



“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”

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It's Cold and Flu Season

Chinese Herbs for the Common Cold

These days, medical doctors are thinking twice before prescribing antibiotics for the common cold, and with good reason. Overuse has led bacteria to evolve into “super bugs” that are stronger and more resistant to standard antibiotics. These medications can also lead to side effects such as diarrhea, rash and tendonitis depending on the type used and the health of the patient. Lastly, a more obvious reason to reduce their use is that antibiotics don't actually fight against the viruses that cause cold and flu. It has long been said that there is no cure for the common cold, but in fact, the Chinese have been treating it with herbal therapy for over a thousand years with great success.

It is a comprehensive approach that involves fighting the pathogen, relieving symptoms, and bolstering the immune system. Traditional Chinese medicine is especially successful at treating the common cold for three reasons. First, it is effective because of its differentiation between the various types of infection based on presenting symptoms. Second, it is effective because of its careful consideration of a patient's prior health

picture. Third, it is effective because it recognizes the different stages of an infection and how to treat accordingly. If a cold is treated with herbs and sweating within the first 24 hours, or first stage, of being caught, barring that the immune system is not impaired, you can literally kick the virus out of the body before it takes hold. The Chinese talk about the catching of a cold as a wind invasion. The virus does literally come via the wind as it is an airborne pathogen that is breathed in or absorbed through the mucous membranes. Wind invades the exterior layer first, initiating immune cell activity at the most surface layer of our body. Cinnamon Twig Decoction (Gui Zhi Tang) is the classic formula to use at this initial stage. The chief ingredients cinnamon and ginger quicken the blood, dilate the blood vessels and open the pores plus offer some antimicrobial support to the immune system. Along with taking a hot bath to encourage a sweat and going to bed early this is a great strategy for nipping a cold in the bud before it starts. If you wake up on the second day and still have symptoms, then you know you are in for it and will have a full blown immune response. Look on the bright side, it is actually

good for you, leaves your immune system stronger than before and forces you to take that desperately needed down time that your body is requiring.

That being said, it is entirely possible to curtail symptoms and speed up recovery time with herbal medicine. The advantage to taking herbs rather than over the counter medications is that they work with your body's natural processes, assisting the immune system to deal with the pathogen faster, whereas, OTC medications masks symptoms by impeding the natural healing processes.

Traditional Chinese Medicine offers an excellent alternative that takes into account a patient's unique presentation. This means that a person presenting with a productive cough with yellow sputum and body aches is treated with a different herbal formula than one presenting with more sinus congestion and a headache. Ultimately, the use of herbs for a respiratory tract infection also helps ensure that there will not be symptoms such as cough and phlegm that linger long after the virus has run its course. This season if you catch a cold, treat it with Chinese herbs and see the difference!

Common Cold Prevention

Prevention is the best cure for the common cold this season. Here are a few easy tips that you can implement to keep your family healthy this winter.

1. Wash hands frequently
2. Clean your phone, doorknobs, etc. regularly
3. Avoid putting your fingers in your mouth, on your face, or up your nose
4. Cough or sneeze into a large tissue or your sleeve to avoid spreading germs
5. Avoid direct contact with people you know have a cold
6. If you have a fever, stay home...if someone you know has a fever, advise them to do the same
7. Avoid sugars and simple carbohydrates...they make you more susceptible to viruses and bacteria
8. Sleep, sleep, sleep
9. Exercise and fresh air is essential, but do not exercise if you have a fever
10. Avoid being out in the cold, damp Seattle weather for extended periods of time
11. Adequate fluid intake is essential
12. Consume chicken soup, garlic, onions, ginger, and Vitamin-C in copious amounts

If you do get sick:

1. Eat as little as possible and eat easily digested foods, like soups. (see our immune support soup)
2. Increase foods containing vitamin A and C
 - *Vitamin A: cantaloupe, apricots, carrots, broccoli, spinach
 - *Vitamin C: lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit, kiwi, papaya, strawberry, broccoli, bell peppers, cabbage
3. Drink plenty of fluids (water, teas)
4. AVOID heavy protein foods, fats, meats, shellfish, cow's milk and other dairy products, white bread, refined foods, processed foods, sugar, sweets
5. Constitutional Hydrotherapy- alternating hot and cold showers... always end on cold!
6. REST!
7. Gargle with salt water several times a day if you feel symptoms in your throat
8. Ask your Naturopath for immune supplements and other remedies

For additional information on exercise and immunity, check out Kindra's recent blog post, located here: <http://alpineintegratedmedicineblog.wordpress.com/2013/10/25/exercise-and-immune-health/>

Exercise and Immunity

Looking for some tips on when and how to exercise if you've managed to catch this season's cold or flu? Check out these handy guidelines from our trainer, Kindra.

1. If you feel a cold or flu coming on, rest is probably your best bet. If, however, you wish to exercise, attenuate the intensity. Depending on your fitness level, this could take the form of a brisk walk, light jog, or low-intensity circuit workout. Current research suggests that while moderate intensity exercise is associated with a reduction in cold and flu symptoms, strenuous exercise can trigger the opposite and leave you feeling worse.
2. Once you become ill, all signs point to avoiding strenuous exercise. Not only does strenuous exercise seem to be correlated with an increase in unpleasant cold and flu symptoms, but common sense dictates that

none of us are as coordinated or energetic once we are under the weather. Steer clear of Crossfit, heavy lifting, intense metabolic training, sprint intervals and the like, and for that matter, don't stress about taking a day off. The gym will still be there once you are back on your feet.

3. Finally, if you do choose to exercise while you are ill, please remember that your fellow group exercise classmates and gym-goers would prefer not to share in your plight. This goes for your trainer as well. If you are feeling under the weather, please stay home. A body weight circuit workout in your living room will be just as effective as heading to the gym, where someone else may pick up whatever you've come down with. If you choose to walk or jog, please take your workout to the streets as opposed to the treadmill, and remember to cover your cough.

Immune Support Soup



- 1 small yellow onion, chopped
- 1-5 cloves of garlic, chopped or crushed
- 1tsp-3Tbsp grated ginger
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1/4 - 1/2 c Shiitake mushrooms
- 1 qt miso/chicken/vegetable broth
- 3 Tbsp fresh minced parsley
- 1 grated carrot
- Cayenne to taste

Combine broth, onion, ginger, garlic, mushrooms, and carrot and simmer for 15-20 minutes. Remove from heat and add lemon juice and parsley. Put cover on and let sit for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with cayenne to taste and enjoy!

Additional immune support:
Add 1Tbsp Astragalus root at beginning of recipe.

This soup combines the antimicrobial elements of garlic, onion, ginger and Shiitake mushrooms while also using the warming and circulatory properties of garlic, ginger and cayenne. The idea is to increase and help circulate your body's antibodies. Therefore, don't be alarmed if you feel warm and maybe even a little sweaty, that is the idea!