The Respiratory Tract According to Chinese Medicine

- Nourishes the hair, moistens the skin, regulates sweat
- The health of the Lungs is reflected in the body hair
- Protects against external “pernicious influences”
- “Surface” immune functions; “protective shield”; helps prevent colds, flu

Lung TCM Syndromes

Treatment Principles for TCM Syndromes

- Lung yin deficiency
- Tonify lung yin
- Lung Qi deficiency
- Tonify lung Qi
- Lung heat
- Clear lung heat (berberine-containing herbs)
- Lung cold
- Warm lungs, dispel cold

Tonify Lung Yin (for some chronic lung ailments like COPD, asthma)

- Shan Yao (*Dioscorea opposita*)
- dong chong xia cao (*Cordyceps chinensis*)
- Sha shen (*Glehnia littoralis*)
- American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*)
- Asparagus root (*Asparagus cochinchinensis*)
- Sweet bulbs from the lily family; classic Chinese bulb is *Lilium brownii*, but consider *Lilium washintonianum*, or any of the western tiger lilies, blue camas bulbs, or *Dichelostemma pulchellum*, or the ookows *D. congestum*)
### Lung Qi Deficiency
- Ginseng (*Panax ginseng*)
- Solomon’s seal (*Polygonatum sibiricum*)
- Cordyceps (also tonifies lung yin)
- Schisandra (*Schisandra chinensis*) or ginkgo seed (*Ginkgo biloba*) [use if chronic cough and wheezing are present]

### Lung Heat Conditions
- White mulberry leaf, Sang Ye (*Morus alba*)
- lu gen (Giant reed rhizome, *Phragmites communis*)
- yu xing cao (*Houttuynia cordata*)

### Lung Cold Conditions
- Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)
  - Tea or tincture or powdered extract

### Demulcent Respiratory Herbs
- Slippery elm
- Marshmallow root
- Mallow leaf
- Comfrey
- Iceland moss, other lichens
- Fenugreek
- Turkey tails
- Mullein leaf

### Western Pathology
- Surface conditions
  - Colds
  - Flu
  - Allergies
- Organ level conditions
Sinus infections
Asthma
Bronchitis
Pneumonia

Treatment Plan: Colds

- Surface condition
  - Cold pathogen
  - No fever
  - Tongue normal
  - Body aches (pathogen penetrating to muscle level)
  - Congested sinus with runny mucus (clear, copious)
  - Sore throat

Treatment Plan: Flu

- Surface condition (heat pathogen)
- Fever
- Fatigue, prostration
- Tongue may have thick yellow coating
- Severe myalgia
- Thicker mucus discharge, congestion
- Sore throat
- Digestive involvement common (nausea, anorexia); can aggravate immune weakness, low energy

Treatment Plan: Allergies

- Respiratory allergies can cause runny nose, congestion, inflamed mucous membranes around eyes, sinuses
- Deficiency and excess types
- Tongue can be normal
- Antihistamine: Nettle, goldenrod, eucalyptus
- Antispasmodic: Lobelia, Verbena lasiostachys, yarrow, khella
- Immune regulator: Astragalus, dong quai, codonopsis, poria
- Decongestant: Ephedra, eyebright, eucalyptus, magnolia (xin yi hua)
Treatment Plan: Sinus Infections

- **Antiinflammatories**
  - Berberine-containing herbs, especially *Hydrastis*
  - *Achillea* (w/proazulenones)

- **Antibacterial**
  - Berberine-containing herbs (huang lian su, ½ tablet for pint + ½ tsp. salt; flush with ear syringe)
  - Garlic
  - Yerba mansa spray
  - Myrrh & or bayberry snuff
  - Hyssop, thyme

- **Immune-regulating**
  - Bayberry
  - Echinacea
  - Baptisia, Thuja spray

Treatment Plan: Bronchitis

- **Antibacterial**
  - Berberine-containing herbs
  - Garlic

- **Antiviral**
  - Andrographis, shiitake, thuja, usnea, Iceland moss

- **Immunostimulant**
  - Echinacea, wild indigo, thuja

- **Expectorant**
  - Yerba santa, grindelia

- **Antipyretic, diaphoretic**
  - Yarrow, elder flower

- **Antitussive**
  - Loquat, wild cherry bark
### Treatment Plan: Pneumonia

- Same actions as bronchitis
- Add lung tonics when lung Qi is weak
  - Codonopsis
  - Mullein leaf tea (*ad lib*)

### Symptomatic Relief

#### Coughs

- **Dry**: marshmallow root, licorice, flax, Iceland moss, slippery elm, maidenhair fern, plantain leaf, tricolored violet, hollyhock root and flowers, fenugreek seed tea, evening primrose root
- **Productive**: black sage, garden sage, grindelia, elecampane, English ivy shoots, bloodroot, red clover, false solomon seal, alder shoots, thyme, cottonwood buds
- **Spasmodic**: wild cherry bark, bloodroot, California poppy, celandine, horehound, tricolored violet

