

Shingrix vaccine

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In news— GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Pharma has announced the launch of Shingrix vaccine in India for the prevention of shingles (herpes zoster) and post-herpetic neuralgia in adults aged 50 years and above.

About the vaccine-

Shingrix is the world's first non-live, recombinant subunit vaccine to be given intramuscularly in two doses.

What is Shingles?

- Shingles is **caused by the reactivation of the varicella zoster virus (VZV)**, the same virus that causes chickenpox.
- A seroprevalence study in Indian subjects showed that by the age of 40 years, more than 90% had this virus in their body and were vulnerable to shingles, a company statement said.
- **Shingles causes a painful rash.** In most cases, the rash disappears, but in some cases the pain persists for months or years. This pain is known as **post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN)**.
- Other possible complications include scarring, complications with vision (if the rash appears around the eye), and partial weakness/paralysis of the areas served by affected nerves.

What is recombinant subunit vaccine?

- Recombinant subunit vaccines are manufactured by inserting the genetic code for the subunit into other cells, such as yeast cells, that can easily grow and synthesize large amounts of the subunit needed for the vaccine.

- Recombinant subunit vaccines contain purified and inactivated “subunits” of the pathogens that the vaccine protects against.
- These subunits are chosen because of their high capability as antigens, and because the fragments are not capable of causing disease and do not involve any infectious agent, this type of vaccine is regarded to be highly safe.