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# Focus on Health

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## Shingles Vaccine

**S**hingles is a painful skin rash caused by the herpes zoster virus. It can lead to severe complications (rarely) such as blindness, hearing problems, or encephalitis (brain inflammation). Only someone who has had Chicken Pox or has had the vaccine against Chicken Pox can get it. You can't catch it from another person. It is far more common in people 50 or older or those with weakened immune systems. A shingles vaccine has been available since 2006. A single dose is indicated for adults over 60 with normal immune systems who are not allergic to Neomycin and do not have active tuberculosis. It is a live vaccine called zostavax.

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As part of the professional services I feel should be provided by me to my patients, screening of the voluminous medical literature has become more and more important. The information in this newsletter is derived from periodicals and books which I have read and whose information I have consolidated. Perhaps you have seen an item that I have not included in this list or have not seen myself. If so, feel free to bring it to my attention.

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## Sleep Apnea and Type II Diabetes

**O**bststructive sleep apnea (OSA) is increasingly linked to Type II diabetes. Researchers at the University of Turin say that OSA impairs insulin sensitivity in obese patients. Treatment with Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) rapidly improves this, according to a 2004 German study. Finally, a recent study furthermore documents a clear role for slow wave sleep (SWS) in the maintenance of glucose homeostasis. A 25% change of insulin sensitivity is comparable to a weight increase of 8 to 10 kilograms (17.6 to 28.6 pounds).

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## Vitamin D Deficiency

**V**itamin D deficiency is common, even in the southern U. S. Incidence is up to 30% in the northern states with less sun exposure. Deficiency is related not only to osteoporosis but also to autoimmune diseases and cancer. Vitamin D3 tablets (Calcitriol) are available in health food stores and pharmacies without prescription (see The Bannost Plan). See "Journal Watch" from the publishers of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, May 1, 2008.

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## Animal Protein and Prostate Cancer

**A**nimal foods, protein and calcium, and their relationship to prostate cancer, were examined in the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition, a combined study from 28 countries reported in the British Medical Journal. A high intake of dairy protein and calcium from dairy products (but not from other foods) was found to increase the risk of prostate cancer by up to 32%.

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## Waist Size and Hypertension

**W**aist size is a vital sign of hypertension risk according to a report from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Increased girth is a continuous risk factor and not a categorical variable in Metabolic Syndrome.

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[www.abouthormones.org](http://www.abouthormones.org)