



# Cornerstone Healing

Acupuncture. Herbs. Bodywork.

## Winter 2005 Newsletter

Dear friends and neighbors,

The winter months are upon us. From the Chinese Medicine perspective, this is a time to slow our busy lives down, sleep more and nourish our bodies. While this may feel impossible, making even the smallest changes can provide huge benefits!

In this issue, we have some wonderful and easy tea recipes to break the winter chill and keep you cozy. While winter means warm woolly sweaters and holiday cheer, it is also the time of colds and flus. With this in mind, Anne offers seasonal advice in

her article on "Colds and Flus" and explains how Chinese Medicine can help keep you well this season. Also in this issue, Peggy brings us valuable information on how acupuncture can help relieve back pain, and our intern Sarah demystifies cupping - a fascinating treatment method we regularly use in our practice at Cornerstone Healing.

We can also help you with all your gift-giving needs this season - our Gift Certificates are a wonderful way to give a gift of any of our services, and our products are the perfect ingredients in unique and pampering gift baskets (which we will be happy to create and wrap for you!). Let us help you give the gift of health and well being to your friends and loved ones this year.

Stay warm, and enjoy the holidays. We hope to see you soon.

Warmest wishes,

Anne Mok and Peggy Regis



和平  
Peace

爱  
Love

欢乐  
Joy



Wishing You  
the Happiest  
of Holidays

from all of us at  
Cornerstone Healing

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We all know the greatness of acupuncture, so represent and spread the word!

**Stop in to see our holiday selection of tshirts, hoodies, and baby t-s.**

## *About Cornerstone Healing*

Acupuncture ♦ Herbs ♦ Bodywork

Cornerstone Healing is a Traditional Chinese Medicine practice located in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn since 2002. We specialize in Acupuncture, Chinese Herbal Medicine, and Bodywork.

Co-owners Anne Mok and Peggy Regis, are both New York State Licensed Acupuncturists and Certified Herbalists with extensive experience in treating a wide variety of conditions including (but not limited to) infertility, gynecological, musculoskeletal, gastrointestinal, and dermatological conditions.

Cornerstone Healing is a thriving practice, dedicated to healing our patients and caring for our community.

For more information about how Chinese Medicine can improve your health please feel free to give us a call or stop by our practice anytime.



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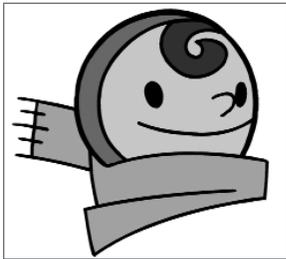
# Chinese Medicine for Colds & Flu

Seasonal advice on how acupuncture and herbs can help!

by Anne Mok, LAc, Dipl C.H., RPh

As winter approaches, our thoughts turn to the joys of holidays, the beauty of snow, and of course the dreadful cold (and we aren't only thinking about the temperature!). It is clear that the best way to cure a cold is not to catch one in the first place. We all know the easy ways we can reduce our chances of catching colds: cover your head and neck; drink warm beverages; don't touch your nose and mouth without washing your hands first; and most important - get plenty of rest. We also know that even if you abide by all the rules, you may still catch a cold. Do not despair - there is still hope! Acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine can increase your resistance to catching colds, and if you are unlucky enough to catch one, it can significantly shorten the life span of your cold and keep it from getting worse.

In Chinese medical theory, everything in the universe, including our bodies, is made up of Qi (pronounced chee). One of the many roles of the body's Qi is that of a force field protecting us against things that can make us sick (this is very similar to the role of the immune system in Western medicine). When our bodies get run down (and our immune system is weakened), it is more difficult for us to fight off the things that can make us sick. In Chinese medicine, our force field protects us against what is called Pathogenic Qi. There are six types of Pathogenic Qi described in Chinese Medicine, each described metaphorically in terms derived from nature: Wind, Heat, Cold, Dampness, Dryness, and Summer Heat.



