



News Spring 2022

Dear Practitioner,

Our last three newsletters were focused on COVID-19. Reports are coming out now indicating that the long haul COVID issues include damage to the central nervous system. This is hauntingly similar to the aftermath of the 1918 influenza pandemic. We are confident that acupuncture will be found to be effective in combating these symptoms. It is likely that scalp acupuncture and neuro-acupuncture will be very important modalities in helping patients with these problems. Herbal medicines will also prove to be helpful. [See our Fall 2021 Newsletter for a detailed discussion on treating Long COVID.]

Traditional East Asian Medicine Covid-19 Study

The American Society of Acupuncturists (ASA) is working with other parties in gathering case studies related to treating patients fighting or recovering from COVID-19 infections. Beau Anderson, Lisa Taylor-Swanson, and others are working on this project. We are joining the ASA in asking people to support this effort. Go to this link to learn more:

<https://www.teamcovidstudy.com/>

In this Newsletter

Included in this newsletter is an article on Eczema by Jake Schmalzriedt, DOM. We know that Chinese herbal medicine and acupuncture are effective in ways that conventional treatments are limited.

Evelyn Robert, L.Ac has just published a book, *Chinese Medicine Essential Oils*, on the effective use of essential oils using Chinese botanicals. We have excerpted some pages here, and you can purchase this book from us.

We are thrilled to share another article from Andrew Sterman: "Eating Healthy on a Budget." We have found his books and writings interesting and enlightening. Enjoy!

About Golden Flower Chinese Herbs

Golden Flower Chinese Herbs offers over 130 Chinese herbal formulas that meet the vast majority of your patients' needs. We also offer about 300 formulas from KPC Herbs for pattern presentations that may not be covered by one of our formulas. The KPC formulas are in granule, tablet or capsule form. We also carry around 400 single herbs in the KPC Herbs granule form.

This newsletter, past newsletters, and the many papers and monographs that we have published are posted on our website. You can check them out under the "Resources" tab at www.gfcherbs.com.

The 7th Edition of our *Clinical Guide to Commonly Used Chinese Herbal Formulas* is now available. Call us for a free copy!

We greatly appreciate your business, support, and feedback.

Support your State Acupuncture Association!

Sincerely,

John Scott, DOM and Lorena Monda, DOM



Treating Eczema with Chinese Herbs

By Jake Schmalzriedt, DOM

Eczema is a common chronic skin condition generally identified by itchy and inflamed patches of skin marked by periods of exacerbation. Eczema can occur at any age and it is estimated that around 30 million Americans have some form of eczema. There are variants of eczema, with the most common being atopic dermatitis, towards which this paper is keyed. However, the understanding from a Chinese medicine perspective can be used to effectively treat other forms of eczema.

The Manifestations of Eczema

Eczema can be found anywhere on the body but is more common in skin folds and flexural areas like the cubital crease or popliteal fossa. Other common areas include neck, hands, feet, ankles, wrists, chest, and eyelids. For babies it is most common on the face, particularly the cheeks and chin.

The presentation of eczema will vary from individual to individual and depends on which pattern is present. Understanding the presentation is important as it dictates treatment approach. The clinical features of eczema present with multiple skin patterns and is generally grouped histologically in three different forms, which are identified as: 1) acute, 2) sub-acute, and 3) chronic. These terms are mainly used as a guideline to categorize symptomology, as the eczema can present in any stage and does not necessarily have to follow a progression.

The acute flare-up phase starts with itching, usually before the rash is present. As the flare-up progresses itching will intensify. Pruritus attacks can occur anytime but are usually worse at night. The condition at any stage can be exacerbated with scratching. When the rash manifests, it is dull red to bright red in color. It can be swollen and can have vesicles, small fluid-filled sacs/bumps that may ooze or weep. There may also be pain or tenderness.

In the sub-acute phase the skin will be dry, scaly, and flaky. The color will be a less intensely red and the itching is usually less intense as well. As mentioned before, the eczema can begin in this stage and can transition from here to an acute flare up or to a more chronic presentation.

Chronic eczema presents as a dull red or brown/grey color. For darker skin, it may present as a discoloration of skin tone. The skin will be lichenified—thickened dry skin that is often scaly or cracked. Like the other presentations the affected areas are itchy.

Understanding Eczema

The exact cause of eczema is unknown. From a Western perspective, it is believed to be linked to both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The intrinsic factors are associated with genetics, which include immune system function and epidermal barrier function. An altered immune response has been considered a primary cause of eczema. Overreaction

of the immune function leads to inflammation in the body, specifically, inflammatory signals to the epidermis of the skin. Epidermal lipids, like cholesterol, triglycerides, fatty acids, etcetera are integral in the structure and function of the epidermal barrier. The imbalance in immune system function leads to altered lipids within the skin barrier, which can develop into eczema. Further Western research on epidermal barrier function points to filaggrin, a key to building an effective barrier against the environment. It is used for pH maintenance, moisture, and skin protection against external pathogens including microbial agents and allergens. Filaggrin mutations cause abnormal epidermal function, which in turn leads to eczema. The extrinsic factors include external triggers such as allergens, chemicals solvents, soaps, fragrances, and detergents. These can lead to an altered immune response and weaken the epidermal barrier, which can cause eczema to develop.

Eczema in Chinese Medicine

Wei Qi

As in Western medicine, Chinese medicine views eczema as a problem with the skin barrier defense, a *wei qi* dysfunction. *Wei qi* is responsible for warming and protecting the body against external pathogenic influences. As part of *wei qi* circulation, the *wei qi* also has the function to expel waste from the tissue. As *wei qi* carries defensive substances to the superficial level, it also clears the superficial of foreign material, toxins, and biological waste products. When the body is distressed, the *wei qi* is unable to properly regulate the exterior. This includes the proper circulation of qi, blood, and body fluids, the proper elimination of toxins, and the ability to fight off external pathogens. When the qi stagnates, pathogenic wind can more easily penetrate and heat and fluids can accumulate. When heat and fluids combine, damp-heat develops and this can damage blood and yin. Eventually, if the condition progresses, there will be blood deficiency with wind dryness, a common presentation of chronic eczema.

