One in three people develop shingles in their lifetime. What’s behind this epidemic? A virus that causes both chickenpox and shingles, Varicella-zoster virus (VZV)1. VZV is a member of the herpes family - whose other members are responsible for cold sores and genital herpes1.  The first infection with VZV causes chickenpox2.  Once the you clear the chickenpox, VZV becomes **latent** - it’s still present in your body, but it’s now hiding from your immune system in nerve cells i.e. neurons3.  If the VZV re-activates, you develop shingles3.  Both chickenpox and shingles have dangerous side effects. You need your immune system to protect you and help you clear both infections. Thankfully, we now have vaccines for both chickenpox and shingles to prevent us from getting sick in the first place. Hopefully, we can eradicate chickenpox and shingles in the future so they become a distant memory like small pox.