

# Outline of Common Respiratory Tract Ailments

## Overview—handout, part 2

\*(also see handout, Treatment Plans—Viral Infections, Respiratory Tract)

- Common Cold
  - Etiology—Stress, loss of sleep; immune imbalances; exposure to viral pathogens
  - Symptoms—Sniffles, runny nose (clear), sore throat, headache, nasal congestion, sometimes fatigue, myalgia
  - TCM patterns—wind-cold; wind-heat; also look for spleen Qi deficiency, other underlying signs of excess or deficiency patterns
  - Suggested treatments
    - Branch: symptomatic relief as needed; typically use warming herbs if wind-cold pattern exists (cinnamon, ginger, elecampane, wild ginger)
    - Root: use immunomodulators carefully (turkey tails, artist conk, etc.)
  - Contra: Spleen Qi tonics during the acute phase; cold herbs

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- Influenza
  - Etiology—lowered immunity; exposure to viral pathogens
  - Symptoms—nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, fever; anorexia
  - TCM patterns—attack by exogenous wind-heat pathogen
  - Suggested treatments
    - Branch: immunomodulators, appropriate symptomatic relief
    - Root: follow acute phase with immunomodulators like medicinal mushrooms; sweating therapy
  - Contra: hot herbs, use sparingly; use warm Sp. Qi tonics carefully

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- Strep Throat

- Etiology— lowered immunity; contact with the pathogen through sharing drinks, kissing, etc. Most common in school-age kids and teens. Most common sore throat due to bacteria (about 10-15% overall); most sore throats are from viral infection.
  - Symptoms—sudden onset of scratchy sore throat, cough, yellow sputum, swollen lymph nodes in the neck, difficulty swallowing, headache, white patches on tonsils.
  - TCM patterns—attack by exogenous heat pathogen
  - Suggested treatments
    - Branch: symptomatic relief (see separate handout)
    - Root: for chronic bronchitis, lung-strengthening herbs (codonopsis, etc.), long-term immunomodulators, especially reishi, artist conk.
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- Sinusitis

- Etiology—Lowered immunity; respiratory allergies; predisposition; about 35 million people have at least one occurrence/year.; all sinuses connect with the nasal passages to drain debris, mucus; acute or chronic; not treatable, might involve *Aspergillus*, etc.
- Symptoms—Can last for 12 weeks or longer; pain and congestion in the sinuses cavities around the nasal passages; headache.
- TCM patterns—heat pathogen, but pay attention to underlying patterns (Sp. Qi deficiency, lung yin deficiency, etc., especially with chronic sinusitis).
- Suggested treatments
  - Branch: antiinflammatory herbs, antibacterials, immunomodulators; analgesics; decongestants; nasal saline flushes with

- Root: Immunomodulating herbs for chronic conditions; constitutional remedies

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- Bronchitis/Pneumonia

- Etiology—more susceptible, alcoholics, the elderly, immune-suppressed individuals (HIV), cancer treatment,
- Much of pneumonia seen clinically is caused by viruses.
- Streptococcus pneumoniae causes about 90% of all bacterial pneumonia cases.
- Symptoms— Inflammation of lung with accompanying fluid build up. High fever with difficulty breathing; chest pain
- Lungs have reddish appearance due to dilated blood vessels
- TCM patterns—lung heat
- Suggested treatments
  - Branch: clear heat; support lung; cold bitter herbs like with berberine (see other handout with protocols)
  - Root: Immune support

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- Asthma

- Etiology— A condition in which a person's airways become inflamed, narrow and swell, and produce extra mucus, which makes it difficult to breathe.

- heterogeneous **disorder** characterized by chronic inflammation of the respiratory airways that can be triggered by allergen exposure or by other mechanisms, possibly autoreactive/**autoimmune**. The **autoimmune** hypothesis is further, indirectly, supported by the response to immunosuppressive drugs.
- Can be life-long; affects any age
- asthma can be minor or it can interfere with daily activities. In some cases, it may lead to a life-threatening attack.
- Symptoms— Asthma may cause difficulty breathing, chest pain, cough, and wheezing. The symptoms may sometimes flare-up.
- TCM patterns
- Suggested treatments
  - Medical treatment: Asthma can usually be managed with rescue inhalers to treat symptoms (albuterol) and controller inhalers that prevent symptoms (steroids). Severe cases may require longer-acting inhalers that keep the airways open (formoterol, salmeterol, tiotropium), as well as oral steroids.
  - Branch: **herbs** that have been used to **treat asthma** include mullein, boswellia (Indian frankincense), ivy tips (dried, extracted), and butterbur. Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) and omega-3 fatty acids (fish oil) can reduce inflammation and alleviate **asthma** symptoms. Antiinflammatory herbs such as pineapple stem (bromelain), hops, turmeric, ginger.
  - Root: Long-term herb selection depends on a differential dx, treatment of constitutional imbalances; avoiding potentially allergenic foods; controlling sources of airborne allergens in the house (air filters, pillow covers, hardwood floors; checking mold spore count, etc.

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- COPD (Discuss if time)

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