#### Sore throat

- Usnea, garden sage, black sage, kava, Oregon grape root, goldenseal, kishwoof, osha, slippery elm, plantain, pacific bistort, fenugreek, hyssop, mallow leaf tea, myrrh, pearly everlasting, speedwell, wild ginger

#### Body aches

- Peuraria, meadowsweet, wintergreen, willow bark (standardized or not; high salicin content), cayenne liniment, St. John’s wort oil, hot bath with strong yarrow, meadowsweet, rosemary, and/or lavender tea added (consider adding essential oils also)

#### Headache

- **Liver/GB (temples and over eyes)**: blue vervain, centaury, feverfew, fringe tree, blessed thistle, boldo, wormwood tea, mugwort tea
- **Tension (occiput, general)**: rosemary, willow bark, meadowsweet, wintergreen tea, shepherd’s purse, betony*, greater periwinkle*, hops, kava, birch bark tea or tincture, catnip, chamomile (both), skullcap
- **External application**: rosemary, lavender essential oils (30-70 with fixed oil), liniment, or tea compress, St. John’s wort oil, liniment
**Fever**
- Diaphoretics: yarrow, elder flower, blue vervain, ma huang, boneset, catnip, mormon tea, life everlasting, lobelia, feverfew
- Antipyretics: willow bark, meadowsweet, birch bark, dogwood bark (either pacific or streamside), quaking aspen bark
- With deficiency of yin: coral root (*Coralarrhiza* spp.), American ginseng
- With fast pulse: add linden flower, passionflower

**Fatigue:**
- With fever: eat lightly, especially broths made with green leafy vegetables, barley, a little fish or chicken; add herbs like American ginseng, turkey tails, cordyceps, witch’s butter; use gentian or centaury tincture before meals sparingly
- With deficiency of Kidney yin or Qi or Spleen Qi deficiency: American ginseng, codonopsis, burdock root, false Solomon’s seal

**Runny nose**
- Clear mucus: magnolia buds, cayenne, sage leaf, eyebright

**Nasal congestion**
- Antihistamines: nettle leaf, goldenseal, Oregon grape root, goldthread, goldenrod, ginger*, lemon, orange, tangerine peel, aged tangerine peel (also contains a sympathomimetic alkaloid, synephrine)
- Sympathomimetics: ma huang tincture, tea; tangerine or orange peel

**Respiratory Wellness**
- Deep belly “Qi” breathing
- Clean air to breathe
- Singing for breath support and building lung Qi
- “Haw” breaths and woodchoppers
- Respiratory tonic herbs
  - Codonopsis
### Materia Medica

Review of a few important herbs for respiratory tract ailments

**Andrographis**
- Cold, bitter antiviral herb
- Use with flu, viral pneumonia

**American ginseng**
- Use sparingly for respiratory tract infections with deficiency of Yin and Qi, along with other herbs

**Betony**
- Useful for tension headaches or headaches due to disordered Qi during colds and flu

**Cottonwood buds**
- All *Populus* spp. unopened leaf buds harvested in the spring while still sticky with resin contain salicylates and phenolic resins
- Expectorant, antispasmodic, antibacterial, antiviral

**Echinacea**
- Antiviral, immunostimulant
- Use for up to 10 days for any respiratory tract infection, along with other herbs
- High alcohol tincture is warming and dispersing; tea and fresh juice preparations tend to be cooler in action

**Elder**
- Flower heads are diaphoretic and antiviral; clears blood heat and toxins; use with flu
- Fruit syrups and other preparations are antiviral and cooling, also strongly antioxidant; use with colds or flu

**Feverfew**
- Feverfew is diaphoretic, anti-inflammatory
- Reduces fevers, aids with headaches

**Grindelia**
- Sticky resinous buds are expectorant, anyodyne, antitussive
  - Iceland moss

### Cetraria
- cold, acrid, dispersing, expectorant, antibacterial, immunomodulating

### Mullein
- Mullein flowers and leaves are expectorant, demulcent, antiinflammatory, anodyne (flowers), and considered a gentle respiratory cleanser and tonic

### Usnea
- Cool in nature, clears heat and infection, soothes (also contains mucilage), immunomodulating
- Expectorant, antiviral, antibacterial
- Very useful for strep throat, pneumonia, bronchitis, tuberculosis

### Yarrow
- Flowering tops are antiinflammatory (use species with proazulenes and make a tea), antiviral, diaphoretic, Qi-regulating
- Useful for fevers, colds, flu

### Yerba santa
- Resinous leaves are resinous and warming
- Good flavor to make syrups, tincture formulas
- Expectorant, antibacterial, antiviral