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Cold and Flu

By: Dr. Jumy Kim, Acupuncturist, TCM Doctor

BACKGROUND

The Common Cold and Flu topic is the first chapter in most Traditional Chinese Medical texts. In traditional China, it was the most common ailment and if not treated properly could easily become a serious problem. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the most common of two distinct types is known as Wind-Cold and Wind-Heat. Wind is what carries the external pathogen into the body via the nose and mouth or our pores when open. Wind-Cold most often leads to sinus congestion, headache, upper back/neck stiffness, aversion to cold and low energy -- typical symptoms of a catch-cold. Wind-Heat often presents with a pronounced sore throat, fever, sweating, nausea/vomiting, and diarrhea -- typical symptoms of the flu.

Each requires its own unique treatment to be effective and the sooner the better to prevent pathogenic factors from going deeper. In both cases the aim is to expel the pathogen and restore Righteous Qi throughout the body. Additionally, heat may need to be cleared and fluids restored in Wind-Heat, while in Wind-Cold we often work to resolve damp-phlegm that accumulates in the sinus cavities and lungs.

SYMPTOMS

Katherine, 45-year-old woman, sought acupuncture treatment for a lingering cough, fever, sore throat, swollen tonsils, headaches and



body-aches, fatigue, and vertigo. These symptoms had persisted for a month. Because she was used to enjoying robust health, she wondered if her immune system had been weakened by the illness. She had recently moved back to San Francisco, and the last few months had been rather stressful. She appeared to be a generally happy, vigorous woman.

EXAMINATION

Examination revealed a slightly pale tongue with some red papillae at the front and a thickened, somewhat damp, yellowish-white tongue coating indicating that the pathogenic factors were still present in the lung, stomach and intestines. Her pulse had slightly pounding and inflated qualities at the lung position along with tense, pounding, and slippery qualities at the stomach position. Her condition was a manifestation of a Wind invasion that had penetrated into the lung and stomach due to an insufficiency of Qi and Wei, resulting in the accumulation of dampness and phlegm. In order to evict the pathogenic factors, it would be necessary to strengthen the stomach channel so that she could generate more Qi, which in turn would augment the Wei and strengthen the lung. To summarize, the treatment plan would be to restore the body's health by clearing the exterior pathogens that resulted in symptoms of illness.

TREATMENT

Acupuncture is great for activating the Lung and Wei (Defensive) Qi of the body to help expel the pathogen while clearing heat or warming the cold to restore health quickly and without side-effects. By placing needles on specific acupuncture points along the lung, stomach and other channels of the body that are affected by the common cold and in this case, the flu, Katherine was on her way in healing from the flu. Herbal medicines work in similar ways, but can also kill the pathogen and more effectively resolve mucous. Together acupuncture and herbs are a powerful combination that have worked wonders for many people over thousands of years. After three treatments during a span of 10 days, Katherine felt so much relief from the symptoms she once had at the beginning of her first visit. She was restored in body and returned to her routine of work and exercise.

Prevention is always the best medicine.



Here are some preventative measures from getting the common cold and flu.

1. Reduce stress – Stress activates the sympathetic nervous system which is primarily about 'fight or flight' drawing nutrition out of the organs and into the limbs to either stand up and fight or make a break for it. Without adequate resources the immune system is weak and body vulnerable to attack. Non-competitive exercise, being outdoors, meditation, and adequate sleep are just a few ways to reduce your stress.

2. Eat right – Once again this is about providing the necessary resources for your immune system while avoiding foods and drinks that are harmful. Eating right means whole foods and all natural ingredients, not prepared foods and artificial ingredients.

3. Supplements and/or Herbs – When you can't get proper nourishment from your food, supplementation can be the key. Also herbal formulas offer customized solutions for your unique chemistry and can be modified to add a little extra immune boosting, pathogen fighting power.

4. Cover yourself – Wind carries external pathogens from one person to the next and we are more susceptible in colder weather. Be sure to keep yourself covered up especially around the upper back and neck.

5. Watch yourself – Wash your hands frequently and keep them (and those of your children) out of your mouth and nose! Also watch that your food and drink is not contaminated before making it to your mouth.

6. Acupuncture treatments are also recommended to boost the immune system and help the body to release stress and fatigue. Thus, the body will be able to protect itself from exterior pathogen invasions.

To book an appointment or free consultation with Dr. Jummy Kim, contact the Adelaide Health Clinic.