

Winter Newsletter



Some easy ways to stay Healthy this Winter.

Everyone dreads this time of year, as traditionally it's the "colds and flu season". However, there are many simple home remedies and basic lifestyle changes we can make to help protect ourselves this cold season.

"Wind is the spear-head of a thousand diseases"



This old Chinese medicine theory means that the wind carries many pathogens and illnesses. When we get hit by an icy cold blast, the wind scatters our defence Qi (which circulates between the muscles and the skin). This then allows pathogens, like colds and flus to enter our body.

Prevention:

Common sense always plays a big part here. If going out in the cold, especially at night, make sure you're warm and your neck is covered. If you've just been exercising (so your pores are open), you are extremely vulnerable to the elements, so stay covered if outside.

In Chinese medicine there are primarily 2 types of illnesses you'll catch: A wind-cold or wind-heat pathogen.

Initial symptoms of a Cold Pathogen:

- Aversion to wind and cold
- Chills/fever
- Muscle aches and pains
- Nasal congestion with clear discharge
- Headaches or dizziness

Initial symptoms of a Heat Pathogen:

- Aversion to wind and heat
- High Fever & Dizziness
- Muscle Aches
- A Sore Throat
- Nasal congestion with yellow discharge
- Thirst

So what do you do when you feel a cold/flu coming on?

The first 48hrs are crucial for fast action. If you treat yourself the moment you feel the symptoms occur you can expel the pathogen quickly and prevent yourself from falling seriously ill.

The best way to prevent illness is through the foods we eat

"Food is the first medicine"



Prevention through Diet

If you like spicy food, now is the time to increase your intake. As the environment is becoming cold and contracting, we combat it by eating pungent/warm/spicy food. Think about it logically. Our body has to work harder in the colder months to keep warm, so why not make it easier? Personally I have at least one meal a day with just a tiny bit of chilli in it. You don't need to add so much that you burn your mouth or even alter the flavour of the meal, but if you blow your nose even once after the meal, then it has done its job.

Herbs and spices like onion, horseradish, garlic, ginger, cinnamon, tumeric, paprika, pepper and chilli are perfect to add to your meals in these colder months.

If you feel a cold/flu coming on, go and have a nice spicy Tom Yum soup, or an Indian Curry. Some Sushi with Wasabi will also do wonders. The emphasis is on eating a nice hot spicy/pungent meal to combat the cold, open the pores and try to get you to sweat out the pathogen.

However, if you have a sore throat, a warm/pungent meal is suggested, but not too spicy, so as not to injure your already sore throat. A Thai Green curry is good, as it contains mint, which is pungent but cooling. You could also eat your meal with some hot mustard or horseradish, which are aromatic and pungent, but not burning hot like chilli or pepper. The aim is still to try and open the pores and promote sweating to expel the pathogen.

Whichever class of symptoms you're feeling, after you've eaten, rug up in a blanket, jump into bed and try and get a sweat going. **Remember to drink lots of water.**

If you feel a cold/flu coming on and are able to come into the clinic, remember acupuncture and herbs are very effective at this acute stage. The key with any form of treatment is fast action!

Here are some simple medicinal herbs you can make yourself, or buy at your local supermarket, to help you through this cold season:

Dried Chrysanthemum Flowers



Available at all Asian grocery stores in large bags for about \$3. Just tear off a couple of flowers and steep in some hot water for about 5-8 minutes to make a tea. This is good for either a cold or heat pathogen as it will help: induce sweating, ease fever, reduce headaches, dizziness and soothe a sore throat.

Fresh Mint Leaves



Available in bunches in the produce section of the supermarket. Try and buy one which has a strong scent. Break off a few leaves and make a tea. Perfect for a sore red throat. If your throat is very sore, let the tea cool a bit, but still try and drink it warm. The sore throat will disappear quickly. It's also good, as a general tea if you're feeling a cold or flu coming on, due to the mint's pungent nature.

Roasted Mandarin (Citrus) Peels



You can buy these in small bags in the spices section or at Asian/Indian grocery stores. They are very easy to make yourself. Keep all your mandarin peels, leave them out to dry for a couple of days. If it takes you a while to accumulate enough, keep them in an airtight container in the interim. Lay them out on an oven tray, heat the oven to 180 degrees, and cook them for 5-8 min. They should turn brown but not begin to char. Once cooled they should have a very strong citrus smell. Break off a piece the size of your thumbnail and make a tea out of it. This is good for any digestive problems such as: bloating, heartburn, over eating, food poisoning, diarrhoea, constipation or IBS.

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