



HERBAL MEDICINE

## The Breath of Life: Herbal Formulas for Lasting Immune Support

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### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- One of the most important patent medicines I keep on hand in my clinic for the cultivation of deep immune health in the prevention of acute cold / flu scenario is *Sheng Mai San*.
- A formula I commonly combine with *Sheng Mai San* in patients suffering from *qi* and *yin* deficiency to boost vitality / immunity and the reserves of *wei qi* is *Yu Ping Feng San*.
- When patients have *qi* and *yin* deficiency, using formulas in acute infections in cases of wind cold / wind heat such as *Gan Mao Ling*, *Chuan Xin Lian*, *Sang Ju Yin*, or *Yin Qiao San* will yield poor results.

I recently had a wonderful teaching opportunity with a patient who experienced tremendous results using the patent medicine *Gan Mao Ling* for an acute cold / flu. I always make sure all my patients have *Gan Mao Ling* on hand for such acute issues, and this patient experienced dramatic results, resolving her issue within 48 hours.

Consequently, she asked, “Can I take this formula daily to prevent future issues?” This was a perfect opportunity to explain the important concept of acute treatments versus preventative protocols.

*Zhi Wei Bing*: “Treating Illness Before It Manifests”

“Treating illness before it manifests” is a fundamental concept in East Asian medicine, but I often find it overlooked in the contemporary clinical setting. The classical statement, “The superior

physician treats illness before it manifests,” is often mentioned; however, I consistently see both patients and clinicians alike searching for and promoting “miracle cures” for acute issues, rather than teaching and investing in long-term prevention.

This is extremely germane when discussing the current focus on treating and managing cold / flu viruses falling under the patterns of wind cold and wind heat invasion in East Asian medicine vernacular.

### *Sheng Mai San* for Deep Immune Health

One of the most important patent medicines I keep on hand in my clinic for the cultivation of deep immune health in the prevention of acute cold / flu scenario is *Sheng Mai San*. This is a simple three-herb formula consisting of *ren shen*, *mai men dong* and *wu wei zi*.

*Sheng Mai San* was originally created for patients experiencing extreme summer heat whereby the *qi* and *yin* were consumed due to excessive sweating. It is also commonly used for patients suffering from tuberculosis, resulting in damage to *qi* and *yin*; and is used in China for senior patients suffering from weakening cardiovascular systems with heart palpitations and overall cardiovascular decline.

The trio of herbs in *Sheng Mai San* have a wide range of action. *Ren shen* nourishes lung, spleen and heart *qi*; *mai men dong* nourishes heart / lung *yin*; and *wu wei zi* astringes the *qi* of the lungs and kidneys, and according to some contemporary herbalists, courses the liver *qi*.

Overall, this seemingly simple formula is extremely effective for patients suffering from long-term *yin* and *qi* deficiency. These two patterns are perhaps the most common I see in patients in my clinic and are very important to address to prevent acute wind cold / wind heat presentations.

My clinic is in a locale which experiences long stretches of extremely hot weather wherein patients experience long-term excessive sweating. Living in and exercising in hot climates for months on end results in significant taxation of the body’s reserves of *qi* and *yin*. However, these are not the only factors that drain *qi* and *yin*.

Two of the most common factors are chronic worry and chronic sleep disturbance. These two factors often feed one another, with chronic worry causing poor sleep, and poor sleep resulting in poor mental clarity, resulting in anxiety. Depletion of the reserves of *qi* and *yin* also results in poor functioning of *wei qi* and poor overall immune function.

*Sheng Mai San* targets deficient *qi* and *yin* and is extremely easy to digest, making it an ideal formula for long-term use for patients suffering from chronic deficiency of *qi* and *yin*. In so doing, it consequently cultivates deep health and vitality for the prevention of acute invasions of wind cold / wind heat.

### Combining *Shen Mail San* With *Yu Ping Feng San*

A formula I commonly combine with *Sheng Mai San* in patients suffering from *qi* and *yin* deficiency to boost vitality / immunity and the reserves of *wei qi* is *Yu Ping Feng San*. This is also a three-herb formula, consisting of *huang qi*, *bai zhu* and *fang feng*.

*Huang qi* boosts the *qi*; *bai zhu* builds and astringes the *qi*; and *fang feng* disperses the *wei qi* to prevent invasions of wind cold / wind heat. These actions make this formula an excellent combination with *Sheng Mai San* as an effective protocol to boost *wei qi* and overall *qi* reserves, and nourish *yin*.

For patients who suffer from significant *qi* / *yin* deficiency or who tend to chronically contract wind cold / wind heat invasions, using the combination of *Sheng Mai San* and *Yu Ping Feng San* is a highly effective clinical protocol to have on hand to prevent potential acute infections. Both formulas are gentle and easy to digest, making them wise choices for patients with potential weak digestion or gastric sensitivity.

### A Critical Consideration

An important factor for clinicians to keep in mind is that when patients have *qi* and *yin* deficiency, using formulas in acute infections in cases of wind cold / wind heat such as *Gan Mao Ling*, *Chuan Xin Lian*, *Sang Ju Yin*, or *Yin Qiao San* will yield poor results, as the patient's body is lacking the overall strength to function properly. This will result in the now highly discussed concept of "long disease."

East Asian medicine has always acknowledged this potential issue. It is extremely important to help patients evaluate the overall underlying reserves of *qi* / *yin* and not depend solely on the use of acute therapies, even when such therapies can be effective.

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