

## Lifestyles

## SAVVY SENIOR

Jim  
Miller

## New shingles vaccine helps protect seniors

Dear Savvy Senior,  
What can you tell me about shingles and the shingles vaccination? Do I need to get it?  
Cautious Senior

Dear Cautious,  
The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone age 60 and older should get a shingles vaccination. Here's what you should know.

## Pesky Virus

Shingles, also known as herpes zoster, is a painful and itching skin rash that affects more than a million Americans each year. It is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox (varicella-zoster). What happens is the chickenpox virus that most people get as kids, never leaves the body. It retreats into the nerve cells near the spinal cord where it lies dormant, with the possibility of re-emerging decades later in the form of shingles.

In the U.S., one out of every three people will develop shingles during their lifetime. While anyone who's had chickenpox can get shingles, it most commonly occurs in people over age 50, and the risk increases with age. In fact, about half of those who reach 85 will have suffered a bout of shingles. Those with a weakened immune system are also vulnerable.

## Nasty Rash

Shingles is a nasty rash and more! Early signs include pain, itching or tingling before a blistering rash appears several days later, and can last up to four weeks. The rash typically occurs on one side of the body, often as a band of blisters that extends from the middle of your back around to the breastbone. It can also appear above an eye or on the side of the face or neck.

In addition to the rash, more than one-third who get shingles go on to develop serious complications such as post-herpetic neuralgia, a severe nerve pain that can last for months or even years. If it occurs on the face, it can affect vision and hearing, or cause brain inflammation. And according to a recent study, shingles can also raise the risk of stroke by around 30 percent in seniors who get it.

## Get Vaccinated

The only vaccine for shingles, Zostavax, was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2006 and has proven to be very effective. While it's not foolproof, Zostavax will prevent shingles in half the people who get the shot, and if you do get it you'll get a much milder case.

Everyone, age 60 and older that's had the chickenpox, including those that aren't sure they've had it, should get vaccinated. Even if you've already had shingles, you still need the vaccination because recurring cases are possible. The only people, ages 60 and older, who should not be vaccinated are those who are allergic to gelatin or neomycin, have a weakened immune system or take high doses of steroids.

You also need to know that the shingles vaccination is covered by most insurance plans including Medicare, but only if you have a Part D prescription drug plan. If you aren't covered you can expect to pay between \$150 and \$300 for the one-time shot. For more information or to locate a vaccine provider in your area, talk to your doctor, visit Zostavax.com or call 800-672-6372. Also note that if you're uninsured and can't afford this vaccine, Merck, the maker of Zostavax, offers a vaccine assistance program that provides the shot free of charge. Call 800-293-3881 or see merck.com/merck-helps/vaccines for details.

## If You Get Shingles

While there's no cure for shingles, it's usually treated with antiviral medications which can help speed up the healing process and reduce the pain, severity and potential complications of the attack. Acyclovir (Zovirax), famciclovir (Famvir) or valacyclovir (Valtrex) are commonly prescribed. Your doctor will decide which of these medicines might work best for you, but you'll need to act quickly because these medicines work best if you start taking them within the first 72 hours after you get the rash.

## Jumping into fitness

By MARGARET HOBBS  
Lifestyles Editor for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tenn.)

A day filled with fitness and healthy lifestyle activities was held recently at McMinnville Civic Center. The day started with a fitness walk conducted by Justin Scott and Emily Hobbs.

Activities inside included a unique performance by jump rope team, the Franklin Hot Shots, led by sponsor Lisa Arnold.

"We are so happy to be here in McMinnville presenting our program. Jumping rope is a life skill that anyone can do. It builds stamina, heart strength, helps with weight control, coordination and balance," said Arnold.

She encourages everyone to try the exercise, with her and her jumpers leading locals in a fun jumping competition where they earned complimentary Gilley Pool passes.

Arnold and her group of boys and girls in grades three through eight work hard on their routines, practicing up to eight hours each week.

"We go everywhere, performing at national competitions, college games, and hosting clinics. It's just a good exercise that requires little equipment and can be done almost anywhere," said Arnold.

Demonstrations were given by

Gary Steele Karate's Team Legacy and a demonstration was led by Tai Chi instructor Hilda Lytle. Brandy Cox, chief clinical dietitian with River Park Hospital held a healthy cooking demonstration. She made and served samples of Black Bean and Corn Salsa and Mandarin Orange Salad.

Visitors had the opportunity to learn about Russian KettleBell, rock climb, shoot basketball and jump in a large inflatable, all in the name of exercise and fitness. They could also participate in the Doctor's Round Table led by area doctors and guests.

Judy Wood and her daughter Jennifer Pinch took advantage of the many booths lining the gymnasium floor, gathering fitness and health-related tips. The family has moved to McMinnville recently, having relocated from Illinois.