**Wear your scarf! Bundle up to help prevent colds and flu.**

In treating colds and flu, we are most concerned with the first three pathogens: Wind, Heat, and Cold. Wind is swift, it can come quickly, and it frequently combines with Wind and Cold. When Wind combines with Cold you get a runny nose with clear mucus, headaches, sneezing, chills, and a scratchy throat. Most of these symptoms are contained around the head and in the upper body. When Wind combines with Heat, some of the most common symptoms are a sore throat, thirst, fever, and a dry cough with yellow sputum. If a Wind Cold is allowed to linger in the body, it will almost always be transformed into Wind Heat.

Acupuncture (the insertion of thin, sterile, stainless steel needles into specific points in the body) strengthens and balances the body's Qi (or force field) - which both increases the body's resistance to pathogens, and enables the body to more easily and quickly fight off colds and flu (pushing out the invading Pathogenic Qi). Western research has confirmed that acupuncture can enhance the functioning of our immune systems by increasing cellular immunity. Another effective treatment method for colds and flu is **Cupping** (discussed in detail on page 6).

Chinese Herbal medicine can also play a role in both avoiding and fighting off colds and flu. Some herbs help the body to rid itself of toxins; other herbs strengthen the body's immune system. We should never underestimate the power of herbal medicine. As healing and valuable as herbs can be, they can also make your cold or flu much worse if used improperly. For this reason it is very important only to take herbal medicine under the guidance of a certified herbalist.

Certain foods are very helpful in treating a colds and flu. We all know the powers of good old-fashioned chicken soup. If you are vegetarian, barley or lentil soup is a good substitute. The key thing is to eat warm foods that are easily digested. Ginger tea with honey is great to relieve phlegm and coughing. Cooking with ginger and scallions can actually help prevent a cold. One of the best fruits to eat in the fall and winter is an Asian pear. Sweet and Juicy these pears are very moistening to the lungs (see page 4 for a wonderful recipe for an **Asian pear beverage**). Similarly, there are some foods that it is best to avoid when fighting a cold or flu. Greasy foods and dairy foods engender more phlegm and heat inside of the body, which will trap your cold or flu making it more difficult to push the pathogens out of your system.

While all of these suggestions are good, you just cannot beat drinking plenty of fluids and getting lots of rest whenever you feel a cold or flu coming on.

*Take good care of yourself; consider acupuncture treatment now to build up your resistance to this winter's nasty colds and flus; and if you do get sick, let us help you fight off your cold or flu (the sooner we start treating you, the sooner you'll feel better).*

# Winter Tea



In the chilly winter months, we race to put the kettle on as soon as we arrive home or at the office, and look forward to the soothing warmth of delicious teas. The next time you come in from the cold, or get the feeling that you might be coming down with something, give one of our favorite tea combinations a try!

## Try some fresh **Ginger**

The spicy warming nature of Ginger (or **Sheng Jiang** in Chinese), makes it an important winter tea ingredient. Ginger helps push cold out of the body "releasing your exterior". It also warms your stomach, facilitating your digestion, reducing gas and even reducing nausea and vomiting.

## Ginger Tea

### Ingredients:

- 2 inch piece of fresh ginger root
- 4 cups boiled water
- 1 tablespoon honey (or to taste)

### Preparation:

Scrub the ginger root and grate or finely chop. Add boiling water and allow to steep covered for 10-15 minutes. Add honey to taste.

### A note on honey:

we recommend buying locally produced honey (especially if you suffer from seasonal allergies) because consuming honey made with the pollens of local flowers has been shown to help reduce your susceptibility to allergic reactions to those pollens.

## Traditional **Asian Pear Beverage**

Asian pears (**Xiu Li Pi**) have a nice moistening effect that helps protect the Lungs. This combination makes an excellent juice substitute for children. It is sweet enough for even the pickiest of palates!

