

JIM C – HEALTH TERMS

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R HOW DID THE TERM “Rx” *ORIGINATE?*

Definition: The symbol for medical prescriptions.

Online Etymology: 1584, "medical prescription," from M. French *récipé*, from Latin *recipe* "take!," imperative of *recipere* "to take"; word written by physicians at the head of prescriptions. Meaning "instructions for preparing food" first recorded 1743. The original sense survives only in the pharmacist's abbreviation Rx.



3000 BC - The symbol may have been derived from the major lines in the symbol of the Eye of Horus. Horus was an Egyptian god of the sky, light and goodness. Seth, the god of darkness and evil, cut out Horus's left eye, but Thoth, a god associated with wisdom and compassion, magically restored the eye. The Egyptians considered it a symbol of good and restored health.

2 The symbol may be a corruption of the astrological sign for Jupiter, which was once placed on prescriptions to invoke that god's blessing on the drug to help the patient recover.

In the days before manufactured drugs, apothecaries (aka doctors) would write out a formula for medications. They would mix up and compound ingredients to make drugs or remedies.

Conventional Wisdom: Rx = Medical prescriptions made here

M of Z: Like a formula, Rx = Recipe of X, X being the variable