Lung

The lung, being the only yin organ with direct contact to the outside, is the organ most associated with problems of the skin, though not the only organ that can impact the skin. It is responsible for the circulation of *wei qi* at the surface level, as well as for distributing qi and body fluids into the limbs and skin. This circulation function sends water vapor to the skin, providing nourishment and lubrication. The lung is also easily affected by dryness; and because the lung is responsible for moistening and nourishment of the skin, when deficient, external cold and dryness can easily impair the body; dry skin will ensue, intensifying the condition.

Qi and Blood

Another etiology that contributes to eczema is prolonged deficiency of qi, which over time injures blood. The spleen is responsible for converting nutrients into qi and blood; so

when the spleen is deficient, qi and blood will become deficient. The resulting blood deficiency can allow the development of internal wind and dryness. When this is coupled with the lung's inability to moisten and nourish the skin, eczema will result.

Spleen

With poor spleen function comes damp encumbrance. The body may try to vaporize the accumulation of dampness with heat. If unsuccessful, the heat and dampness combine into a damp-heat condition, further contributing to acute eczematous conditions. Lastly, when the spleen is deficient it is unable to provide support to the lungs, complicating the lung deficiency described above.

Basic Understanding of Western Medical Treatment for Eczema

There is no Western medical cure for eczema. Western medicine focuses on treating flare-up symptoms, and then turns its focus toward education and knowing individual triggers to prevent recurrence (which will be discussed later in this paper). Western medicine uses both topical and internal medications to treat eczema. The common topical pharmaceuticals include corticosteroids, PDE4 inhibitors, which block PDE4 production in order to reduce inflammation, and topical calcineurin inhibitors (TCIs), which are non-steroidal medications that inhibit immune response. Internal pharmaceutical treatment includes immunosuppressant therapy to reduce immune response and moderate symptoms.

Differentiation and the Treatment of Eczema with Chinese Medicine

Chinese medicine can be very successful in the treatment of eczema. Generally, both acupuncture and herbal medicine treatments together provide the best results. Above, there was an explanation on understanding the role of *wei* qi, as well as lung and spleen function, in patterns of eczema. For clarification, eczema results from the dysfunction of *wei* qi. However, this impairment is not addressed in the treatment of acute stages of active flare-ups. Once the flare-up is under control, the underlying deficiency becomes the primary focus of treatment. The active presentation of eczema is primarily an excess pattern, and the treatment focus is on symptom control and based on how the eczema is manifesting.

For treatment, as discussed above, eczema will present in a couple of ways. 1) damp-heat and 2) blood deficiency with wind-dryness are the two most common presentations from a Chinese medicine perspective. This represents the acute phase and sub-acute/chronic phases respectively. For severe conditions heat/fire toxin or blood-heat may become

primary patterns.

Damp-Heat

The acute pattern is differentiated in Chinese medicine as eczema due to damp-heat. Damp-heat eczema presents as red inflamed skin that is itchy. It can be oozing or have pustules/vesicles present. This is a common pattern presentation for early stages of an acute flare-up. The classical formula, **Eliminate Wind Powder** (*Xiao Feng San*), is a key formula for this presentation and is ideal for acute and leading into sub-acute patterns. **Eliminate Wind Powder** (*Xiao Feng San*) can be defined as a wind-toxin formula used to address red, itchy, weepy skin lesions. The for-

mula clears wind-damp and wind-heat trapped in the skin layer. The function of this formula is to dispel wind and dampness, clear heat, and nourish blood. One of the main symptoms of eczema, itching, is a key symptom of wind, or rather, wind is a major cause of itching. **Eliminate Wind Powder** (*Xiao Feng San*), like its name implies, is excellent for dispelling wind from the skin using key herbs such as arctium (*niu bang zi*), which is also beneficial for clearing heat-toxin, schizonepeta (*jing jie*), which is beneficial for pruritic conditions, siler (*fang feng*), and cicada molting (*chan tui*). The heat-clearing herbs include rehmannia (*sheng di*



huang), which clears heat from the blood, gypsum (*shi gao*), and anemarrhena (*zhi mu*). The damp-draining herbs include sophora flavescens (*ku shen*) and clematis (*mu tong*), both of which drain damp-heat, and atracylodes (*cang zhu*), which transforms dampness. Nourishing blood is an important aspect of **Eliminate Wind Powder** (*Xiao Feng San*). Wind enters the body through the pores. Wind cannot easily enter the body when qi and blood are full and there is harmony between the *ying* qi (nutritive qi) and *wei* qi (defensive qi). When the blood is full and flowing without impediment, wind is naturally extinguished; but when blood is deficient, wind can enter and occupy the vacuum left by the qi and blood deficiency. As the wind is expelled, the space must be filled (with blood) in order to prevent wind from reforming. In this formula, angelica (*dang gui*) is used for this purpose. Additionally, angelica (*dang gui*), through the effects of nourishing and moving blood, has natural anti-inflammatory and analgesic qualities, which are beneficial for treating eczema. Finally, the formula uses angelica (*dang gui*) and licorice (*gan cao*) to protect qi and blood from the damage caused by damp-heat pathogens.

Heat-Toxin

It is not uncommon to see damp-heat with a proclivity to give rise to heat-toxin. It can also be hard to differentiate at what point the presentation turns into heat-toxin. Clinically,

combining **Viola Clear Fire Formula** (*Di Ding Qing Huo Pian*) with **Eliminate Wind Powder** (*Xiao Feng San*) can be very effective and aid in a quicker resolution of a flare-up.