## Asian Pear Beverage

### Ingredients:

- 2 asian pears with peels
- 2 carrots
- 4 slices ginger root (2 slices for children)
- 8 cups water
- 2 tablespoons sugar (or to taste)

### Preparation:

Cut pear into quarter slices and slice the carrots and ginger. Combine all the ingredients, bring to a boil and simmer for 30 - 45 minutes. Strain and enjoy at any temperature!

## A spicy twist on **Green Tea**

The spicy warming natures of Cinnamon bark (**Rou Gui**) and Cloves (**Ding Xiang**) are both highly valued in Chinese Herbal Medicine for their warming qualities. Cinnamon's hot, spicy, sweet nature dispels deep seated cold and encourages the circulation of Qi and Blood throughout the body. Clove's acrid, warm nature has similar effects and is good for cold in the stomach causing hiccoughs or nausea.

## Green Tea with Cinnamon and Cloves

### Ingredients:

- 2 teaspoons green tea
- 2 quality cinnamon sticks
- 2-3 cloves
- 4 cups boiling water

### Preparation:

Add green tea to boiling water. Steep for 3-5 minutes. Grind the cinnamon and clove to a fine powder and add directly to the prepared green tea, or coarsely chop the cinnamon and clove and place in a tea ball in your tea.

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# BACK PAIN?

## ACUPUNCTURE CAN HELP

**A Q&A Session with  
Peggy Regis, DA, LAc, Dipl C.H.**

*According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke: Seventy to 85 percent of adults in the United States will suffer back pain at some point in their lives. Five million Americans are partially disabled by back problems, and another 2 million are so severely disabled that they cannot work. In fact, low back pain accounts for 93 million workdays lost in the United States every year and costs over \$5 billion in health care.*

*Why do so many people suffer from back pain? What can be done to prevent and relieve back pain? These questions are frequently asked by afflicted patients and by the practitioners who treat them. In this brief article, I will attempt to share with you a basic understanding of the causes of and treatments for back pain from the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) perspective.*

### **Q: How is back pain defined?**

**A:** Western medicine defines back problems as nerve impingement syndrome and categorizes them further as: spondylosis; spinal osteoarthritis; prolapsed lumbar disc; or muscular/ligamentous lumbar pain. When there is a structural problem that prevents the spinal nerves from exiting the spinal cord through the spinal vertebrae and out into the body, the body experiences pain. Depending on the severity of symptoms, treatments from physical therapy to surgery may be required.

### **Q: How does TCM define and treat back pain?**

**A:** In Chinese Medicine we recognize several etiologies for back pain. In order to determine an accurate cause and diagnosis for a particular patient's back pain we must conduct a thorough evaluation of the patient's pain, as well as their overall health and lifestyle.

In TCM, we define all conditions in terms of disharmonies - conditions are Excess or Deficient; Cold or Hot; Exterior or Interior; Yin or Yang. We pay close attention to the location of the patient's problem - is it in the upper body, the lower body, the extremities or the internal organs. And we assess the characteristics of the pain to determine whether it is a condition primarily involving Qi (pronounced chee) or primarily involving Blood - Qi and Blood are the two primary substances on which all healthy body functions depend.

Qi (or Chi) is the energy that flows throughout our bodies. It flows through a network of Channels reaching all aspects of the body. These Channels are separate from the

pathways of the nervous, vascular and lymphatic systems defined by Western medicine.

In Chinese Medicine the concept of Blood is very similar to the definition of blood in Western medicine, in that it is the nourishing fluid of the body, but it is important to understand that when we speak of conditions of the Blood in Chinese medicine, these conditions do not automatically correlate to Western medical pathologies involving the blood.

