What is Shingles?

- Shingles is caused by the reactivation of the varicella zoster virus (VZV), the same virus that causes chickenpox.¹
- More than 90% of those over 50 years old have had chickenpox and are at risk for shingles.²
- For reasons that are not fully known, the virus can reactivate years later, causing shingles.¹
- Shingles typically presents as a painful, itchy rash that develops on one side of the body and can last for two to four weeks.³,⁴ Other symptoms of shingles outside of the rash include fever, headache and sensitivity to light.¹
- Complications of shingles include postherpetic neuralgia (PHN), scarring, vision complications, secondary infection and nerve palsies.¹
- The best way to help prevent shingles is to be vaccinated against it.⁵

Aging and the Immune System

- The risk and severity of shingles increases with age because aging causes a natural decline in the body’s immunity.¹
- As immune function declines with age, there is a reduction in the number of immune cells and their ability to prevent the reactivation of the virus that causes shingles.⁶,⁷
- A person’s risk for shingles increases after 50 years of age, as does the risk of complications, including PHN.¹
- Age-related decline in immunity is recognized as an important risk factor for shingles.¹
- The individual lifetime risk of developing shingles is approximately one in three and, for those who live to 85, it is one in two.¹,⁸