

# Itching to get rid of shingles

It's hard to imagine a scorching hot day as we climb out of the winter cold, but one day in June last year we had a Saharan heat wave which for most of us was just what we wanted. For Alicia Swaithe the warmth was uncomfortable as she drove her car along the road. Quite naturally she turned her air conditioning on and was met by a flow of super heated air instead, and she realised that the cooling system had failed. She remembers cursing the red lights that seemed to crop up all too regularly and by the time she arrived at her destination she was in a high state of heat fatigue.

Well, she got out into the warmth of a beating sun and began to walk. The next thing she remembered was picking herself up off the ground; she'd fainted and fallen. Worse still her arm had become entangled in her glasses chain around her neck during the fall so that when she'd impacted the road her elbow had slammed into her ribs; she'd also hit her head on the tarmac. Understandably Alicia was shaken up and in a lot of pain. What followed over the next few days was not a gradual recovery but an acute attack of shingles; immensely painful going from her left eye, over her skull and round the back of her head. It was agonising to touch; even allowing hair to stroke the skin was unbearable. Sleep was almost impossible too, even her ability to walk properly had been impaired.

Her doctor gave her a cocktail of five different pills to manage the pain side of things and a mixture of oils and creams for the skin irritation. The big worry was that the shingles would move beyond the skin itself and invade her left eye. It was a great concern for a while that she would have become blinded if that had occurred. It was a very difficult time to live through and Alicia is quite adamant that she would have done anything to get better. Life closed in on her usual



*Alicia and David, the couple who defeated shingles, along with five thousand years of Chinese medical knowhow of course!*

vivacious personailty and she became a self-made recluse just to cope. Even eating had lost its appeal and she began to become very thin and drawn. Trying to stop scratching the affected area became a daily battle. Oddly enough the way ahead came through the experience of David, Alicia's husband. Previously David's back pain had been cured through acupuncture and so he suggested they nip into Grantham to see what the Chinese Herbcare and Acupuncture Centre on the High Street could do. David had gone in

for acupuncture in great pain and poor mobility. After just one session he'd felt as if he could have jumped over a wall. Everything hung on what acupuncture could do for Alicia.

She arrived looking very frail and grey and lay on the couch hoping this would be her salvation. Dr. Ma, the centre's resident practitioner placed the micro-thin needles in Alicia's brow and the back of her ear. After the first session a great amount of pain had begun to fade. The Chinese medicine in pill form did the rest, putting back into her body the necessary elements that were needed to reverse the illness. Amazingly it all worked. There's no sign that the shingles had ever been there, she's putting on weight and feeling like meeting people again. More importantly she has rediscovered the vibrant sense of herself, much to the delight of her husband, who feels as if he's finally got the woman he loves back again. Together they faced this awful illness as a team and with a bit of ancient Chinese knowhow managed to find a way back to health and happiness once more.



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