In Chinese medicine, the most common causes of back pain are:

- 1. Qi Stagnation** - When there is free flow of Qi there is no pain, if the flow is interrupted for any reason, then pain is likely to occur. Qi Stagnation pain usually has a dull, distending or aching quality.
- 2. Blood Stagnation** - Blood Stagnation can be due to trauma (e.g.: injuries due to lifting, repetitive strain, or automobile accidents). It can also be due to a long history of Qi stagnation -if the Qi is stagnant the Blood cannot flow freely and over time this stagnation may result in the development of lumps or even tumors in the body. Blood Stagnation pain is more severe, localized and stabbing in nature than Qi Stagnation pain.
- 3. Damp-Heat or Damp-Cold** - An external invasion of Wind, Cold, Dampness, or Heat may invade the back region causing pain. If our Defensive Qi (a function of the body's Qi that is similar to the immune system in Western

**Continued on page 7**



# the tradition of Cupping demystified

by Sarah Coles McKeown

There has been a lot of buzz about cupping in the media - Gwyneth Paltrow made headlines when she attended a premier with cup marks on her back last summer. More and more people are interested in cupping, and once you experience it, it is easy to become a big fan of this ancient healing therapy.

Cupping is one of the techniques of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), and it has been used in China for thousands of years. But cupping is not exclusively Chinese in origin. In fact, cupping was a commonly used therapy in the Mediterranean and throughout Eastern Europe up until the time of World War II. With the introduction of antibiotics and fever-reducing drugs, the use of cupping died out in America and much of Europe in the early 20th century. However, today many people and medical professionals are embracing traditional healing therapies such as acupuncture and cupping.

## So just what IS cupping?

Cupping is, in the simplest terms, the application of cups (usually made of glass) to the body (most often the back and neck). The cups create a pulling action on the skin and underlying muscles. This pulling action moves the Qi and Blood and removes stagnation from the body. Cups come in a variety of sizes, and the number of cups used in a treatment varies depending upon the area of the body and the condition being treated.

When applying glass cups, we create a vacuum by introducing a small flame into each cup to consume the oxygen inside it just prior to applying it to the body. It is this vacuum that causes the desired pulling action on the skin and muscles. The flame never touches the person being cupped, and because it is inserted into the cup for only a few seconds, it does not warm the cup itself. Therefore, you should feel no significant heat sensation when you are cupped. You will feel a pulling sensation where the cup has been applied to your body. Most people find this sensation comfortable and soothing, but if you find it uncomfortable, it can be adjusted. Once the cups have been applied to your body they may be left in place for approximately 10 or 15 minutes, or they may then be moved along muscles or TCM Channels - depending upon the goals of the treatment.

## What to expect after cupping

After cupping there is sometimes a short period of tenderness where the cups have been applied. There will almost always be slight circular bruising caused by the edge of the cup at the site(s) where they are applied to the body. The extent of the mark depends on the length of treatment time, the strength of the suction,

and the condition of the person being cupped. Usually the marks will fade away within a week and do not hurt at all. However, think about your plans before being cupped - let your acupuncturist know if you are planning a trip to the beach or an evening out in a low cut dress in the next week so that we can be sure not to cup you where marks will be visible on your body.



## A typical cupping treatment

The pulling action of the cups moves Qi and Blood and removes stagnation from the body

The marks are usually worst after the first cupping treatment. Follow-up treatments to the same areas will result in much less marking, as the circulation improves and the stagnation is removed. Following cupping treatment most people feel a sense of warmth and well-being in their body, sometimes accompanied by a feeling of light-headedness and thirst (similar to the feelings experienced following acupuncture treatment). After you are cupped, it is important to cover the areas of your body that have been treated and avoid exposing them to cold, wind, and cold water for a few days because your pores have been opened wide making it easier for wind and cold to enter your body.

## When is cupping used?

Cupping can be used to treat a wide variety of conditions including abdominal pain, asthma, back pain, bed-wetting, chest pain, common cold and flu, constipation, dysmenorrhea, fevers, hypertension, muscular and joint pain, skin complaints and fatigue.

## Can I be cupped?

Cupping therapy is, in general, very safe and has no side effects; with a few exceptions, it can be used to help almost anyone - including children.

*We often incorporate cupping into treatments at Cornerstone Healing. Please contact us for more information.*

*Source: Traditional Chinese Cupping Therapy by Ilkay Zihni Chirali*

## Backpain Continued from page 5

Medicine) is weak, we become more susceptible to invasions of external pathogens through the pores of our skin. Damp-Heat and Damp-Cold are characterized by pain that is radiating in nature. (for further discussion of the immune system see **Colds & Flus** on page 3).

