

GRAB BAG

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word nerd

By RYAN HUME

R [ar•eks]

noun

1. a ligature and symbol used to abbreviate the term, "prescription." R is also written out as the subscript, *R_x*, or more commonly as the double glyph, *Rx*

Origin:

Ligatures — a type of shorthand that blends

two separate letters into a symbol, like the ampersand for example — arose before the introduction of the printing press around 1440 as a way for scribes, who handwrote manuscripts, to produce work or copies faster.

R is first noticed in medieval manuscripts as an abbreviation for the imperative Latin, *recipe!*, meaning "take!," which is the command form of the verb, *recipere*, "to take" or "to receive."

Travelling through Middle French as *récipé*, around the 1580s, with the same

direct connotation, it originally retained its verb status when it entered the English language and medical jargon later. Legend has it that even the first doctor to use the R symbol used it as a verb, as in the hypothetical, "R two and call me in the morning."

Both the word *recipe* and the abbreviation R were originally synonymous with both the definitions of "medical prescription" and "to prepare food."

"The Veggie Prescription program — Veggie Rx, for short — allows people to get \$20 worth of vouchers

at a time to use at local farmers markets or grocery stores. Local hospitals are joining up with the nonprofit to identify people who need a reliable source of food. The idea is that it's not enough for local produce to be available, if it's not affordable for everyone."

— Molly Harbarger, "Columbia Gorge 'Veggie Rx' program writes prescription for free food," OregonLive, oregonlive.com, June 11, 2015

"The Columbia Gorge Region is a winner of the 2016 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize. One of the community's successful initiatives is a "Veggie Rx" program. Veggie Rx is administered by OCFNS Member organization Gorge Grown Food Network and was developed in partnership with Lauren Kraemer of Oregon State University Extension's Family & Community Health (FCH) program. The Veggie Rx program "prioritizes food not just theoretically or through nutritional advice, but on the ground by screening patients for their food needs," says Sarah Sullivan, executive director of Gorge Grown."

— Tori Wilder, "2016 Culture of Health Prize Winner: Columbia Gorge Region Veggie



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Rx Program,"The Oregon Community Food Systems Network, Sept. 28, 2016

"Forty organizations, including Oregon State University and the Oregon Food Bank, have teamed up to strengthen local food systems and connect growers who struggle to find markets with buyers who struggle to obtain healthful food ... (The organization) is called the Oregon Community Food Systems ... Jump-started with funding from the Meyer Memorial Trust, network members settled

on four primary initiatives (including the establishment of) a "Veggie Rx" program, in which doctors could write a prescription for healthful food as they would for medicine. A program in Hood River initiated by Gorge Grown allows doctors to give patients \$30 vouchers that can only be used to buy fresh fruit and vegetables. In the past year, the program helped 6,500 people buy food."

— Eric Mortenson, "Network will help Oregon growers, buyers connect," *The Daily Astorian*, Nov. 7, 2016

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