



Common Cold

According to Traditional Chinese medicine, over exposure to cold wind can be the precursor to annoying common colds. This is because acupuncture points called ‘wind points’ are located at the back of the neck and at the base of the skull. Wind points represent a gateway to the body which allow cold to enter into the muscle layer. Once cold enters, it gets trapped and can cause symptoms such as a headache, stiff neck, shoulder pain, chills and a sore throat.

Prevention: the best treatment

Heed the climate

To protect your “wind points”, always rug up and wear a scarf or a collar when venturing out into a chilly or windy climate.

Mind the draft

Many people catch colds from sitting in drafts. Make sure you keep windows shut when sleeping, stay out of doorways in cafes and restaurants if the breeze is whipping through, and avoid “the blow” from the aircon; it’s not worth getting a sore throat or a thumping headache.

Rug up after running out

A common time one can experience an attack of “wind cold” is after exercise. When we work hard physically, the body generates heat which will protect us from the cold, and the pores open to release the heat, but once you stop and cool down you’re vulnerable to “cold” entering; particularly if your skin or clothes are wet with sweat. Immediately after exercise, shower or put some dry clothes on - preferably shower for the sake of your friends and family!

Lie low if your Qi has taken a blow

As with Western medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine sees that if we become run down and over tired, our immune system is compromised. When our immune system is compromised, our protective Qi is weak and can’t protect us from the elements as easily. Listen to your body, if you feel worn out take it a little easier and get some rest.

What to do once the cold has taken hold

“Wind cold” is what Traditional Chinese Medicine calls an external pathogen. If not treated correctly and quickly, the pathogen can travel deep into the body. “Wind cold” can cause problems such as constipation, restless sleep, or a persisting cough.

Treatment is essential to prevent the “wind cold” from travelling deep into the body. An acupuncture or cupping session will help to eliminate the cold. Chinese herbs act quickly to expel the unwanted pathogens. A very popular patent formula of Chinese medicine is Yin Qiao San. It is often helpful to have a bottle of this formula on hand to start taking as soon as you feel the initial symptoms of a cold; it can be purchased through the clinic or Chinese Herbal stores.

A great home remedy for preventing wind cold from taking hold is ginger and spring onion tea:

Ginger and spring onion tea

1. Slice the white parts of five to six spring onions.
2. Slice four to five ten cent piece sizes of ginger.
3. Add these to two and half cups of water with one teaspoon of brown sugar or honey.
4. Bring to the boil then simmer for five minutes.
5. Drink as a tea.

The ginger and onion have a slight diaphoretic action; this means they will cause a slight sweat. The best thing to do is drink the tea as soon as you feel a cold coming on and rug up and go to bed. When you wake the symptoms will be gone.