Blood Heat

Another Chinese medicine pattern presentation during an acute flare-up of eczema is heat in the blood. This pattern will present as bright red, hot to the touch, with the key symptom of severe itching. This pattern will commonly present with heat-toxin and again can be difficult to differentiate, but this is the most common pattern when the intense itching causes the sufferer to overscratch and cause bleeding. **Rehmannia Cool Blood Formula** (*Tu Fu Ling Sheng Di Huang Wan*) can be used alone to clear blood heat, but the combination of **Rehmannia Cool Blood Formula** (*Tu Fu Ling Sheng Di Huang Wan*) with **Heavenly Emperor's Formula** (*Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan*) is a stronger option clinically. With the high percentage of rehmannia (*sheng di huang*) in both of these formulas, it is excellent to relieve extreme itch. **Heavenly Emperor's Formula** (*Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan*) has the ability to calm *shen*, which is almost always disturbed when the patient is overwhelmed with intense itching.

Blood Deficiency with Wind-Dryness

Blood deficiency with wind-dryness falls into the sub-acute and chronic patterns of eczema. It is common for the eczema to have transitioned through damp-heat, where the damp-heat has damaged blood, yin, and body fluids. As heat subsides, the pustules and vesicles that were weeping/oozing crust over and scaling begins. This pattern presents as dry skin with itching. The skin will be rougher with thick, scaly, flaky patches around the affected areas. As the pattern becomes a prolonged condition, lichenification can occur. The color will not be as intense as with the damp-heat condition, but presents as a dull, darkened red or brownish color. The presence of damp-heat may still be an issue, even though it is not the focus of the manifestation. The dryness is in part due to damp-heat obstruction. Damp-heat disrupts the qi mechanism, particularly the lung's ability to disseminate and diffuse, and damp-heat also dries up body fluids. **Tang Kuei and Tribulus Formula** (*Dang Gui Yin Zi*) is a key formula for this presentation. This classical formula is excellent for eczema in sub-acute and chronic patterns. The base formula of **Tang Kuei and Tribulus Formula** (*Dang Gui Yin Zi*) is *Si Wu Tang*, used to treat blood deficiency. **Tang Kuei and Tribulus Formula** (*Dang Gui Yin Zi*) is focused on nourishing blood, moistening dryness, and relieving itch. The formula still has heat-clearing ability, however, it does very little to transform damp. If the eczema is in a transition from a damp-heat pattern to a dryness pattern,

where both pattern symptoms are manifesting, a formula combination of **Tang Kuei and Tribulus Formula** (*Dang Gui Yin Zi*) and **Eliminate Wind Powder** (*Xiao Feng San*) is suggested.

As the pattern of blood deficiency with wind dryness progresses and lichenification occurs, further support to nourish the body and moisten dryness may be warranted. Suitable formula combinations with **Tang Kuei and Tribulus Formula** (*Dang Gui Yin Zi*) can include: for blood support, add **He Shou Wu Tablets** (*Shou Wu Pain*) or **Tang Kuei and Salvia Formula** (*Jia Wei Si Wu Tang*). **He Shou Wu Tablets** (*Shou Wu Pain*) nourish blood and yin and support liver and kidney. It is a beneficial supplement for skin conditions due to blood deficiency and wind-dryness. While by themselves, **He Shou Wu Tablets** (*Shou Wu Pain*) are generally not enough to relieve itch, they are a good assistant to **Tang Kuei and Tribulus** (*Dang Gui Yin Zi*),

providing the extra nourishing support needed for chronic eczema. **Tang Kuei and Salvia Formula** (*Jia Wei Si Wu Tang*) is a modified version of the classical blood nourishing formula, *Si Wu Tang*, with additions to further support the nourishing and invigoration of blood. Blood moving herbs help to promote circulation, reduce the thickening and hardening of the skin, and benefit the healing process with new tissue growth. For qi and blood deficiency, combine **Tang Kuei and Tribulus Formula** (*Dang Gui Yin Zi*) with **Women's Precious Formula**

(*Ba Zhen Tang*). For yin deficiency with dryness, use **Eight Immortals Formula** (*Ba Xian Chang Shou Wan*).

Stress and the Liver

The liver is generally not the primary organ involved in patterns for eczema, but when involved, can worsen the condition. The liver may play a role in an underlying damp-heat pattern, which can develop into eczema, but liver involvement is often only identified if the condition is worsened with stress. Adding a formula like **Free and Easy Wanderer Plus** (*Jia Wei Xiao Yao San*) to the treatment is suggested if stress exacerbates the condition. Aside from regulating liver qi and addressing the stress, this formula will also help with the eczema directly, as it clears heat, cools blood, supports qi, and nourishes blood.

Root Treatments

As symptoms recede, it is important to move from the branch treatment, using the above formulas, to the root treatment with appropriate constitutional formulas. During this non-acute phase it becomes very important to support the body's deficiencies, whether it is the lung, spleen, blood, body fluids, or *wei qi*. With proper support during the non-acute stage you can prevent or minimize future eczema flare-ups.



Topical Treatments for Eczema

Topical strategies can be a very beneficial treatment addition for eczema. There is a wide variety of topicals that can be used for eczema. **Spring Wind Ointment** nourishes skin and dispels dryness and is excellent for wind-dryness eczema. **Golden Yellow Ointment** by Spring Wind clears heat, dispels toxins, reduces swellings, and expels pus. It is great for damp-heat and heat-toxin presentations.

An easily accessible topical is coconut oil. This natural oil can be used to moisturize your skin and provide relief from itching. While coconut oil is generally excellent to use, it has occasionally been identified as a trigger for eczema. Trying it out on test areas to make sure that it does not cause irritation is advised.

To help with relief of intense itching, an oatmeal or apple cider vinegar bath can be beneficial. Skin cleanliness and proper moisturization is important. After the bath, pat dry, then moisturize immediately after bathing. This helps to retain moisture in the skin barrier.

