

Algorithm for the Treatment of Postherpetic Neuralgia

Prevent shingles and PHN by routinely vaccinating seniors >60 years of age with zoster vaccination



Early antiviral therapy for herpes zoster (e.g., famciclovir, valacyclovir, acyclovir) within 72 hours of symptom onset reduces PHN



Early treatment with amitriptyline* (25 mg/day) reduces PHN



Established PHN should be treated with TCAs[#], gabapentin, pregabalin, lidocaine patch and/or opioids[#]

Topical capsaicin may also be helpful

PHN=Postherpetic neuralgia; TCAs=Tricyclic antidepressants.

*Not FDA approved for postherpetic neuralgia.

[#]No agent in TCA or opioid classes is currently FDA approved for postherpetic neuralgia.

Information from:

Shingles (herpes zoster) vaccination. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/shingles/default.htm>. Accessed July 29, 2011.

Dubinsky RM, Kabbani H, El-Chami Z, Boutwell C, Ali H. Practice parameter: treatment of postherpetic neuralgia: an evidence-based report of the Quality Standards Subcommittee of the American Academy of Neurology. *Neurology* 2004;63:959-65.

Irving GA, Backonja MM, Duntzman E, Blonsky ER, Vanhove GF, Lu SP, et al. A multicenter, randomized, double-blind, controlled study of NGX-4010, a high-concentration capsaicin patch, for the treatment of postherpetic neuralgia. *Pain Med* 2011;12:99-109.