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## Staying Healthy during Cold and Flu Season

This year it is predicted that 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.

The easiest way to protect against the flu is to have a healthy immune system. However, that doesn't mean you still won't come into contact with airborne virus particles. That's why your first line of defense against the flu, or any other illness, is to strengthen your immune system.



When it comes to staying healthy during cold and flu season, acupuncture and Oriental medicine have a lot to offer. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help 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 by focusing on the protective layer around the exterior of the body called Wei Qi or defensive energy. The Wei Qi involves acupuncture points known for strengthening the circulation of blood and energy to boost your body's defenses.

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can also provide relief and faster healing if you have already come down with a cold or the flu by helping to 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 also reduce the incidence of an upper respiratory tract infection and shorten the length of the illness.

### **Boost your Wei Qi and Stay Healthy**

"To treat disease that has already developed is comparable to the behavior of those persons who begin to dig a well after they have become thirsty, and of those who begin to cast weapons after they have already engaged in battle. Would these actions not be too late?" - Huangdi Neijing

Seasonal changes affect the body's environment. With wind, rain and snow come the colds, flu viruses and the aches and pains that accompany them.

If you catch colds easily, have low energy and require a long time recuperating from an illness your Wei Qi may be deficient. Through the process of evaluating subtle physical signs as well as the emotional condition of a person, practitioners of acupuncture and Oriental medicine can detect health problems in their earliest stages, before a person becomes gravely ill.

Once the nature of an imbalance has been determined, a customized program can be created for you. Your treatment may include acupuncture, herbal therapy and Tui Na, as well as food, exercise and lifestyle recommendations.

### **Schedule a 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.

### **Wash Your Hands:**

Good lifestyle and hygiene habits are also proven to reduce your risk of getting sick. 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 from picking up germs by washing your hands regularly and remembering 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. Even busy, working people can boost their health by sleeping in on weekends.

### **Stress Less:**

Find a release valve for your stress. According to Oriental 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 acupuncture treatments also serve to tonify the inner organ systems and can correct minor annoyances before they become serious problems. Call today to see how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you stay healthy this season!

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## **Chronic Cough? Find Relief with Acupuncture?**

A chronic cough is more than just a nuisance and may cause some serious disruptions to a person's health. Any cough persisting for more than 8 weeks in adults, or more than 4 weeks for children, is considered a chronic cough.

Coughing attacks during the night can interrupt sleep, resulting in day-time fatigue and drowsiness. Coughing episodes can also cause vomiting, dizziness, headaches, urinary incontinence, loss of consciousness, and rib fractures.

The most common causes of a chronic cough are smoking, post nasal drip, asthma and acid reflux. Other culprits are chronic bronchitis, the flu, pneumonia, whooping cough and certain blood pressure medications. Although less likely, lung cancer or cystic fibrosis can cause a chronic cough as well. Signs and symptoms that often accompany a chronic cough include runny nose, constant need to clear the throat, difficulty breathing, sour taste in the mouth, or spitting up blood or sputum.

When treating a chronic cough, it is important to address the underlying cause, or root cause, as it is known according to the philosophy of acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. Once the root cause is cleared up, the chronic cough will clear up. However, no matter what organs need rebalancing to address the root cause, treatment of the lungs is necessary.

Uncontrollable coughing represents a risky, potentially dangerous characteristic known as 'rebellious Qi.' Qi is the most fundamental energy essential for all forms of life. Just as it sounds, rebellious Qi flows in the wrong direction and causes health problems. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help soothe and eliminate risk factors that can contribute to a chronic cough such as smoking or acid reflux.

One of the biggest risk factors is smoking tobacco, and stopping this habit is a necessity. Reducing chemical dependencies helps reduce a patient's craving and assists the body in detoxifying harmful substances. In the case of acid reflux, acupuncture treatments can help the stomach from forcing digestive juices upwards. As the acid reflux subsides, chronic coughing should lessen as well.



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## Get Seasonal Allergy Relief

About 26 million Americans endure chronic seasonal allergies, while the number of people with milder symptoms may be as high as 40 million, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

Acupuncture has been used to treat seasonal allergies for centuries with great success. According to traditional medicine, treatment is directed toward clearing the nasal passages, supporting the immune system and strengthening the systems of the body to prevent allergic reactions from recurring.



Commonly called hay fever or allergic rhinitis, a seasonal allergy is an allergic reaction to a trigger that is typically only present for part of the year, such as spring or fall. Pollens spread by the wind is usually the main cause of seasonal allergies.

People who are allergic to pollen are also often sensitive to dust mites, animal dander, and mold. Airborne mold spores can be found almost year-round, along with other common allergens such as dust, dust mites, and animal dander.

Seasonal allergies are caused by the body's hypersensitivity to substances in the environment. Symptoms primarily involve the membrane lining the nose, causing allergic rhinitis, or the membrane lining the eyelids and covering the whites of the eyes, causing allergic conjunctivitis.

While there are many medications to treat the symptoms of seasonal allergies, these treatments can cause unwanted side effects, such as drowsiness and immune system suppression as well as an over-reliance on medications. These side effects have motivated many people to search for alternative approaches like acupuncture and Oriental medicine to manage their allergies.

When treating with acupuncture, underlying imbalances within the body are addressed and a treatment plan is developed to relieve the acute symptoms of allergic rhinitis while also treating the root problems that are contributing to the body's reaction to allergens. Treatments often include dietary modification, the use of specifically chosen herbal formulas and acupuncture.

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.

**If you experience seasonal allergies, now is the time to schedule an appointment. Call for a consultation today!**

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