Know Your Triggers

Identifying triggers is important to help prevent future flare-ups. Triggers can be very individualized. Some individuals may be susceptible to the cold dry air exacerbating their eczema in the winter, while others may find that the heat and humidity of the summer make their eczema worse. The most common known triggers include: stress, dry skin, irritants like dish soaps and antibacterial soaps, harsh detergents, shampoos, deodorants, perfumes, disinfectants, surface cleaners, and environmental allergens like seasonal pollens, hay fever, pet dander, dust mites, mold, etcetera. Sun, sweat, prolonged exposure to water, and clothing materials like wool or polyester can also exacerbate eczema. It is debated whether food allergies directly affect eczema, however, foods that have the potential to worsen symptoms of eczema include: wheat, eggs, milk, and soy. It is also advised to avoid inflammatory foods like sugar, trans-fats, refined carbohydrates, alcohol, etc. This list is a good place to start, but because triggers vary from individual to individual, identifying one's individual triggers is important.

Once you know your triggers you can take action. Use gentle alternatives to the irritants, such as fragrance free soaps, shampoos, lotions, and deodorants. Protect your skin by using gloves when cleaning in order to avoid exposure to chemicals and allergens like dust mites and pollens. Wear soft breathable clothing and use an extra rinse cycle when doing laundry. Take time to read labels. This includes products that state they are "all natural". Just because it states it is "all natural," does not mean it will not affect you. Even some plant-based products, like aloe, can cause reactions. And deal with stress! Stress is a top-ranked trigger that can precipitate a flare-up. Finding effective ways of dealing with stress is very important. Top stress management techniques include: daily meditation, physical exercise, and deep breathing. For more in-depth discussion on stress

management take a look at the article *Understanding Stress*, which can be found on the Golden Flower website under: **Resources->Newsletter->GFCH Newsletter Fall 2019.**

Final Thoughts

There is a close relationship between the skin, the lung, respiratory problems, and emotional issues. The lung-skin connection is commonly seen, often with a co-occurrence of eczema and asthma. More often than not, eczema will exacerbate asthmatic conditions. The emotional connection is not always apparent to the patient or the practitioner and the psycho-emotional aspects of eczema are often overlooked, but can be a key to preventing future flare-ups. Because of the close connection with the lungs, emotions of unexpressed grief, sadness, depression, and withdrawal, may be present and can be key triggers for eczema. With emotional health, it is common to discuss stress and its negative impact on eczema, but much less common to identify and work through lung pattern emotions. These considerations may prove a valuable asset in treating certain cases.



A New Book! Chinese Medicine Essential Oils:

A Materia Medica and Practical Guide to their Use

Evelyn Robert's pioneering book *Chinese Medicine Essential Oils* is an innovative treasure trove for practitioners of Chinese medicine, aromatherapists, and everyone interested in the great value that the therapeutic use of essential oils offers for personal wellbeing. It

brings the ancient wisdom of Chinese medicine to the art of aromatherapy, and vice versa, by introducing essential oils made from Chinese medicinal plants to the aromatherapy community.

Part One explains in detail the therapeutic use of essential oils in the practice of acupuncture and classical Chinese medicine, while making the concepts of these healing modalities accessible to the lay reader. Most appreciated by the practicing reader, Evelyn Robert, L.Ac. presents comprehensive practical instructions on proper application of the oils for a myriad of conditions and indications, including how to safely dilute essential oils and how to create customized blends. In Part Two, the *Material Medica*, the author presents extensive, valuable information about the qualities, character, actions and therapeutic combinations of over 75 unique Chinese medicine essential oils.

**Through April, get \$30 off the list price of \$198.00!
Available at Golden Flower Chinese Herbs.**

(Excerpted from *Chinese Medicine Essential Oils*
by Evelyn Robert, LAc)

CANG ZHU 蒼術 ATRACTYLODES

Atractylodis lancea Rhizoma

The Chinese character for *zhu/shu* 術 in *cang zhu*, refers to artistry and skill. It can hold and conduct the intention of the practitioner. *Cang zhu's* aroma and essence embody the magic of transformation. In the body it transforms accumulation of dampness and directs the movement of water. Too much dampness slows things down and interferes with proper bodily functions internally; and in the limbs, it causes swelling, aching, and difficulty with movement. By clearing up the dampness, *cang zhu* brings that which was inhibited back to life.

Dampness is also a state of mind. It is a kind of depressive heaviness, and a foggy lack of clarity. If damp accumulates over time, it becomes thick and sticky phlegm which eventually can block the senses causing mental confusion. *Cang zhu's* magic helps to break through the fog to transform thoughts, settle the mind, build up low self-esteem and self-worth to do away with hopelessness, and more extreme suicidal tendencies.

In *The Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing/Divine Farmer's Materia Medica Classic*, *cang zhu* is considered an upper grade herb. It says, "It mainly treats damp impediment, dead muscles, tetany, and jaundice. It stops sweating, eliminates heat, and disperses food. It can be used as a conductor in decoctions."

Aroma: Fresh, sharp, earthy.

Note: Middle/Base.

Part of Plant: Rhizome.

Extraction Method: CO₂ extraction.

Color: Dark red-brown.

Growing Region: Mao Shan area of Jiangsu province, China.

Major Chemical Components: Sesquiterpenoids: atractylo-din, atractylone [6], hinesol, eudesmol, atractylenolide, caryophyllene, elemene, selinene.

CM Category: Aromatic Transforming Dampness.

Nature and Taste: Pungent, bitter, cool.

Affinities: Spleen, Stomach, Lung, Liver. As essential oil, also Kidney. Average Dilution: 8-10%.

Pharmacological Actions: gastrointestinal relaxant, anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic, antispasmodic, anti-ulcer, vulnerary, nervine, diuretic, antiviral, antibiotic, antiparasitic, antidiabetic.

Actions and Indications:

- Aids digestion, strengthens the Spleen, and transforms Spleen damp which can lead to epigastric and abdominal fullness, distention, nausea, vomiting, loose stools, and diarrhea, as well as a feeling of heaviness in the body and extremities.
- Tonifies postnatal qi by strengthening spleen and lung thereby supporting digestion and respiration.
- Transforms damp accumulation, damp-cold or damp-heat in the lower burner, with signs such as leucorrhea (white or

yellow discharge), cystitis, prostatitis, genital itch, and low backache.

