



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MERCK FROSST'S ZOSTAVAX™ NOW AVAILABLE IN CANADA

Today adults 60 years of age or older can ask for the first and only vaccine for the prevention of shingles

KIRKLAND, Quebec – September 22, 2009 – Starting today adults across the country 60 years of age or older can choose to help protect themselves against shingles – a reactivation of the virus that causes chickenpox. Merck Frosst Canada Ltd. is pleased to announce that ZOSTAVAX™ [zoster vaccine live, attenuated (Oka/Merck)], for the prevention of shingles (herpes zoster) in individuals 60 years of age or older, is now available across Canada through clinics and physicians offering the vaccine.

“Both my mother and grandmother had really bad cases of shingles so I’m aware of the consequences”, said Dr. Austin Richard Cooper, a 67 year old practising physician in St. John’s, Newfoundland and the first person in Canada to be vaccinated with the shingles vaccine today. “I’ve been following the information about this vaccine from the beginning and I am delighted that the vaccine is now available - I really wanted to be the first Canadian vaccinated with it.”

The Merck Frosst vaccine is the first and only one to help prevent shingles. People should talk to their doctor or healthcare professional to find out if the vaccine is right for them.

Currently, not all clinics or physician offices can accommodate the storage requirements for the shingles vaccine and administer it onsite. In response to this, Merck Frosst has created a specially-designed website www.zostavax.ca. Clinics and physicians desiring to list their offices and clinics as being able to meet the storage requirements for ZOSTAVAX™ may add their office/clinic address and coordinates to this website.

Locating vaccination sites

Go to the website www.zostavax.ca. In the menu section, look for the following phrase and click on it: "The list of some physicians and clinics which stock and administer ZOSTAVAX™". Then, enter your postal code, select a radius and click on "Search". A list of vaccination locations will then appear. The website will continually be updated to reflect physicians and clinics which can accommodate the vaccine and have advised us that they wish to add their office or clinic to the list.

Live frozen vaccine puts shingles on ice

The shingles vaccine must be stored frozen at an average temperature of -15°C or colder until it is ready for injection in order to maintain its potency. The vaccine must be reconstituted immediately after being taken from the freezer and administered.

Anyone who has had chickenpox is at risk of developing shingles. The incidence and severity of shingles increase significantly with age, with two-thirds of cases occurring in individuals older than 50 years of age.¹ For more than half of shingles sufferers over the age of 60, shingles can progress into debilitating pain called post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN)², which can persist long after the blisters have healed.

In the Shingles Prevention Study (SPS) of 38,546 subjects 60 years of age or older, the shingles vaccine reduced the risk of developing herpes zoster compared with placebo by 51 per cent for all age groups.³ The vaccine also reduced the incidence of severe and long-lasting zoster-associated pain by 73 per cent compared with placebo⁴.

In clinical studies, the most common side effects reported were redness, pain, swelling, itching, warmth and bruising at the injection site.⁵ The overall incidence of vaccine-related injection-site adverse experiences was significantly greater for subjects vaccinated with the shingles vaccine compared to placebo (48 per cent for the vaccine and 17 per cent for placebo).⁶ Headache, fever and allergic reactions were also reported.⁷

The Merck Frosst list price for the shingles vaccine is \$150.

About Merck Frosst

At Merck Frosst, patients come first. Merck Frosst Canada Ltd. is a research-driven pharmaceutical company discovering, developing and marketing a broad range of innovative medicines and vaccines to improve human health. Merck Frosst is one of the top 25 R&D investors in Canada, with an investment of close to \$110 million in 2007. More information about Merck Frosst is available at <http://www.merckfrosst.com>.

Forward-Looking Statement

This press release contains "forward-looking statements" as that term is defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are based on management's current expectations and involve risks and uncertainties, which may cause results to differ materially from those set forth in the statements. The forward-looking statements may include statements regarding product development, product potential or financial performance. No forward-looking statement can be guaranteed, and actual results may differ materially from those projected. Merck undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise. Forward-looking statements in this press release should be evaluated together with the many uncertainties that affect Merck's business, particularly those mentioned in the cautionary statements in Item 1 of Merck's Form 10-K for the year ended Dec. 31, 2006, and in its periodic reports on Form 10-Q and Form 8-K, which the Company incorporates by reference.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Sheila Murphy
Manager, Public Affairs
Merck Frosst Canada Ltd.
514-428-2748
sheila_murphy@merck.com

Montreal

Roch Landriault / Stephanie Lyttle
514-843-2345 / 843-2365
rlandriault@national.ca / slyttle@national.ca

Atlantic Provinces

Adele MacLean / Claire Ryan
902-425-1860 / 506-672-1860
amaclean@mtlpr.ca / cryan@mtlpr.ca

Ottawa

Melissa Wood
613-233-1699
mwood@national.ca

Toronto

Lynn Bessoudo / Jacqueline Zonneville
416-848-1426 / 416-848-1398
lbessoudo@national.ca/jzonneville@national.ca

Calgary

Lauren Piercy
403-444-1499
lpiercy@national.ca

Vancouver and Victoria

Kate Best
604-691-7386
kbest@national.ca

References:

¹ Straus SE, Oxman MN. Varicella and herpes zoster. In: Freedberg IM, Eisen AZ, Wolff K et al, editors. Fitzpatrick's dermatology in general medicine. 5th ed. Vol 2. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill 1999;2427-50.

² Oxman MN. Clinical manifestations of herpes zoster. In: Arvin AM, Gershon AA, editors. Varicella-zoster virus virology and clinical management. Cambridge Press 2000:246-75.

³ Product Monograph for Health Canada dated August 11, 2009. Page15.

⁴ IBID. Page 17.

⁵ IBID. Page 23.

⁶ IBID. Page 6.

⁷ IBID. Page 23.