

Patient Help Sheet

Cold Prevention

Here are some tips that you can use to help balance and support your health during this time. Please feel free to call me if you have further questions or concerns.

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." -Benjamin Franklin

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Cold and flu season usually occurs during the fall and winter months. The common cold doesn't follow a schedule though and it can occur at any time of the year. The common cold affects nearly 3 million people in the United States every year. Symptoms can include a runny nose, sneezing, congestion, coughing, sinus pressure, watery eyes, fatigue and muscle aches and pains. The cold is usually caused by a virus and unfortunately, conventional medicine has no real cure for this ailment.

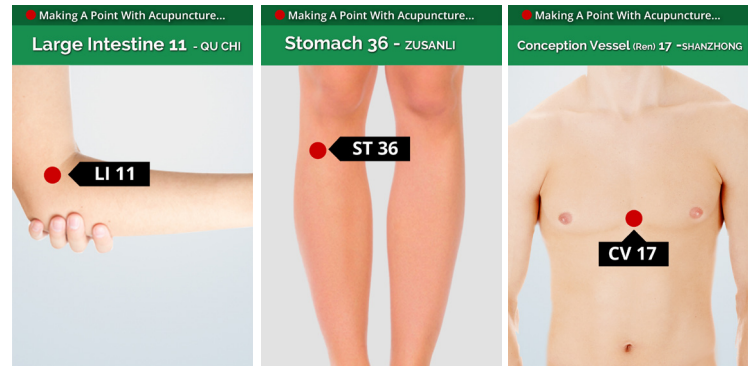
Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is a medical system that approaches ailments from a very different angle though. In TCM, wind is one of the six external pathogens that can invade the body and produce symptoms. The external pathogens responsible for the cold are seen as invasions of wind. The body is protected by something known as the Wei Qi (defensive Qi, pronounced "way chee").

The Wei Qi is comparable to the immune system in conventional medicine and acts as the first line of defense when the body is under attack from external pathogens. If the Wei Qi is strong, then the body is capable of fighting off the cold virus. The Wei Qi keeps the pores of the skin closed and prevents wind from entering. Extreme stress, lack of sleep and a poor diet can all play into how strong the body's Wei Qi truly is and how well it performs.

Acupuncture for Cold Prevention: As mentioned above, TCM treats the common cold by first focusing on the immune system or Wei Qi. To prevent colds, the Wei Qi needs to be strong. Regular acupuncture treatments can help boost the immune system, while balancing hormones that can also play into how the body functions to fight off a cold.

Chinese Herbs and Formulas for Cold Prevention:

Another important component of Traditional Chinese Medicine is the use of herbs and herbal formulas. Many times the herbs can be used alone, but there will be a more synergistic effect when the single herbs are combined to make a formula. One such herb is astragalus root, also known as Huang Qi. This herb specifically boosts the Wei Qi and helps prevent infection. A favorite herbal formula of practitioners is Yu Ping Feng San. This formula combines Huang Qi with two other herbs to boost and strengthen Wei Qi.



Acupuncture Points for Cold Prevention:

Large Intestine 11 This point can be found bilaterally at the outer end of the elbow crease created when the arm is flexed. Large intestine 11 is used to decrease inflammation throughout the body, while also stimulating immune function.

Stomach 36 Stomach 36 known as the Longevity Point, is located bilaterally on the lower outer leg. It can be found 1 finger-breadth from the border of the upper tibia and about 3 thumb-breadths below the lower border of the knee cap. This point boosts the energy of the body and stimulates the immune function.

CV 17 This point is located in the middle of the chest, between the two nipples, directly on top of the breast bone. Conception Vessel 17 stimulates the thymus gland which helps resist infection.

Dietary Recommendations for Cold Prevention:

Nutrition is very important for proper immune system function. There are certain foods that have been used for centuries to help prevent colds. One of these is ginger. Dried ginger contains a compound known as shogaol. This compound has anti-inflammatory properties that can help if you're starting to feel a cold coming on. Garlic is a great antioxidant also. Antioxidants boost the immune system. Another food to add to your daily diet as a preventive is green tea. Green tea is also full of antioxidants and studies show that people who drink green tea daily get sick less frequently.

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