- Circulates fluids throughout the extremities.
- Regulates sweating.
- Treats damp *bi* painful obstruction syndrome with painful, stiff, swollen joints and decreased mobility.
- Repairs necrotic flesh.
- Transforms phlegm to unblock the senses.
- Benefits the eyes, diminished vision, cataracts, glaucoma, night blindness.
- Eliminates parasites.

CM Concepts, Channel Systems, and Patterns:

- *Yin Qiao Mai*/Yin Heel, Motility Vessel treatment.
- Treats *Tai Yin* Stage headache.

Treatment Strategies:

☞ To transform damp accumulation in the spleen, combine *cang zhu* with *hou po* (magnolia bark), *bai dou kou* (cardamom), and *chen pi* (aged tangerine peel). If there is more cold, add *gan jiang* (dry ginger). Dilute 10% in grapeseed oil and apply on SP3, ST40, LR13 (mu accumulation point of spleen), and compress over the abdomen. Make necessary dietary changes.

☞ For damp accumulation in the lower burner, blend equal parts *cang zhu* with *nan mu* (cedarwood) and *ai ye* (artemisia argyi). Apply on *Dai Mai*/Belt Vessel points, GB26, CV3, BL32, BL40. For genital area symptoms, blend with *she chu-ang zi* (cnidium fruit) dilute 3% in coconut oil. Apply on the affected area and on LR5.

☞ To treat damp *bi* syndrome with painful, swollen joints, make a liniment with *cang zhu* 30%, *yi yi ren* (coix) 25%, *song zhen* (pine needle) 30%, and *fo shou* (Buddha's hand) 15%, as a 10% dilution in ethyl alcohol. Massage into affected areas.

☞ To tonify postnatal qi, combine *cang zhu* with *huang qi* (astragalus) and *chen pi* (aged tangerine peel). Dilute 10% in black cumin seed oil. Apply to acupoints such as SP3, LU9, BL20, BL13, CV12, CV17.

☞ To build self esteem, wear *cang zhu* as an amulet and inhale the aroma. Place *cang zhu*, neat, on KI6 and points of the *Yin Qiao Mai*/Yin Heel Vessel.

☞ To transform phlegm blocking the senses, causing mental confusion, add 27 drops of *cang zhu* to 2.7 oz spray bottle of *yuan zhi* (polygala tenuifolia) hydrosol, shake well before spraying on the face and head, and apply *cang zhu*, neat, on ST40 and *Jing*-well points.

JIN YIN HUA 金銀花 HONEYSUCKLE*Lonicerae Japonica Flos*

The Chinese name *jin yin hua* 金銀花 means “gold and silver flower,” referring both to yang and yin as well as to the alchemical transmutation of precious metals. *Jin yin hua* essential oil is the sweetest way to clear heat and eliminate toxicity from the body. Its aroma is strong yet pleasantly sweet and floral. It can detoxify without harshness or harm. It is antiviral and antibacterial and is the main ingredient in the popular herbal formula, *Yin Qiao San*, for treating colds and flus. Applied topically, it is gentle on the skin even though it is powerful enough to eliminate infections, dark spots, and scars. Emotionally, it reduces the intensity of fear and fire, relieving anxiety and insomnia. It purifies the mind and spirit, providing a clean slate, the chance for renewal, and an opening to the spirit as an aid to meditation.

Aroma: Intense, sweet floral.**Note:** Middle/Base.**Part of Plant:** Flower.**Extraction Method:** CO₂ extraction.**Color:** Golden yellow.**Growing Region:** Guilin, Guangxi province, China. Harvested mid-June.**Major Chemical Components:** Monoterpene alcohol: linalool. Esters: benzyl acetate, hexenyl acetate. Sesquiterpenes: caryophyllene, humulene. Monoterpenes: ocimene, limonene, alpha-pinene. Phenol (Phenylpropanoid): methyl eugenol.**Average Dilution:** 2-4%.**CM Category:** Clearing Heat, Resolving Toxicity.**Nature and Taste:** Sweet and cold.**Affinities:** Lung, Large Intestine, Stomach.**Pharmacological Actions:** Anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, antipathogenic, antimicrobial, anticancer, anxiolytic, prebiotic.**Actions and Indications:**

- Draws toxins out of the body.
- Resolves childhood fire toxins as in the aftereffects of inoculations or infectious and inherited diseases.
- Eliminates wind and fire syndromes.
- Detoxifies the liver.
- Acts as preventative for breast cancer, prostate cancer, and viral infections.
- Treats wind-heat type colds and flus with fever, sore throat, congestion, cough, headache, body aches, and thirst.
- Reduces blood sugar.
- Relaxes, cools, and descends to reduce blood pressure.
- In the digestive tract, acts as prebiotic, supporting microbial flora in the gut, and colonization of good bacteria in support of gut flora. It eliminates harmful intestinal bacterial or fungal infections, dysentery, and damp terrain.
- Promotes elimination and diuresis, clears urinary tract infections.

- In OB/GYN it benefits delivery and postpartum, relaxes the uterus and the mind to smooth labor, delivery, and postpartum recovery.

- In dermatology, it eliminates skin infections, fibrotic tissue, scarring, keloids, boils, pustules, abscesses, and reduces hyperpigmentation (age spots, liver spots, sun damage).

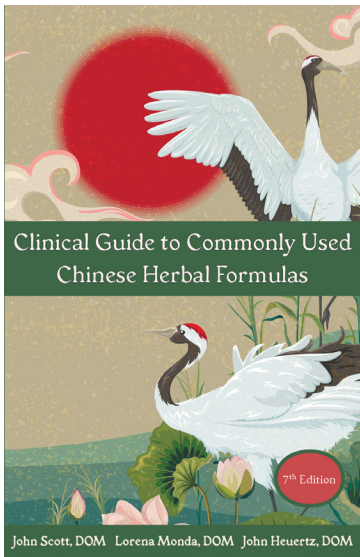
CM Concepts, Channel Systems, and Patterns:

- Clear damp-heat as part of Divergent Meridian treatment strategy.
- Facilitate *Yang Qiao Mai*/Yang Heel Vessel Treatment.
- Benefit the Career Palace of the Nine Palaces.

