

Chinese Herbal Formulas and COVID-19

Introducing two herbal teas – Immune Booster and Lung Detoxicator

Q & A with Dr. Willow Liu

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Q1: There are many online reports about Chinese herbs for COVID-19 in China. Can you give us some evidence to support the reports? Do Chinese herbs have anti-virus activities?

A: COVID-19 started to spread rapidly in Wuhan, China in January. Since there was no effective Western medicine for the new virus, the patients were treated with Western medicine only at the beginning. Sadly, several thousand patients died, including a dozen physicians who were treating the patients. Most of them died of pneumonia, which resulting in the function failure of their lungs. Later, when Chinese medicine was integrated with Western medicine in the treatment, the mortality rate decreased significantly and the cure rate was increased dramatically. Meanwhile, in some provinces where Chinese medicine was given at the very beginning, the mortality rate was much less than in Wuhan.

On March 8, in Bo Zhou, a city in Anhui province, China, known as the capital of Chinese medicine because it has the largest distributing center of Chinese medicine in China, the government announced that the mortality rate of COVID-19 infected patients in the city has been zero and no health care professionals were infected in the hospitals treating COVID-19 infected patients. This is because people live in that city know well about the application of Chinese herbs. This demonstrates the powerful advantages of Chinese medicine for treating viral infection.

In fact, Chinese herbal formulas have been used for infectious diseases in China since ancient times, with the record in the book of Shang Han Lun (Treatise on Exogenous Febrile Diseases)¹ written 2000 years ago. The efficacy of Chinese herbs for virus infection was also clinically demonstrated in the U.S. a hundred years ago by “Doc” Hay, with a record that “all his patients survived the fetal Spanish Flu”.² Recently,

Chinese herbs have played an important role fighting the pandemics of 2003 SARS³ and current COVID-19 in combination with Western medicine. In addition, modern pharmacological studies in the past decades have revealed that some Chinese herbs have inhibitory activity on influenza, HIV, hepatitis, herpes, and other viruses. The literature can be easily found by searching online.

The article published in Pharmacological Research on March 4, 2020 introduced “Traditional Chinese Medicine for COVID-19 Treatment.”⁴

Q2: I heard that you recently launched two herbal teas?

A: Yes. One is called Immune Booster, and another is called Lung Detoxicator. Both are formulated with Chinese herbs.

Q3: Why did you make these two herbal teas?

A: American people are threatened by the outbreaks of COVID-19 virus now. In addition to washing hands, quarantine, and taking vitamin C, *etc*, Chinese herb is another alternative way for self-protection.

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) believes that when there is sufficient healthy qi inside, pathogenic factors have no way to invade the body". **Healthy qi** can also be translated into **vital qi** or **righteousness qi**. Here it mainly refers to the function of the human body to prevent disease and maintain health. **Pathogenic factors** can also be translated into **evil qi**. It refers to the external factors that can cause diseases. Bacteria, viruses, mycoplasma, mold, and other microbes that can cause people are all pathogenic factors. Further, the pathogenic factors that spread widely and threaten people's lives are classified as plagues. COVID-19 is in the category of plague in TCM.

Q4: What are the ingredients and main functions of Immune Booster and Lung Detoxicator?

(1) Immune Booster

Ingredients of : Astragali Radix, Codonopsis Radix, Poria, Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma, Citri Reticulatae Pericarpium, Platycodonis Radix, Armeniacae Amarum Semen, Aurantii Fructus, Glycyrrhizae Radix et Rhizoma, Zingiberis Recens Rhizoma, Jujubae Fructus.

Function: Help to enhance immune and lung function, improve circulation, mitigate inflammation and pain.

Suggested Use: Take 1 sachet each time, 1-2 times per day. Dissolve with hot water.

Modern studies have demonstrated that Astragali Radix,⁵ Codonopsis Radix,⁶ Poria,⁷ Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma⁸ can potentiate the immune response; Citri Reticulatae Pericarpium,⁹ Platycodonis Radix,¹⁰ and Armeniacae Amarum Semen¹¹ can improve the function of the respiratory system; most of them have anti-inflammatory effect;^{9,7-16} and Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma,^{12,13} Radix Glycyrrhizae¹⁵ and Zingiberis rhizoma¹⁶ exhibit antiviral activities on different viruses.

(2) Lung Detoxicator

Ingredients: Lonicerae Japonicae Flos, Scutellariae Radix, Paeoniae Alba Radix, Cinnamomi Ramulus, Eriobotryae Folium, Puerariae Lobatae Radix, Phragmitis Rhizoma, Zingiberis Recens Rhizoma, Glycyrrhizae Radix et Rhizoma, Vitamin C

Function: Help to mitigate infection, inflammation, and pain, improve circulation.

Suggested Use: Take 1 sachet each time, 1-2 times per day. Dissolve with hot water.

Autopsies of patients who died from COVID-19 revealed a sticky liquid was found from the cut surface of the infected lungs. Such sticky liquid should be the result of inflammation caused by the virus infection.

