

JIM C – HEALTH TERMS

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HOW DID THE TERM “ASPIRIN” ORIGINATE?

Definition: A white, crystalline compound, $\text{CH}_3\text{COOC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COOH}$, derived from salicylic acid and commonly used in tablet form to relieve pain and reduce fever and inflammation.

Online Etymology: Coined 1899 in German as a trademark name, from Greek a- "without" + Latin Spiraea (ulmaria), the plant in whose flowers or leaves the processed acid in the medicine is found.

- **400 B.C. – Hippocrates was left historical records of pain relief treatments, including the use of powder made from the bark and leaves of the willow tree to help heal headaches and fevers.**
- **1829 – Scientists discovered that it was the compound called salicin in willow plants which gave you the pain relief.**
- **1838 – Italian chemist Raffaele Piria split salicin and converted it into an acid of crystallized colorless needles, salicylic acid.**
- **1853 – Charles F. Gerhardt buffered salicylic acid with sodium salicylate and acetyl chloride to create acetylsalicylic acid.**
- **1897 – Felix Hoffmann "rediscovered" acetylsalicylic acid**
- **1899 – Bayer distributes aspirin powder to physicians**
- **1915 – Aspirin becomes available without a prescription.**

Conventional Wisdom: Aspirin = The first “wonder” drug

M of Z: 40,000 metric tons of aspirin is consumed each year