

JIM C – HEALTH TERMS

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HOW DID THE TERM “SHINGLES” ORIGINATE?

Definition: A disease of adults caused by the varicella-zoster virus and is a reactivation of chickenpox viruses in a nerve ganglion and resulting in inflammation, pain, and a rash of small skin blisters.

Online Etymology: 1398, "inflammatory disease of the skin," from Middle Latin *cingulus* (loan-translation of Greek *zoster* "girdle"), variant of Latin *cingulum* "girdle," from *cingere* "to gird."

Encarta: Scientists theorize that during an attack of chicken pox, the virus may invade large clusters of neurons (nerve cells) found on either side of the spinal cord. The virus may live dormant within these neurons for years, held in check by the immune system.

- **18th Century** - William Heberden established a way to differentiate between herpes zoster and smallpox
- **19th Century** - Herpes zoster was differentiated from erysipelas.
- **1861** - Felix von Bärungsprungin confirmed that the disease arose from the dorsal root ganglion.
- **1995** - FDA approved a chicken pox vaccine, which reduced the number of chicken pox cases in some regions by 90 percent.
- **2006** – FDA approved a more potent vaccine that was successful in preventing shingles among Americans over 60 years of age.

Conventional Wisdom: Shingles = A Band of Excruciating Pain

M of Z: The best defense is to strengthen your immune system