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Acupuncture, the Natural Cold and Flu Remedy

This year there will be 1 billion colds and 95 million cases of the flu in the United States alone. While the misery of cold and flu season might be inevitable, one thing is changing: where we look for relief.



Acupuncture to Get Better Faster - If you have already come down with a cold or the flu, acupuncture treatments can help relieve symptoms you are currently experiencing including chills, fever, body aches, runny nose, congestion, sore throat and cough. While bringing some immediate relief, treatments will reduce the incidence of an upper respiratory tract infection and shorten the length of the illness.

Acupuncture for Prevention - Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can prevent colds and flu by strengthening the immune system with just a few needles inserted into key points along the body's energy pathways.

In Oriental Medicine, disease prevention begins with a protective layer around the exterior of the body called wei qi or defensive energy. There are acupuncture points known for strengthening the circulation of blood and energy and for consolidating the outer defense layers of the skin and muscle (Wei Qi) so that germs and viruses cannot enter through them.

If you catch colds easily, have low energy and require a long time recuperating from an illness your wei qi may be deficient.

Acupuncture Point: Du 14

One particularly important point to attend to is Du 14. Located below the spinous process of the seventh cervical vertebrae, approximately where the collar of a T-shirt sits on the neck.

Du 14 activates the circulation of blood and Qi to strengthen the outer defense layers of the skin and muscle (wei qi) so that germs and viruses cannot enter through them.

This point is often used to ward off as well as shorten the duration colds and flu.

Seasonal acupuncture treatments just four times a year also serve to tonify the inner organ systems and can correct minor annoyances before they become serious problems. Call us to see how we can help you stay healthy this season!

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Did you know that Miso Soup with Scallions is actually an ancient Chinese herbal remedy for colds?

In 300 AD famous herbalist, Ge Hong, wrote about Miso Soup with Scallions in a book called, *Bei ji zhou hou fang* or *Emergency Formulas to Keep Up One's Sleeve*.

This soup is indicated for the onset of a cold when a person is just beginning to feel a headache, stuffy nose and a slight fever.

So, the next time you feel a cold coming on, be sure to have your miso!

Staying Healthy

Seasonal changes affect the body's environment. With wind, rain and snow comes the colds, flus and the aches and pains that accompany them – Good lifestyle and hygiene habits are proven to reduce your risk of getting sick.

Wash Your Hands– Studies have shown that one of the main reasons that we catch colds and flu in cold weather is that we are indoors and in closer vicinity to others. Protect yourself by washing your hands regularly and try not to touch your face.

Sleep In - The Nei Ching, an ancient Chinese classic, advised people to go to sleep early, rest well and rise late, after the sun's rays have warmed the atmosphere a bit. This preserves your own Yang Qi for the task of warming the body.

Stress Less - Find a release valve for your stress. According to Chinese medicine, stress, frustration, and unresolved anger can play an important part in throwing the immune system off and allowing pathogens to affect the body. Find a way to relax and release stress on a daily basis. Such methods may include yoga, meditation and exercise. Acupuncture has been shown to be effective in the treatment of stress, anxiety and depression.

Seasonal Tune-Up - Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can prevent colds and flu by building up the immune system with just a few needles inserted into key points along the body's energy pathways. These points are known for strengthening the circulation of blood and energy and for consolidating the outer defense layers of the skin and muscle (wei Qi) so that germs and viruses cannot enter through them.

Seasonal acupuncture treatments also serve to tonify the inner organ systems and correct minor annoyances before they become serious problems.

Miso Soup

Serves 4

Ingredients:

6 cups water
3-4 Tablespoons Aka Miso or red soy bean paste (usually sold in the refrigerated section)
3-5 green onions stalks, chopped

Directions:

- * Dissolve the miso in a little bit of boiling water (about 2 tsp.)
- * Bring water to a boil in a saucepan and add the miso & scallions.
- * Simmer for 5-10 minutes.
- * Remove from heat top with green onions and serve.

Variations: Add other ingredients to make a more substantial soup, such as tofu, fresh mushrooms, cooked shrimp, snow pea sprouts, cooked rice noodles, or paper-thin slices of fresh ginger.

Flu Vaccines: Should I Get One?

Hello everyone,

Every autumn I hear the question, "Should I get a flu shot?". The latest recommendation from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) is that everyone over the age of 6 months should get a flu vaccination. But, is this really a good idea? I never presume to make health care decisions for clients or family or friends, but evidence indicates that flu shots don't work, and can be harmful to your health.