Modern studies have shown that Lonicerae Japonicae Flos,¹⁷ Scutellariae Radix,^{18,19} Paeoniae Alba Radix, Cinnamomi Ramulus,^{20,21} Eriobotryae Folium,²² Puerariae Lobatae Radix,²³ Paeoniae Alba Radix²⁴ have anti-viral activities; most of them have anti-inflammatory activities,^{17-20,25,26} Eriobotryae Folium has Bronchodilator effects²⁷, antitussive and expectorant properties;^{27,28} Paeoniae Alba Radix, has vasodilator effect.²⁹

Q5: Are the teas taste bitter?

A: No, there is no bitter taste herb in it.

Q6: Where were the herb extracts in sachet packaged?

A: They were packaged by Expert Pharmaceutical LLC, a GMP manufacturer of dietary supplements in the City of Industry, CA.

Q7: Do you have any testing for the products?

A: Yes. Best Lab did ID testing for the herbal extracts and heavy metal and microbiological testing on the finished products.

Q8: Are the formulas safe?

A: Yes if the consumers take by following the instruction. The safety of Chinese herbs depends on the dosage and period of administration. The two herbal teas were formulated based on my own clinical practice with reference to traditional application and the results of modern study.

Q9: Are these two herbal teas were developed specifically for preventing and treating COVID-19 virus?

A: Chinese herbal medicine is classified as dietary supplements by the FDA in the U.S., not as a drug. Therefore, although licensed acupuncturists are allowed to prescribe Chinese medicine to treat patients in the clinic for various diseases, FDA stipulates that the labels on the products of dietary supplements are now allowed to use words of “prevent”, “diagnose”, and “treat” any type of disease. Only words like “improve”, “help”, or “assist” function(s).

Although some of the herbs in the products have anti-virus activities, but none of the has been studied for **COVID-19**. Therefore, the two herbal teas are not developed for a particular disease such as **COVID-19** in Western medicine. Different terminologies are used in Chinese medicine.

Treatment of Chinese medicine doesn't focus on specific bacteria or virus. No matter what is the cause, the doctors pay more attention to the pattern of the syndrome and treat the symptoms based on TCM diagnosis and differentiation. The herbs in the formulas of Immune Booster can work together to enhance the healthy qi, which including stimulating the immune function to fight external pathogens. The herbs in the formulas of Lung Detoxicicator can exert their anti-inflammatory effect and improve respiratory and circulatory function because of their functions of heat-clearing, phlegm-dissolving, and detoxification.

Q10: How does Chinese medicine work?

A: When the COVID-19 pandemic in Wuhan just started, many patients treated only by Western medicine died of this virus infection, including a dozen of physicians who were treating the patients. The death was mostly caused by pneumonia, the inflammation in the lungs resulting in failure of the respiratory system. Meanwhile, although the mechanism is unknown, the application of Chinese herbs to patients with COVID-19 in China has been demonstrated effective. It might take effect with their anti-inflammatory and anti-viral activity, and other activities mentioned in Q4.

Q11: There is a saying “Western medicine treats disease, but Chinese medicine treats the people”. How to explain this statement?

A: Take COVID-19 as an example. Western medicine is still waiting for new drug to treat the virus. Some patients who have severe symptoms may die from the functional failure of the lungs if their immune function is too low to fight the virus and their body's self-repair function is weak.

Treatment of Chinese medicine emphasizes syndrome differentiation, such as yin and yang, internal or external, heat or cold, deficiency or excessiveness, or dampness, no matter the syndrome is caused by bacteria or virus, COVID-19 or SARS. Even to COVID-19, the patient will be given different formulas based on the progress of the disease and individual conditions. The treatment will not only clear away the symptoms such as fever and cough, but also to eliminate inflammation and improve the functions of respiratory and circulatory systems by expelling the internal phlegm dampness (the definition of phlegm is different from the one in Western medicine) and helping the body restore its own regulating function to eliminate the symptoms. If patients have symptoms such as weak digestive function, they will also be treated together because food is an important source of healthy qi.

Q12: How to deal with the COVID-19 virus?

- Pay attention to hygiene by washing hands and avoid touching;
- Stay away from infected patients.
- Keep distance from the person with fever or cough.
- Improve your immune function by eating and sleeping well and doing exercise.
- Take dietary supplements that help to enhance your immune function, which including vitamin C and B complex, as well as herbs introduced here.
- If you have fever or coughing, go to see your doctor for diagnosis right away.
- If your doctor is too busy to see you, try to find a trusted acupuncturist who is good at treatment with Chinese herbal medicine.

Where to buy Immune Booster and Lung Detoxicator?

- TAT Health Group in Temple City: 626-451-6800
- 21st Century Herbs & Acupuncture in Diamond Bar: 909-896-4598.
- Call 626-464-3098, or e-mail: sales@expertpharm.com
- Buy online <https://www.expertpharmshop.com/shop>

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