Why are people 50 years of age and older recommended to get the shingles vaccine when most of them have had chickenpox?

a.) The virus that causes chickenpox remains in the nerves and can reawaken as a person ages, causing shingles.

b.) Because anyone over 50 years old can get shingles, even if they haven’t had chickenpox.

c.) Because exposure to chickenpox only provides immunity during youth.

d.) Because shingles virus is different enough that having chickenpox previously doesn’t matter.
Trivia Answer:
The correct answer is A. People 50 years of age and older are recommended to receive the shingles vaccine because the virus that causes chickenpox remains in the nerves after the initial infection subsides. As a person ages and their immune system weakens, the virus can reawaken and cause shingles. Go to vaccine.chop.edu/trivia to play Just the Vax, the Vaccine Education Center's trivia game, where you can find this question and others like it.

News and Notes

The opioid epidemic and hepatitis A

States across the country have been seeing increases in hepatitis A outbreaks. The outbreaks have been linked to increases in homelessness and the ongoing opioid epidemic. Hepatitis A is spread through the feces of infected people. Most often we think of this as resulting from food handlers who did not wash their hands properly after using the restroom or travelers who go to places where sewage may be near clean water or food. In the current situation, hepatitis A can spread as a result of living in unclean conditions or not being able to maintain proper hygiene, or similar circumstances that can inadvertently expose someone to microscopic amounts of infected fecal material. For more information on hepatitis A and the vaccine to prevent it, check out these VEC resources: A Look at Each Vaccine: Hepatitis A webpage and Hepatitis A: What You Should Know Q&A sheet (English | Spanish)

"Going Viral" podcast delves into 1918 influenza pandemic.

Last year (2018) marked the 100th anniversary of the 1918 influenza pandemic. Many groups and organizations shared information about this important historical event, such as, the Parents PACK interview with Terri Wood about how, even generations later, her family has been affected by the pandemic. One of the most extensive efforts we have seen, and wanted to share, was a podcast series called, Going Viral: The Mother of All Pandemics. Each of the eight episodes examines different facets of the pandemic, including its historical ramifications, what we know today about why it was so severe, and how it’s helping us prepare for future pandemics. If you like scientific and medical history, check out this podcast.

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