Influenza is medically defined as "a contagious viral infection mainly affecting the nose, throat, airways, and lungs". There are several strains of viruses, classified as type A, B, or C, blamed for causing the flu. Each strain can mutate and change quickly.

Type A is credited with causing the worst flus; Type B is said to cause milder symptoms; Type C has not been associated with the annual plague of flu. A common cold is not considered to be the flu. "Stomach flu" is not influenza.

Flu vaccine formulas change every year. Usually in the spring, three flu strains are chosen based on guesswork, flu outbreaks in Asia, and recommendations from the World Health Organization. The guess is frequently wrong. According to vaccine researcher Tom Jefferson, MD, the flu is not caused by a single 'bug'; about one third of all influenza is caused by an unknown agent; another one third is caused by rhinoviruses, the same viruses that cause the common cold; and the remainder are a mixed bag of other agents including influenza A and B viruses and members of the coronavirus family.

Studies from the CDC showed that each year virtually the same percentages of people suffer from flu-like symptoms whether they are vaccinated or not. The researchers concluded that the flu vaccine "was not effective or had very low effectiveness". Besides being mostly ineffective, typical ingredients in the flu vaccines include toxins such as aluminum hydroxide, thimerosal (which contains mercury), and phenol (a potential carcinogen), among other additives.

No one really knows how many people actually get the flu or how many die of it. Since the 1990s, the annual number of estimated deaths has been 36,000. Ninety percent of those who die are over the age of 65. It might be more accurate to say they die of a flu-like illness than to say they die of the flu. This is because underlying complications such as respiratory or cardiac diseases that people had before contracting the flu make fighting the flu that much more difficult. In people with chronic illnesses in general, their immune system is already stressed or compromised, making it harder to cope with the flu.

The number of reported influenza deaths has remained essentially the same during the last few decades despite the fact that the number of people getting a flu shot has increased substantially. The number of hospitalizations due to influenza has remained unchanged, as well. The vaccines have had no effect.

Did the famous H1N1 flu vaccine prevent a flu epidemic last year? Do you remember all the hoopla and fear mongering by the drug companies, the medical community, and the FDA about the pandemic we were facing? The U.S. government spent \$1.8 billion to produce the vaccine. The vaccine itself was rushed to production with little thought to safety testing. It turns out there was no epidemic and the people who received the vaccine fared no better than the non-vaccinated. The drug companies, however, did quite well. Not that I'm cynical!

But the flu vaccines are safe, right? No they are not safe or harmless. There are pitifully few studies on safety. Adverse event reporting is done for only 2-14 days after the vaccine is administered, whereas negative effects may occur later on. People with egg allergies should not get the flu shot because it's made in fertilized chicken eggs. The safety of the flu shot in children "has not been adequately studied in large populations", according to a report in the Journal of the American Medical Association. At least 2 studies found an increased risk for Guillain-Barre syndrome in people getting flu vaccines. Guillain-Barre is a neurological disorder which can cause temporary paralysis as well as permanent residual disability.

There are 2 types of flu vaccine: live-virus nasal spray and dead-virus injectable vaccine. The live- virus spray is not recommended for people with immune problems or chronic illness as it can cause any and all flu symptoms. The dead-virus vaccine contains preservatives and other additives such as ethylene glycol (anti-freeze), formaldehyde (a known carcinogen), aluminum (associated with Alzheimer's disease and seizures), and thimerosal (a mercury-based preservative). Mercury is implicated in autoimmune diseases and almost all neurological problems.

A doctor who has worked for many years in labs of major pharmaceutical companies and the NIH says "all vaccines are dangerous". They involve the immune system "in a process that tends to compromise immunity". Dr Tom Jefferson says "there is no knowledge whatsoever that these vaccines are safe".

So, if I'm not going to get a flu shot, what can I do to protect myself and my family and loved ones from the flu? The key to avoiding the flu is a strong immune system. Numerous nutrients and real, whole foods have demonstrated the ability to support immunity. Fresh fruits and vegetables are full of phytochemicals to keep cells healthy. Eliminate processed foods, sugars, caffeine, and trans fats. Get plenty of sleep. This is especially important in the colder weather, as our bodies need more time for repair and rejuvenation. Exercise regularly to boost immunity. Echinacea can be a helpful addition to your daily regimen. It supports a healthy functioning immune system. The homeopathic remedy Oscilloccinum is a very effective, natural remedy to take when you are around someone who has the flu, or if you feel like you might be getting it. If taken within the first 24 hours especially, it can be very efficacious.

Please contact me with any questions you have or for more information about flu vaccines and how to prevent the flu with natural means.

To your continued good health,

David Mortell, Registered Acupuncturist
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