Treatment Strategies:

- ☞ Blend with *huo xiang* (patchouli) to promote probiotic terrain in the gut and eliminate harmful bacterial or fungal infections. Dilute equal parts *jin yin hua* and *huo xiang* 4-6% in black cumin seed oil and take 3 drops with 1 tbsp of yogurt once per day between meals. Three days on, three days off.
- ☞ As a preventative, take by internal ingestion with *ling zhi* (ganoderma) spore oil, 1 drop of *jin yin hua* in 1/3 tsp *ling zhi* spore oil twice per day. Take three days on and three days off for three weeks with a break for one week and then continue the pattern.
- ☞ To reduce age spots and reduce hyperpigmentation, blend *jin yin hua* with *bai zhi* (angelica dahurica), equal parts diluted to 2% in milk and coconut oil. Keep refrigerated. Apply directly on the dark spots once per day at night. Cover and keep overnight.
- ☞ For wind-heat illnesses, combine *jin yin hua* with *lian qiao* (forsythia) and *bo he* (peppermint), equal parts, and dilute to 4-6% in almond oil, grapeseed oil, or ethyl alcohol and apply to the upper back area around GV12, 13, 14, on the forehead and on acupoints LI20, LI11, LU11, and LI1. If gua sha is going to be used, apply oils afterward. Add 3-5 drops neat to a pint of steaming hot water and inhale the steam with eyes closed.
- ☞ To relax the uterus and the mind to smooth labor and promote delivery, use *jin yin hua* as aromatherapy with deep breathing, or diffuse in the birthing room. Take 1 drop neat by mouth. May also apply on acupoints such as LI4, SP6, GB21, LR5, GB41, BL67 to promote labor and delivery.
- ☞ To slow labor and allow for a short break in contractions when the mother is exhausted, apply *jin yin hua* with *wu wei zi* (schisandra fruit) on HT7, PC6, KI4, GB34, LR3, CV17. Restart labor when ready with *jin yin hua* alone on LI4, SP6, and UB60.
- ☞ To ease recovery and treat postpartum depression, add 12 drops of *jin yin hua* and *bai zi ren* (biota seed) to the daily bath water. Mix first in full fat milk or cream to emulsify the oils. Combine *jin yin hua* with *ru xiang* (boswellia sacra) in the bath to help heal episiotomy or surgical wounds and prevent scarring.
- ☞ To lower blood pressure, blend equal parts *jin yin hua* 20% with *jiang xiang* (dalbergia) 60%, and *ju hua* (chrysanthemum) 20%. Diffuse or inhale neat. Dilute 10% in *bai zi ren* (biota seed) or black cumin seed cold-pressed carrier oil and apply to the bottom of the feet. May also apply on other acupoints appropriate to the case.

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EATING HEALTHY ON A BUDGET

By Andrew Serman

Today, tens of millions of Americans don't have enough food. One-third of all Americans are living with inadequate health insurance or none at all, there are food deserts in cities and towns across the nation, and junk food is inadvertently subsidized through government programs designed generations ago to keep bellies full and protests down. All this in the wealthiest nation on earth, in the wealthiest moment in history.

Health in America is generally poor, despite healthcare spending marching toward four trillion dollars each year: about 18 cents from every dollar of the total economy. In America alone there are 35 million adults living with preventable diabetes, the highest proportion in the world. Autoimmune diseases are rising for officially unknown reasons, now said to afflict 24 million Americans according to the National Institutes of Health. Despite a warlike attitude against cancer, incidence continues to increase; 40% of Americans can now expect to experience a cancer diagnosis.

Underneath these statistics lies an epidemic of metabolic disease—illnesses based on inability to digest our own diets successfully—the outward manifestation of which is the epidemic of obesity (which has more than tripled in my lifetime). Each one of those millions of people is a unique individual with aspirations, personal gifts, and deeply intertwined family relations.

What can be done? We eat at the mercy of our budgets and the foods deemed profitable for sale in our neighborhoods. We are inundated with expertly crafted and highly manipulative advertising, with misinformation coming from government agencies led by industry players more committed to profit structures than to public health. Food in America is enormously complex. Profit is sacrosanct. We are asked not to be concerned for the health of the land, those who farm it, or the genuine dietary needs of individuals. We are asked not to be concerned about the unprecedented use of chemicals, or the health of farm animals. We are asked not to question whether the epidemic of drug abuse is fostered by a system that medicates us at birth and for every ill, large or small, without seeing possibilities beyond the use of drugs. Something is not working. Any change in the status quo is said to be too expensive, too disruptive, impossible. But change is not impossible. In a context of climate crisis, destructive farming, societal dissatisfaction and tenuous public health, change is necessary, overdue, inevitable, and welcome.

When we teach how to heal with foods from a Chinese medicine perspective, a question lurks in the background: "What if we can't afford organic foods and special ingredi-

ents? What if we can barely afford food at all?" We can't simply wait for the blessings of late-stage market economics to provide solutions for the food deserts in city neighborhoods or less-than-affluent towns across the country. We need to solve these problems for ourselves by finding ways to eat well, within any budget, to claim our individuality and rise above being seen only as "consumers," destined to be counted in the statistics summarized above. Eating well on a budget is a matter of survival. A skillful home health practice is central to success, and we in the Chinese medicine community need to participate, reaching across all structures of our modern society.

What Is Healthy Eating?

Eating well is to eat in a way that supports your life both in the moment and moving forward, according to your own deep values, feelings, and needs. Since it's food, it needs to taste good, be good to digest, and be easy enough to shop for, cook, and share.

What Makes a Basic Meal?

Everyone needs some protein every day, some carbs, and some fats or oils. We also need the micronutrients within foods—vitamins and minerals. A basic meal includes some protein, some greens, and some grain. We support or undermine our health by how we meet this simple guideline. Healthy eating on a budget works when we choose inexpensive but good quality food to fulfill these basics in ways that we (learn to) like to eat.

