

Herbs for the Treatment of Wet Cough & Acute Infection of the Lower Respiratory System

Pleurisy Root

Asclepias tuberosa is diaphoretic, antispasmodic and expectorant. It is used in the treatment of infections and congestion of the respiratory system, particularly pleurisy, influenza and acute stage of bronchitis. The Eclectics wrote that "it acts upon the mucous membrane of the respiratory tract, augmenting the secretions and favouring easy expectoration".^{1,2}

White Horehound

Marrubium vulgare is an antispasmodic expectorant with a gentle stimulating action. It is especially used in congestive catarrhal conditions of the respiratory system such as acute bronchitis with nonproductive cough and whooping cough. Traditionally combined with Ginger in whooping cough.^{1,3,4}

Licorice

Glycyrrhiza glabra has marked expectorant, demulcent, anti-inflammatory and spasmolytic action. It has a long history of traditional use for the treatment of cough, chest complaints (especially bronchitis) and as a soothing ingredient in cough medicines.^{1,3} In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) Licorice moistens the *lungs* and stops coughing.⁵

Echinacea Root

Echinacea purpurea root reduced the symptoms of influenza in a placebo-controlled trial.⁶ *Echinacea purpurea* root tincture given to healthy volunteers was found to stimulate phagocytosis. When the Echinacea was stopped the phagocytic activity declined to normal levels.⁷

Ginger

Zingiber officinale is a circulatory stimulant, diaphoretic, warming expectorant and pulmonary antiseptic and is used for bronchitis, acute colds and to settle wet cough.^{1-3,8} In TCM Ginger is indicated to relieve congested coughing.⁵

Thyme Oil

The essential oil of *Thymus vulgaris* leaf is antimicrobial and antispasmodic, and has been used in whooping cough and bronchitis.⁹

Supportive Formulation

These herbs and the essential oil complement each other in a very potent formulation with the following actions:

- expectorant: facilitating the removal of sputum from the bronchi and trachea;
- anti-infective whilst enhancing immune function, and managing fever through diaphoresis;
- stimulating circulation and thereby relieving congestion;
- soothing and healing to the inflamed bronchial mucosa.

Indications

- Acute and subacute bronchitis, pulmonary congestion and influenza.
- Tracheitis, nasopharyngeal catarrh.
- Pleurisy, pertussis.

Cautions and Contraindications

Contraindicated in hypertension, oedema and if patient is taking potassium-depleting diuretics. If taken over a long period blood pressure should be monitored and symptoms of potassium depletion and oedema watched for. Echinacea is contraindicated in patients taking immunosuppressant medication (e.g. transplant patients). Short-term therapy only is advised for these patients. Caution is advised in patients taking cortisol, prednisolone or antacids.

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