

Your Monthly Update

Dear Colleague

Welcome to the September 2009 newsletter from Pure Bio Ltd.

Did you know:

In a study of 64,000 men, researchers at the Washington University School of Medicine found that annual PSA screening over six years detected more incidences of prostate cancer, but did not lead to fewer deaths than seen amongst those who were screened only when their doctor advised it.

The chosen topic for this month is:

Shingles

Protocol Summary

Ranking	Nutritional Supplements	Botanical Medicine
Primary		Cayenne (topical; for pain only)
Secondary		Peppermint oil (topical; for post-herpetic neuralgia)
Other	Adenosine monophosphate (injection) Lysine Vitamin B12 (injection) Vitamin E Vitamin C dl-Phenylalanine	Licorice (topical) Wood betony
<p>Primary – Reliable and relatively consistent scientific data showing a substantial health benefit.</p> <p>Secondary – Contradictory, insufficient, or preliminary studies suggesting a health benefit or minimal health benefit.</p> <p>Other – An herb is primarily supported by traditional use, or the herb or supplement has little scientific support and/or minimal health benefit.</p>		

Symptoms

Varicella zoster, the virus that causes shingles, is a herpes virus. Shingles, or herpes zoster, is an acute infection caused by reactivation of the chickenpox virus. Shingles

is known for its extreme pain and long healing time, although not all infections are so severe. It typically appears along one nerve branch on one side, along the back and chest or on the face. Before the characteristic skin blistering develops, the skin is highly sensitive and burns with pain a few days or even two weeks before the eruption. Shingles can also begin with general flu-like symptoms of aching, chills and fever. As the condition progresses, the skin becomes red and very painful to touch. When groups of water-filled blisters emerge, the diagnosis is clear. As the eruptions heal, they open and form crusts.

In most cases, the period of recovery is about two or three weeks from the appearance of the rash, though the nerve pains can last longer. Scarring is not common, though it can occur. Although shingles can resolve as a normal infection does, in some cases and particularly in the elderly, nerve pain lasts years after the skin symptoms subside. Shingles on the face can also affect the eye and cause serious complications. It is more likely to occur in those over the age of fifty, though it appears at any age.

Causes

The pain of shingles is caused by an inflammation of the nerve that lies just beneath the skin's surface due to the reactivation of the viral infection. After the relatively moderate childhood illness of chicken pox, the virus retreats to the nervous system where it remains. It reappears in the form of shingles, only if the immune system is weakened, or as a result of a more severe or lengthy illness, extreme stress, or a therapy involving suppression of the immune system. Overall health and nutrition often determine the severity of illness and length of recovery.

Dietary Modification

Another herpes virus, herpes simplex virus (HSV), has a high requirement for arginine. On the other hand, lysine inhibits HSV replication. Therefore, a diet that is low in arginine and high in lysine may help prevent herpes viruses from replicating. For that reason, some practitioners advise people with shingles to avoid foods with high arginine-to-lysine ratios, such as nuts (especially peanuts) and chocolate. Non-fat yogurt and other non-fat dairy is one way to increase lysine intake. This dietary advice for shingles has not been subjected to scientific study.

Whole grains and legumes provide B vitamins, which are important for nerve health. Eggs and fish provide vitamins B12 and B1, which are especially important in treating shingles. Yellow, orange and green vegetables - particularly carrots - and citrus fruits provide vitamins A and C, which assist in the healing of skin lesions. Green, leafy vegetables provide calcium and magnesium, important for the health of nerve endings and the transmission of nerve impulses.

Lifestyle Modification

Stress and depression have been linked to outbreaks of shingles in some, but not all, studies. A small, preliminary study found that four children with shingles outbreaks, but who were otherwise healthy, all reported experiencing severe, chronic child abuse when the shingles first appeared. Among adults, how a stressful event is

perceived appears to be more important than the event itself. In one study, people with shingles experienced the same kinds of life events in the year preceding the illness as did people without the condition; however, recent events perceived as stressful were significantly more common among people with shingles.

Nutritional Supplement Treatment Options

Adenosine monophosphate (AMP), a compound that occurs naturally in the body, has been found to be effective against shingles outbreaks. In one double-blind trial, people with an outbreak of shingles were given injections of either 100 mg of AMP or placebo three times a week for four weeks. Compared with the placebo, AMP promoted faster healing and reduced the duration of pain of the shingles. In addition, AMP appeared to prevent the development of post-herpetic neuralgia.

Some practitioners have observed that injections of vitamin B12 appear to relieve the symptoms of post-herpetic neuralgia. Oral [vitamin B12](#) supplements have not been tested, but they are likely to have less impact against post-herpetic neuralgia.

Some practitioners have found [vitamin E](#) to be effective for people with post-herpetic neuralgia—even those who have had the problem for many years. The recommended amount of vitamin E orally is 400 – 800 IU per day for short-term neuralgia; and up to 1,200–1,600 IU per day (*this is a very high dose and should thus be monitored very carefully*). In addition, vitamin E oil (30 IU per gram) can be applied to the skin. Several months of continuous vitamin E use may be needed in order to see an improvement.

