***HEALTH NGATEA NEWSLETTER - August 2023***  
  
Greetings  to our Community,  
  
Anyone who has had chickenpox is at risk of developing shingles, a painful blistering rash.  The best protection against   
shingles is vaccination. The risk of shingles increases as you get older or if you have a weakened immune system. You  
can't catch shingles directly from someone else. However, if you've never had chickenpox or received the chickenpox   
vaccine, you can catch chickenpox if you are in close contact with someone who has shingles. This is because the shingles  
blisters contain the chickenpox virus.   
Before the rash develops, people often have pain, itching or tingling in the area where the rash will develop. Although shingles  
can occur anywhere on your body, it most commonly occurs around the back, upper abdomen or on the face. Other symptoms  
of shingles can include; fever, headache, chills and an upset stomach. The pain or irritation will usually go away in 3 to 5 weeks.  
However, if the virus damages a nerve, you may have pain, numbness or tingling for months or even years after the rash is   
healed.   
Shingles is less contagious than chickenpox, and the risk of a person with shingles spreading the virus is low if the rash is  
covered. Once the rash has developed crusts, the person is no longer infectious. The best way to prevent shingles, is to get  
vaccinated. The shingles vaccine used in New Zealand is called Shingrix. You will need two doses, with the second dose, given two  
to six months after the first.   
***Who Can Get A Free Shingles Vaccine?***  
Shingles vaccine is free for 12 months once you turn 65. As long as you receive your first dose when you are 65, your second dose  
will still be free, even if you get it after you turn 66.   
***Shingrix*** is recommended for anyone aged 50 and over. If you are not 65 years old however, you will need to pay. You are most welcome  
to phone the Practice Nurse to discuss or inquire about the vaccine and the associated cost, or to make an appointment to have the  
vaccine administered.  Look after yourselves and each other,   
  
Team Health Ngatea.