

## Summer Colds

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Perth's Summer is usually hot and dry and according to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) it is these climatic factors that lead to Summer colds.

Observe carefully the clinical features of a Summer cold in Perth and you will see that it typically starts with a sore throat. Then either a cough with phlegm that becomes sticky and yellow or blocked sinuses. In TCM we say this is a type of Warm pathogen attack (Wen Bing) and a great deal has been written about these conditions over the last 500 years.

The reason Chinese Doctors were so interested in Warm pathogens was the prevalence of epidemic diseases that swept across China in those times. Many famous Chinese herbal prescriptions were developed to counter those epidemic febrile diseases. And today the theories and prescriptions used then are being used now to develop strategies for SARS and bird flu.

A Summer cold in Perth may seem a world away from those conditions, but we can apply the same analytical methods used by the famous Physicians of the past, to determine the depth and strength of the local version of this Warm pathogenic attack on the body. Chinese herbal prescriptions can then be used to relieve the specific clinical features of your Summer cold.

In the Yellow Emperors Classic of Internal Medicine (Huang Di Nei Jing), written more than 2000 years ago, there is a statement about colds in the Winter reappearing in the Summer. Today people with reoccurring sore throats are often suffering from this type of hidden or lurking Warm pathogen. Because the body is constantly fighting off these pathogens, it is not long before tiredness and lethargy become part of the problem.

Home remedies are part of most Chinese households and those remedies can be used to ward off and resolve the milder versions of the Summer cold. Dried chrysanthemum flowers (Ju Hua) are available at most Chinese food stores and are cooling and relieve itchy eyes. They can be made into a tea and drunk daily as a preventative for Summer colds. Chinese mint (Bo He) is also cooling and relieves sore throats. Flowers and leaves are light and help lead the Warm pathogens to the surface so that the hidden pathogens from Winter are expelled.

Another favourite for Summer colds that have penetrated deeper into the body, possibly causing diarrhoea, is a rice congee (rice soup) made with mung beans (Lu Dou). Place 4 small handfuls of rice and one and a half handfuls of mung beans in a saucepan and add one to one and a half litres of water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes with the lid off. The Chinese people eat this warm or cold to clear Heat and resolve Toxins from a Summer cold.

When Summer colds linger with a dry cough, pear juice can help soothe the dryness and alleviate the cough.

For dry coughs that will not resolve and Summer colds that have become complicated with digestive problems, then a professionally written Chinese Herbal prescription can target your specific problems.

The Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association (AACMA) has a web site where qualified TCM practitioners can be located. [www.acupuncture.org.au](http://www.acupuncture.org.au).

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