for people aged 70 years or 79 years on 1<sup>st</sup> Sep 2013.

This vaccine is a live vaccine and can therefore cause harm if you are taking a drug that may damp down your body's natural immune system.

► If you are taking any of the following drugs **you should not have the vaccine** unless recommended by your Hospital consultant:

Abatacept (Orencia)  
Adalimumab (Humira)  
Anakinra (Kineret)  
Belimumab (Benlysta)  
Certolizumab (Cimzia)

Ciclosporin  
Cyclophosphamide  
Etanercept (Enbrel)  
Golimumab (Simponi)  
Infliximab (Remicade)

Mycophenolate  
Rituximab (Mabthera)  
Tocilizumab (RoActemra)  
Ustekinumab (Stelara)

► If you are taking any of the following drugs you may be able to have the vaccine, depending on the dose of the drug. You should check with your GP or consultant before receiving the vaccine. If you are taking prednisolone it is important you check with your consultant as they will have additional information about your steroid treatment to help make this decision.

Methotrexate  
Leflunomide

Azathioprine  
Prednisolone

► If you have been told by your consultant that you will soon be starting a drug that may damp down your immune system ('immunosuppressing agent') then we may recommend that you have the vaccine but you will need to leave a gap of at least a month between having the vaccine and starting your new treatment. You and your GP will be informed by letter if this is the case.

*Please contact the Rheumatology Patient Advice Line (number above) for further information.*

#### References:

Sanofi Pasteur MSD Ltd, 2013. Summary of product characteristics: Zostavax. Available from: <http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/25927/SPC/Zostavax/> [Accessed 16/10/13].

Public Health England, 2013. Vaccination against shingles for adults aged 70 and 79 years of age – Q&As for healthcare professionals. Available from: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/239892/2013181\\_Shingles\\_QA\\_for\\_healthcare\\_professionals\\_final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239892/2013181_Shingles_QA_for_healthcare_professionals_final.pdf). [Accessed 16/10/13].

Public Health England, 2013. Immunisation against infectious disease: the green book. Available from: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/147824/Green-Book-Chapter-6-v2\\_0.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/147824/Green-Book-Chapter-6-v2_0.pdf). [Accessed 16/10/13].

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