4. **Kidney Pathology** - It is important to understand that when we discuss the Kidney in Chinese Medicine it is similar to, but not exactly the same as the kidneys defined in Western Medicine. Just as with Blood, conditions defined as Kidney-related in Chinese Medicine do not correlate exactly with pathologies of the kidneys or renal system in Western medicine. Back pain can have at its root either a Kidney Yin pathology, or a Kidney Yang pathology.

Both Kidney Yin and Kidney Yang Deficiency are characterized by long-term back pain (usually six months or more), with no history of trauma. Additional Kidney Yin Deficiency symptoms include hot flashes, night sweats, tinnitus, irritability, and restlessness. Whereas, additional Kidney Yang Deficiency symptoms include cold hands and feet, low energy, pale face, hearing loss, frequent urination, low libido, and early morning diarrhea.

Once your diagnosis has been determined and the cause of your back pain established, your TCM treatment will focus on resolving the specific imbalances in your system, and when these imbalances are improved or resolved, you will experience a commensurate reduction in, or resolution to your back pain.

### Q: What can I expect during my treatment?

A: Your treatment will vary depending upon the cause of your back pain. Optimal treatment will be comprised of an integrative use of acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, electrical stimulation, **cupping** (described on page 6), moxibustion, gu sha, and tui-na bodywork therapies.\*

### Q: How does Acupuncture resolve back pain?

A: Acupuncture relieves pain primarily by moving Qi and relieving blockages of the Qi (also called Qi Stagnation). When the Qi is able to move freely, the Blood can move freely, increasing the flow of Blood throughout the entire body. There are over 2,000 acupuncture points on the body. Studies have shown that stimulating these points

increases the flow of endorphins- the body's natural painkillers - within the body. Other studies have shown that stimulating acupuncture points initiates the release of opioid peptides, which are natural occurring chemicals in the brain that have analgesic effect, thus also helping to reduce pain. Still other studies have shown that acupuncture activates both the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland, thus playing a role in the sensation of pain and the activity of the organs.

### Q: Are there preventive measures in which I can engage in order to avoid major back pain?

A: Prevention is always preferable to even the best treatment plan. The first thing to look at is your posture. Most people have poor posture. Proper posture can help determine your back's basic condition. While standing or sitting, practice proper posture by pulling your abdomen inward and rotate your hips back so that your low back is relaxed and your abdomen is not protruding. Also, remember to keep your knees slightly bent at all times.

In Chinese Medicine we recognize and treat you as a whole person, including all aspects of your health including your lifestyle. An unhealthy lifestyle, will contribute to and exacerbate your back problems. We will make recommendations regarding changes in your diet, exercise regime and lifestyle that can contribute to the relief of your back pain.

- \* A proper diet and plenty of water will improve your overall health as well as contribute to relieving your back pain.
- \* Chinese massage (tui na) activates pressure points and can be very beneficial in resolving pain conditions.
- \* Qi gong breathing exercises and proper exercise promotes the normal flow of Qi and Blood.
- \* You may want to consider taking up yoga, pilates, or Tai Ji to strengthen and align your back.

And as we all know too well, prolonged stress can create physical, emotional, and spiritual disharmony. Ample amounts of rest as well as meditation can help to reduce your stress levels.

*At Cornerstone Healing both Peggy and Anne continue to have great success in treating back pain. Our back pain treatments involve a balance of art and science and are completely customized to your condition. We will be happy to speak with you further about your specific condition.*



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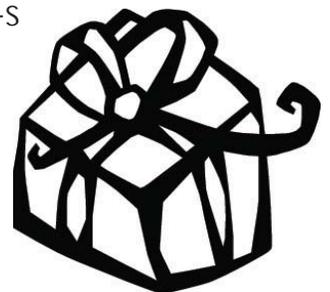
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