FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Health & Fitness

Living With Shingles: New Hope For An Old Disease
Gray Williams Jr.
Mary-Ellen Siegel
978-0-87131-965-4
(February 25, 2002)

For anyone who has had chicken pox, the potential for shingles is lurking inside you. Mary-Ellen Siegel, an instructor at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, and Gray Williams Jr. (The Fight Against Pain, The TMJ Book) explain the virus and its activities in very easy-to-understand language. They are realistic, blunt and extremely thorough. Apparently, having chickenpox once is enough to make your immune system stand up straight and march when it comes to keeping you from getting it again. Yet the virus stays inside of us waiting for the immune system to blink, then comes back as shingles in about 20 percent of the population—about 850,000 people each year.

The *New Hope* in the title is the chickenpox vaccine. This hasn't been proven to prevent shingles, but these authors seem pretty confident. Shingles is mainly a rash and, if caught early, can be treated with antiviral medication. It's the after-effect—Post-Herpetic Neuralgia—that is really painful. It may be over in a few weeks but could last up to a year and it's not easy to predict who's going to get it.

Which brings up the *Living With* in the title. Shingles won't kill you, but you may want to die anyway. The pain afterward is so distressing, some people can't even bear to wear clothes. The authors go through many, many options, ranging from aspirin to hypnosis. They give the goods and bads of each, explaining specifically how each remedy helps.

The best thing, of course, is to get early treatment. But even that's not a cakewalk because the early symptoms (headache, muscle pains) are fairly ambiguous. The rash is the telltale sign. It usually shows up in one place of your body, mainly near your trunk, but it can also show up on your face, which brings up a whole new set of worries ranging from pinkeye to glaucoma.

This book tells you everything you would ever need to know about shingles. The authors explain several pain-management techniques and the differences between types of medications

and other information that’s helpful even if you don’t have shingles. If you know someone who wants to know the nitty gritty details of shingles, this is the resource to recommend.

Jodee Taylor