Buy for the family, share bulk deliveries and shipping costs

Food is expensive. When our budget is tight, we tend to buy just what we need for that day or that week, but buying in small amounts is the most expensive way to buy something. Or we buy food ready to eat, and that's also an expensive way to buy food. The food industry knows this well and capitalizes upon it; often lower-income areas only have fast food or low quality food available, in the situation known as food deserts. Spending hours sourcing decent foods after long hours at a job is overtaxing on budget and personal energy.

But, in today's world, high quality food ingredients can be ordered from your phone for delivery. Here are a few ideas:

- + Join a food co-op if one is available.
- + Make formal or informal groups with family, neighbors, or friends to order quality staple foods in bulk, such as rice, lentils and other beans, brown rice, millet, oats, buckwheat, quinoa, corn grits/polenta, organic all-purpose or bread flour, spices, and more.

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- Divide bulk purchases among your group, large or small, using food-grade bags or airtight canisters (available online).
- Once staples are purchased in bulk and shared, use available budget for fresh vegetables, some fruit, and some meat or fish as desired.
- Share recipes, traditional and new. Most recipes are over-written, simplify them to make them better and healthier.
- Take pride in living well.

Remember, local stores will also order anything you request, particularly smaller shops. Where you spend your money is like where you water your field; shop with purpose and awareness. Below are a few places to order good quality staples online. Be discerning, don't buy just anything that comes with a "healthy" label. Add your own online or micro-community favorite sources to the list. Make notes of relative prices, quality, free shipping, and overall preference.

- Essential Organics. Grains, beans, nuts, seeds, spices, more: <https://essentialorganicingredients.com>
- Webstaurant Store. Bulk organic foods free of pesticides: <https://www.webstaurantstore.com/48527/organic-foods.html>
- MisfitsMarkets. Discounted organic produce online: <https://www.misfitsmarket.com>
- Anson Mills. Organic corn, oats, and more, whole or freshly ground: <https://www.ansonmills.com>
- The Rice Factory. Japanese imported rice and more: <https://trf-ny.com>
- Lundberg rice farms in California grow organic rices of many varieties and will ship to your door: <https://www.lundberg.com>
- Rancho Gordo. Heritage beans rescued from breed extinction: <https://www.ranchogordo.com/collections/heirloom-beans>

Which foods are most important to be organically grown?

Modern farming is economically complex. Huge farms often grow only a few government subsidized crops, which they grow in vast monocultures requiring genetically modified seed that in turn requires huge amounts of dangerous chemicals to survive. This process brings commercial food products to market without factoring the real costs to the farmland, farm workers, taxpayers, or public health. While crop subsidies may once have had good intentions, they created the gigantic fast food industry that uses only the government subsidized food products. These are the foods that are grown in

the cheapest and most damaging way possible: wheat, corn, soy, peanuts, beef, and milk.

Organic foods can be expensive in comparison to subsidized industrial farm products. Therefore, it is helpful to know which foods are most important to be organically grown: corn, soy, and wheat. Organic corn for tortillas may be more expensive, for example, but the difference is small, about three cents per tortilla. When the quality is better, the taste is better, and we are more likely to enjoy cooking, eating, and sharing at home (reserving going out for socializing rather than every time we need to eat).

Traditions to keep, traditions to update?

Traditional food can be some of the best on a tight budget. Soups, stews, casseroles, rice and beans—many beloved dishes began as peasant food. The tradition was to eat vegetarian meals (rice, beans, green vegetables, root vegetables) most of the time, and when needed or possible, to acquire a piece of meat or a chicken that would be shared throughout the family. The easiest way to share evenly is not as a steak or a burger, but to dice the meat and spread it through a soup or stew (or in Asia, to spread the meat and some simple greens in stir-fried rice). A single egg can be spread through the rice, or into egg-drop soup, or mixed into buckwheat before steaming; in this way, everyone gets a bit of the nourishing proteins and oils of the egg. In truth, a little does a lot for nutrition while avoiding the problems of excess protein and fat stagnation that we often see today.

Fast food and sugar have now become traditions of their own, and anything we do to break that habit will have strong benefits for personal health. Make burgers at home, make pancakes with some honey at home—it's important to begin with what is familiar, improve the quality, then broaden to other dishes, all while saving money from not eating out too much. For parents, few things are more important than investing in new traditions of real comfort food for your kids.

Know For Yourself: What Do I Need To Eat Well?

We all need to balance various goals, habits, and circumstances. To live our own lives larger than the limits projected upon us requires that we know what's going on and have ways to rise above it. We can do this on a budget if we are willing to do a bit more cooking and planning ahead (for example, buying staples in bulk). And, we can do it in a way that is better for our health, better for our kids, better for small businesses in our neighborhoods and beyond, better for our farmers, and in concert with a worldwide movement of bringing some sanity to how we live on this earth, with each other.

Easy budget meals for busy people

Good eating is about pairing foods together to make up meals. Below are some simple meals along with pricing from a local grocery store that caters to a low-to-middle income clientele of many backgrounds. Prices change (usually upward); what is here is intended only as a guide. If you don't live in an expensive city like New York, your prices may be lower.

Meal #1: Chicken, Rice, String Beans

This is a strong, basic meal that includes protein, healthy grain, and greens. Chicken is a basic food that nourishes digestion (stomach, spleen-pancreas); rice nourishes fluids and supports stomach, spleen-pancreas, and the small intestine; string beans balance the protein along with contributing essential minerals and support for the liver. It's a well-balanced and nourishing meal.

Chicken is currently \$2.25-5.00 per pound for cut parts, less per pound if buying a whole chicken. Free range is \$8 per pound, and organically raised chicken about \$10 per pound. A fresh-cooked whole rotisserie chicken is available at many food markets for only \$8-10 for the entire (medium size) bird. Buy chicken with the skin; more preparation raises cost, and the skin provides good quality cooking fat that is better for our bodies than the mystery fats added to processed foods or used in fast food chains. Chicken thighs are cheaper than the white meat and provide more richness of nourishment.