[Vitamin C](#) is excellent for supporting the immune system and acts as an antiviral agent. Vitamin C should be taken up to bowel tolerance and withdrawn from therapy on a gradual basis to avoid a rebound deficiency. Bioflavonoids improve the absorption and use of vitamin C in the body and should be taken as well.

[Phenylalanine](#), relieves pain as it inhibits the breakdown of the body's own endorphins.

Other supplements that help include [zinc](#) with [copper](#), and [coenzyme Q10](#). Drink aloe vera juice daily, as well as green juices.

Botanical Treatment Options

The hot component of cayenne pepper, known as [capsaicin](#), is used to relieve the pain of post-herpetic neuralgia. In a double-blind trial, a cream containing 0.075% capsaicin, applied TID–QID to the painful area, greatly reduced pain. In another study, a preparation containing a lower concentration of capsaicin (0.025%) was also effective. Two or more weeks of treatment may be required to get the full benefit of the cream.

One case report has been published concerning a patient with post-herpetic neuralgia who experienced dramatic analgesia from topical application of 2 to 3 drops of [peppermint oil](#) to the affected area 3 or 4 times per day. Each application produced almost complete analgesia, lasting approximately 6 hours. The woman began to experience redness at the site of application after four weeks of use. The oil

was therefore diluted by 80% with almond oil; the diluted preparation did not cause redness, and continued to produce "adequate" though somewhat less-pronounced analgesia.

[Licorice](#) has been used by doctors as a topical agent for shingles and post-herpetic neuralgia. Glycyrrhizin, one of the active components of licorice, has been shown to block the replication of *Varicella zoster*. Licorice gel is usually applied three or more times per day. Licorice gel is not widely available but an adequate alternative is to mix licorice tincture with an aqueous gel or cream and apply.

Wood betony(*Stachys betonica*) is a traditional remedy for various types of nerve pain. It has not been studied specifically as a remedy for post-herpetic neuralgia.

Since shingles affects the nerves, herbal remedies for support to the nerves are a valuable support to the treatment of this disease.

- [St. John's wort](#) and [horsetail juice](#) help rebuild nerves..
- [Cabbage-leaf poultices](#) help absorb toxins and speed healing.
- Intestinal tract cleansing with extract or tincture of black walnut, [comfrey](#), [kelp](#) and [lady's slipper](#) along with [aloe vera juice](#) daily helps remove toxins which irritate the skin.
- Drink [goldenrod](#) and [rose hip tea](#) three times daily to stimulate the kidneys.
- Mix 1 part [tea tree oil](#) with ten parts olive oil or any other cold-pressed oil. Warm mixture and apply to painful area two to three times daily until pain subsides. Add 10 drops of tea tree oil to warm water to wash the affected areas. Pat dry with a cotton cloth and apply drying powder to open blisters or dab on fresh plant extract of lemon balm and calendula.
- [Echinacea](#) in high dosages works well for pain control. Take 1 tsp. of the tincture hourly or more often as required.

Homeopathy

Use the 6c strength, dissolving 2 tablets under the tongue four times daily until symptoms improve.

- **Rhus tox** is useful when blisters emerge that are not only painful but very itchy, and warmth brings relief. The pain is worse at night and less noticeable when moving about.
- **Arsenicum album** is another common remedy for shingles that are relieved by warmth and are worse at night, causing great restless anxiety. The skin burns with pain.
- **Mezereum** helps itchy, oozing crusts to heal. The itching is worse with warmth. Lasting neuralgic pains that shoot along the nerve after the skin has healed are often helped by this remedy.
- Use **Ranunculus bulbosus** for severe burning and itching, which gets worse from touching the skin, moving about or eating.
- If swelling and stinging pains predominate, improve with cold and become aggravated by heat, use **Apis**.

Tissue Salts

Take 4 tablets under the tongue four times daily.

- **Ferr phos** is effective in the first stage of inflammation with burning pain.
- **Kali phos** is the chief tissue salt in the case of shingles with watery, itchy blisters; especially if due to overexcitement, stress or worry.
- **Nat mur** is indicated when the blisters are filled with clear, watery substance and there is burning and itching.
- Alternatively, use **Kali mur** if the blisters contain white pus.

External/Physical Therapies

During an outbreak, apply healing clay or quark compresses.

Vinegar compresses help to relieve nerve pain. After the shingles attack subsides and the blisters dry up, mix 1/2 cup of apple cider vinegar with 2 cups of water, moisten a clean cotton face-cloth with this solution; wring slightly and rub affected area with the moist towel upwards towards the heart. Repeat this procedure uninterrupted for an hour daily, if needed.

Other Suggestions

- Intravenous vitamin C can halt shingles before infection becomes serious. It also reduces the pain associated with this disorder.
- Zinc ointments applied topically to the blisters speeds healing.

Integrative Options

Acupuncture may be helpful in some cases of shingles and post-herpetic neuralgia. Anecdotal case reports of people treated with electroacupuncture (acupuncture with applied electrical current) described improvement in seven of eight people.

Hypnosis has improved or cured some cases of post-herpetic neuralgia, as well as the acute pain of shingles.

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