

Herbal Formulas for Seasonal Illness – Cold & Flu

It's cold & flu season once again and this one appears to be quite challenging for some. In addition to rest, Chicken soup, and staying hydrated, is there anything else a person might be able to do to effectively and safely prevent and treat these types of illnesses? There are many different options to consider in the field of natural and nutritional therapies and today's short discussion focuses on: Therapeutic Herbs and Traditional Chinese Medicine approaches for colds and seasonal illnesses.

Recently, I was visiting with old friends in the Chicago suburb where I grew up. During the course of my visit I was flooded with some fond, funny, and poignant memories from my formative years. One that stood out was an unforgettable experience that I had while visiting with my Tai Chi instructor, a Chinese man who possessed great skills in martial arts as well as vast knowledge of Traditional Chinese healing techniques like herbal medicine and acupuncture.

I recall visiting with him one day at his school when I was a teenager. He was sipping an unusual and almost exotic smelling cup of tea that he had made from a package of dried herbs that had been boiled and brewed into this thick cup of "liquid medicine". This cup of tea looked and smelled so different than anything I had ever experienced at that point in my life about tea, which was admittedly limited to the black, (Lipton) version.

When my 17 year old curious mind could stand it no longer I asked my teacher, who I greatly respected, what he was drinking. He replied, without hesitation and very matter of fact, that he was drinking a medicinal Chinese herbal tea to "clear Wind Heat and tonify his Wei Qi." When I looked totally confused, he mentioned further that he was fighting off a cold and wanted to strengthen his immune system to help shorten the duration and intensity of his illness. He had grown up in Taiwan and using Chinese herbal medicines was a common practice for him (and totally new for me at that time.)

That incident was an AHA(!) moment for me and one that molded my future health care choices in various ways. What a fascinating concept and practice: herbs and herbal teas/remedies could be used in such a way to prevent and treat certain types of health conditions and illnesses; including the common cold?! Little did I know at the time that I would go on in my later life to study Chinese Herbal Medicine, a time tested and extensive system of using therapeutic herbs, in great depth. I have been certified in Chinese Herbology for many years now and have used these natural health practices both personally and professionally with good success.

So, how might Chinese Herbal Medicine (alone or in combination with Western herbs & nutrients) help to treat or prevent colds and seasonal illnesses? Simply, by using herbs that are safe and time tested to help support and stimulate our immune system.

Appropriate use of therapeutic herbs & herbal formulas has the capacity to:

- Shorten the duration and intensity of a cold, flu, or sinus-related illness.
- Aid in quicker recovery from various types of seasonal illnesses.
- Aid in the prevention of colds & seasonal illnesses through strengthening our body's inherent immune system.