White rice costs between \$2-3 per pound (the higher price is organically grown and fresher), less if purchased in bulk. One pound serves six, or four including hungry teenagers. Brown rice has several advantages for eating on a budget: it is less processed and therefore less expensive to produce, it is more nutritious, and it satisfies hunger more fully. But brown rice can spoil, so purchase it at a place that sells it often, store it in a well-sealed container in the dark, and use within a few months. White or brown rice is often misconstrued as just filler food, but if selected and cooked with care, it is beautiful to eat, a foundation to a meal and a feature in itself.

String beans, or green beans, are currently about \$4 per pound fresh, \$2.50 if frozen. Fresh is preferred, of course, but frozen vegetables are vastly better than none, and modern freezing techniques are good. Some vegetables freeze better than others; find your favorites if the convenience and cost saving is important to you. Cook carefully so that vegetables don't become overcooked and soggy. Serve when still bright green with a hint of firmness, dressed simply with olive oil (\$10-20 per quart) or butter (\$4-8 per pound) and a pinch of salt.

To put the meal together:

- Cook the chicken as you like. Oven baking is a good method for chicken. Rub some olive oil, salt, and spices on the chicken

parts, arrange on a tray, bake in a 375°F oven for about 35-40 minutes, longer if your chicken parts are larger. Chicken should be cooked through but not dried out. Rosemary and thyme can make simply cooked chicken special.

- While the chicken is cooking, rinse, then steam the rice (1 measure rice to 1.5 measures water). Bring to a boil, reduce to simmer, cover with a well-fitting lid, cook for 12-15 minutes for white rice (twice that for brown). Do not stir or fluff. Turn off heat, allow the rice to coast, covered, for five minutes or more.

- If fresh, wash and trim the string beans, then steam them until bright green but still slightly firm. Remove from any steaming water (a steamer basket is not needed) and dress with olive oil and a pinch of salt, or, if you prefer, butter.

- Serve the rice, chicken, and greens together. Avoid over-spicing, but don't be afraid of reasonable salt or herbs. After all, if you don't like your own cooking, you will end up going out more often for food that is vastly saltier, often uses the cheapest possible ingredients, and wastes money.

The cost of this meal, cooked at home, is about \$10 to feed four people, \$2.50 per person (including some of the cost for olive oil, etc.), more if appetites are very large.

Meal #2: Rice & Beans with Broccoli

Rice and beans make a classic budget meal; the beans and grain combine to build complete protein equal to animal quality but far cheaper, far better for the planet, and, of course, without cruelty. Add a green vegetable for a complete meal. When cooking the meal another time, swap the types of rice, selection of beans, and green vegetables for variety and focus of food energetics.

Beans are not only very inexpensive protein, they are high in fiber (meat has none). Red and black beans help build blood while also clearing stagnation and toxins (particularly helpful are the smaller beans such as lentils and adzuki). Beans are available dried (raw) for about \$2.50 per pound (less in bulk), and in cans (cooked) for \$1.50 (\$2.79 if organic).

Rice is discussed above.

Broccoli, like string beans mentioned above, is currently about \$4 per pound in my NYC neighborhood, \$2.50 if frozen.

The cost of this meal is about \$7.50 for four people (a bit more for large appetites), including a splash of olive oil and sea salt over the greens and the beans. If able to purchase very good quality rice, beans, and greens (about \$2-3 more), this meal can rise from excellent to superb.

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Meal #3: Polenta with Chickpeas and Kale

Polenta is another highly regarded restaurant dish that began as the least expensive peasant food possible. Cooked with care and paired with protein and greens, it is wonderful eating, absolutely delicious.

Never buy pre-cooked polenta in plastic wrapping; it is cheaper and infinitely better to cook it yourself. One pound serves 6-8 people (quality polenta is currently about \$4 per pound, less if buying in quantity).

Chickpeas are available raw or pre-cooked in cans. Canned beans are fine to eat; they are convenient, affordable, and—although not as good or as inexpensive as soaking and cooking your own beans—they can be very good. Well-cooked organic beans are readily available for about \$1 more per can.

Kale is an important vegetable. Kale helps clear food stagnation and digestive pain, helps build blood, supports healthy liver function, provides powerful antioxidants and welcome dietary fiber. Fresh kale is currently \$1.50-3.00 per pound. Always cook kale, then dress with olive oil and just enough salt.

The cost of this meal is about \$8-10 for four people, including olive oil, sea salt, and some cracked black pepper which pairs beautifully with the polenta.

Meal #4: Burgers, Bread, Salad

Lots of people love burgers, and while they are subsidized, cheap, and research-tested for appeal in the fast food joints, they are far better when cooked at home. Price is complicated, since farm subsidies hide the true costs of the beef, buns, and potatoes that are the mainstay of fast food (dairy and sugar, too). Even so, real burgers that honestly provide animal taste and “yang qi” can be made at home for very reasonable expense.

Ground beef is \$4-5 per pound (\$10 if grass fed). Pre-made hamburger buns are expensive in stores, about 50 cents each. It's cheaper and better to pair burgers with a bread you like, or, if gluten-free, with a steamed grain.

Salad greens are about \$1-3 per pound, and fresh carrots about \$1.50 per pound.

The cost of a home-cooked burger meal is about \$12-15 for four people, with a green salad in place of French fries. A welcome and satisfying change.

Andrew Sterman is the author of Welcoming Food, Diet as Medicine for the Home Cook and Other Healers. The two volumes of Welcoming Food offer a unique entry into understanding the energetics of food, explain how foods work in common sense language and provide easy-to-follow recipes for everyday eating. Andrew teaches food energetics classes and sees private clients for dietary therapy and medical qigong in New York City. He has studied deeply in holistic cooking, meditation, and qigong, and for over twenty years has been a student of Daoist Master Jeffrey Yuen in herbal medicine, qigong, and of course, dietary therapy from the classical Chinese medicine tradition. Visit Andrew at andrewsterman.com/food