

Free Shingles Vaccine Available for Older Residents

South Gippsland Shire Council would like to remind residents aged 70-79 of the new National Shingles Vaccination Program.

The program commenced in November 2016 and offers a free single dose of zoster vaccine as part of the National Immunisation Program.

Those eligible under the program include:

- All people aged 70 years old as an ongoing program
- People aged 71 to 79 years of age as a catch-up program until the 31 October 2021

Shingles is a painful blistering rash caused by reactivation of the varicella zoster virus – the same virus that causes chickenpox. One in three people will develop shingles during their lifetime. The risk of getting shingles and neurological complications increases as people get older.

Council's Acting Team Leader of the Immunisation Program Georgina Kibble said older residents are being encouraged to speak with their local doctor for advice on receiving the free vaccine. A single dose is currently recommended.

"It is important to remember that immunisations do not finish at childhood. It is also essential that adults are vaccinated against diseases like shingles to ensure lifelong protection against vaccine preventable diseases," said Ms Kibble

People aged 65 and older are eligible for other free vaccines under the National Immunisation Program including the pneumococcal vaccine which can reduce the risk of pneumonia and the influenza vaccine which is available to protect individuals against the flu virus.

Individuals interested in any of these vaccines are urged to contact their local practitioner for more information.

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