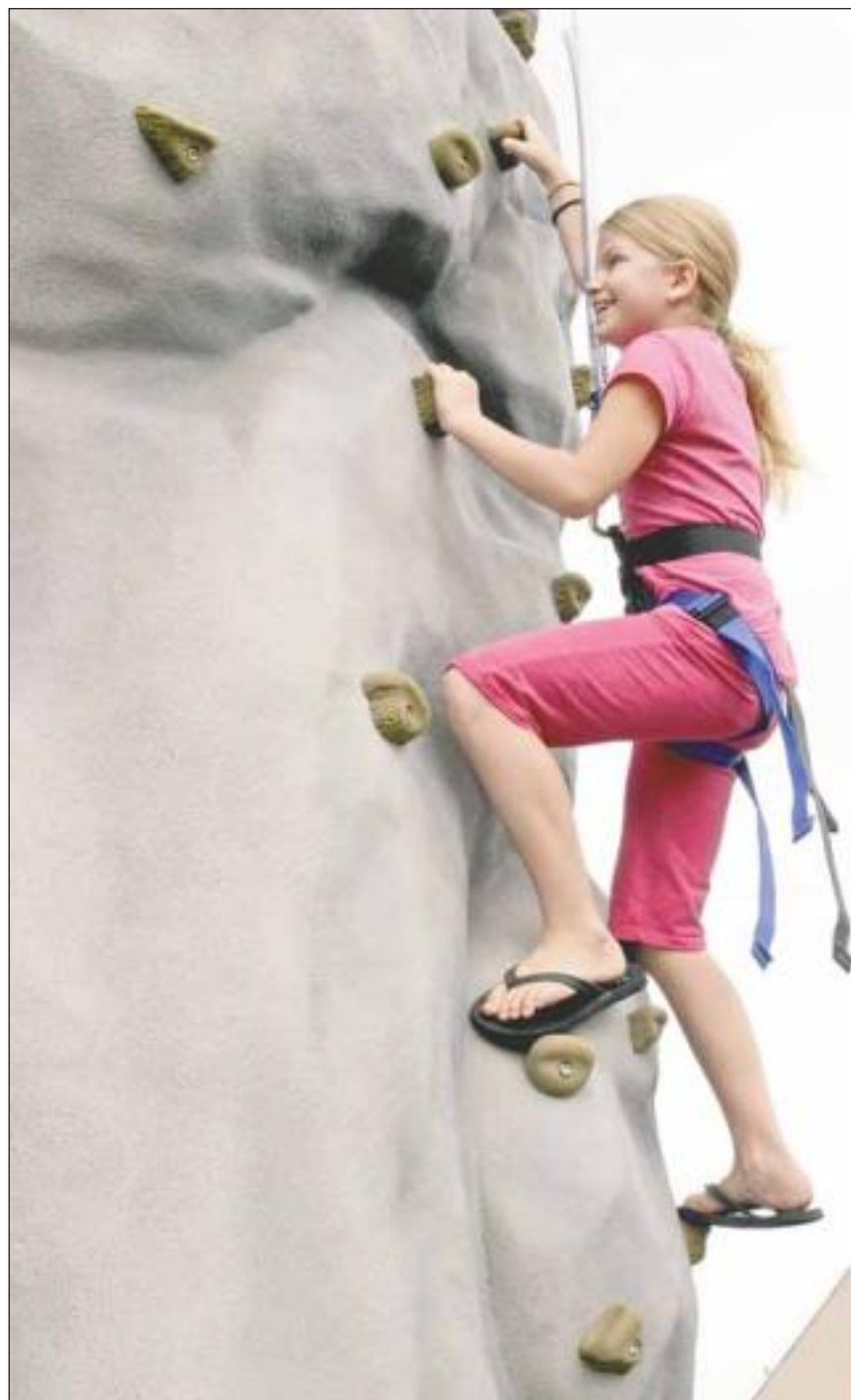
"We love it here. Residents here really don't know how good they have it here. We came from an area that was in very bad shape, and it is fabulous here," said Wood.

They also sing the praises of the Civic Center, having family memberships. Wood is recovering from knee surgery and has arthritis, so exercise is important to her.

"I don't call it exercise, I call it therapy. I'll take the time to come if I relate it to therapy!" said Wood with a laugh.



Margaret Hobbs photos  
Jumping rope is good for everyone, even frogs! Gilley the Frog receives some pointers from Franklin Hot Shots jump rope members, from left, McCallie Melton, Vanessa Vassar and Kathryn Hallock. The group gave demonstrations and encouraged crowd participation at the event held at the Civic Center.



Charles W. Johnson photo

Kylie Simerly tries her skill level on a rock climbing wall provided by the Army National Guard at the Wellness and Fitness Fair. The event was sponsored by McMinnville Parks and Recreation.



A healthy food cart filled with delicious complimentary snacks is manned by Warren County Schools employee Sally Heath. She talks with Dibrell students Will and Ali Wisner about healthy snack choices.



One of the lucky door prize winners Raya Chea shares his good fortune with family members, from left, Tomy Chet, Munny Chet, Phea Tang and Chenda Chan.

## Delicious healthy recipe



## Black Bean and Corn Salsa

Combine the following ingredients in a large bowl:  
2 15 ounce cans black beans, drained  
1 17 ounce can whole kernel corn, drained  
2 large tomatoes, chopped  
1 large avocado, chopped  
1 purple onion, chopped  
1/8-1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro

Whisk the following together and pour in the bowl above and stir:  
3-4 tablespoons lime juice  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon pepper

Tip: If you plan to make the recipe the day before, or several hours before serving, recommend squeezing lime or lemon juice on chopped avocado prior to adding to your recipe to prevent it from turning brown.