



# Hands on Health



Karen Chase, L.Ac.

*At Classic Touch  
Acupuncture Center the  
emphasis is on you.  
Whether you desire  
treatment for a chronic  
or acute illness,  
treatment to enhance and  
improve your health,  
lasting relief from stress  
and fatigue, or pure  
relaxation, you have  
come to the right place.*

## Classic Touch Acupuncture

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## SWINE FLU TIPS AND ORIENTAL MEDICINE

There has been a great deal going on about the swine flu and potential pandemic it could cause. There have been people and critics on both sides of this health concern suggesting everything from millions of people losing their lives, to it being merely hype.

In either case, it is important to educate yourself so you are better informed to take care of yourself. The information below will hopefully keep you healthier and more resilient.

One great place to start, is by reading the article by Dr. Mercola. Below is the link:

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/04/29/Swine-Flu.aspx>

It talks about the potential problems should a pandemic occur, and compares it to other past outbreaks. He also talks about media hype related to the swine flu, In any case, it is an interesting read.

## THE SWINE FLU AND CHINESE MEDICINE

Oriental Medicine actually has a very good track record with treating a wide variety of respiratory viruses. When SARS hit a few years back, it was strict precautionary measures and Chinese herbal medicine that got Asia through the crisis.

### What are the symptoms to watch for?

The Centers for Disease Control has stated that the symptoms for swine flu are to be considered “similar to regular human seasonal influenza and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with swine flu also have reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.”

### What is the pathogenesis of swine flu?

Unlike the common cold, which attaches to the adenoids, the influenza virus attaches to the lung tissue itself. The lungs become inflamed and the body reacts with “flu-like symptoms.” Incubation for most influenza viruses are from 1-4 days. It is not yet known for certain whether the swine flu follows the same incubation pattern.

### What is the contagious phase for swine flu?

As of the writing of this newsletter, this information is not certain. In the absence of certainty we must act upon the assumption that the contagious phase of the swine flu will behave much like that of other influenza viruses. In other influenza viruses a person is contagious from about 1 day before the onset of symptoms up to 7 days after the symptoms appear. Children can be contagious up to one week after the fever has dispersed.



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### **Why is the swine flu considered so dangerous?**

Much of the answer to this question is conjecture, but I believe this: Most of the influenza viruses we encounter during regular “flu season” are variants of viruses we have already adapted to. It may be easier for our bodies to figure out how to respond to a variant compared to a more radical mutation. It has been hypothesized that the reason young and healthy people are more susceptible to extreme reactions to swine flu is that their immune response may be more extreme. This may also be why some infected with swine flu develop vomiting and diarrhea, even though influenza is a respiratory virus. The gastrointestinal response may be the body’s panic mode while attempting to expel the pathogen. But this explanation remains a hypothesis. From an Oriental Medicine perspective, if there is vomiting and diarrhea, then the energetics of the digestive system is involved and needs to be addressed. However, in this instance, getting the digestive response under control is viewed as treating a symptom, while the cause is likely to remain in the lungs.

### **Oriental Medicine Treatment options for swine flu**

Chinese Herbal Medicine and Acupuncture offers many effective options to treat the swine flu (and any type of influenza).

We break down the treatment options into phases. What works during one phase will be minimally effective in another, and in some cases, downright harmful. This is why it is important that you do not attempt to treat yourself with herbs and why you should find a qualified Oriental Medicine practitioner. The three phases are: Prevention Phase, Initial Exposure Phase, Fully Engaged Phase.

#### **Prevention Phase**

Prior to exposure, it is possible and recommended to support the immune system in order to prevent the virus of a future exposure from forming full attachment. A strong immune system is characterized by a firm and well-regulated exterior. The wei (defensive) qi can be supported both with herbal medicine and acupuncture. The Prevention Phase herbal formulas are only effective prior to the onset of symptoms. These formulas, if administered after the onset of symptoms can strengthen the pathogen as well as intensify the body’s response.

#### **Initial Exposure Phase**

If exposure is certain or probable, there is a little time to try and kill the virus before it has a chance to reach full strength application. The incubation period of most influenza is from 1-4 days before symptoms begin. What we can use from this knowledge is that we probably have at least one day, possibly more, to try and kill the virus after a known or suspected exposure. There are many powerful antiviral and general antimicrobial herbal formulas. They are exceptionally effective against viruses that attack the throat, intestines or urinary tract. Acupuncture will increase



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the effectiveness of the herbs while helping to boost the body's own natural immune system.

### **Fully engaged phase**

What distinguishes the fully engaged phase physiologically is the attachment of the virus to the lung tissue. Viral replication has reached peak production, and the body's immune response is now occupying or even consuming all available qi. This is why we are often so tired when we are sick with the flu. The most common or characteristic symptoms are headache, significant loss of appetite, high fever, pronounced fatigue/weakness, chest discomfort with or without cough, and sometimes body aches. Other, less frequent symptoms can include sore throat, sinus symptoms, diarrhea, or vomiting. Herbal formulas for this stage help to disperse heat and regulate the body's immune response. These formulas are often combined with the anti-viral formulas to finish off the virus. Again, acupuncture will reinforce the formulas and continue to boost your immune system as well as help to reduce the severity of your symptoms.

**What can you do on your own**—Staying healthy through good hygiene and proper nutrition

Wash your hands frequently. Especially after you sneeze, cough, blow your nose. Washing your hands for at least 20 seconds (1-mississippi, 2-mississippi...) in warm or hot water and soap will get rid of a lot of bacteria and virus potential.

Did you know that viruses not only pass from person to person by means of airborne pathogens from sneezing and coughing, but can pass on to you from a surface to your hands. Think, doorknobs, keyboards, phones, pens, coffee pots.

Practice good health habits like getting proper amounts of sleep so that your body is rested and capable of fighting any possible external invaders.

Be physically active, oxygenation of the blood is one of the best ways to stay healthy in body and mind.

Manage your stress. Being overly stressed puts a strain on your entire system leaving you susceptible to external invaders. Find time to relax amidst the hectic pace. Using lavender or Rescue Remedy (tincture) to calm your mind will help your immune system stay strong.

Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of fluids so that your body can properly process toxins and function optimally.

Think Superfoods. Add some of these foods high in Vitamin C, fiber, antioxidants and other minerals will help your system be capable of fighting off a potential sickness. Blueberries, broccoli, oranges, spinach, salmon, soy, oats, beans, pumpkins, turkey, walnuts, yogurt and tea, both green and black.



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Add a bit of fiber and probiotics. Fiber and probiotics like Acidophilus and Bifidus are a sure way to keep your intestines and elimination system healthy. By having this system working properly you are creating an environment where your body is working efficiently at ridding itself of wastes and toxins which might otherwise compromise the immune system.

Stay at home when you are sick. Getting sick is a natural reaction to external invaders, but few of us allow our bodies enough time to naturally fight off the pathogen. Resting and allowing your body to do its work is key to getting over a sickness faster.

Avoid close contact. If someone you know is sick or if there is a good chance that you will be around people that are extremely sick, avoiding the situation may be the best option for your health. Advising the sick person to listen to their body and get some rest away from others may also be a wise choice.

Do a nasal flush. Use a Neti Pot to flush your sinuses and the hairs of your nose of any foreign invaders that may have become attached. Don't have a Neti Pot or are uncomfortable using one? There are a number of saline (non-medicated) nasal mists that will help to moisturize your nasal passages.

And finally, make an appointment with your Oriental Medicine Practitioner. Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine is safe and effective for all ages.

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