

ActiveHerb's Guide: Chinese Herbal Medicine for Coughs

Cough is the No. 1 reason Americans seek medical attention yet effective OTC cough medicines are lacking. Chinese medicines may help.

We all cough once in a while. Most of the time, cough goes away by itself. Although annoying and disturbing in living and at work, cough on its own often does not prompt a doctor's visit. Coughs have many causes such as colds and flu, asthma, chronic bronchitis, pneumonia, smoking, or acid reflux. A cough may be dry or productive, depending on whether phlegm is coughed out. Biologically cough is a protective reflex of the body to expel harmful substances from the respiratory track (e. g., in the form of phlegm).

The treatment of coughing should ideally target the underlying cause of coughing. For example, antibiotics for bacteria infection of the respiratory track; bronchodilator inhalers like albuterol for bronchial asthma. Generic cough medicines are available over the counter (OTC) that either suppress the body's urge to cough (cough suppressants, such as dextromethorphan) or loosen mucus from the respiratory tract (expectorants, such as guaifenesin). They have been used in common cough medicines like Robitussin for decades. In 2001 studies found that there is no clinical evidence that OTC cough expectorants or suppressants actually relieve cough. In 2006, the American College of Chest Physicians published a guideline that strongly recommended against the use of OTC cough and cold medications for children age 14 years and younger.

Cough is a common symptom well studied in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and many good Chinese herbal medicines have been developed. Cough exists in different TCM patterns. Correct pattern distinction is critical in selecting the right Chinese medicines. To do it, several TCM concepts need to be taken into account.

A) Whether cough is caused by external factors like colds, flu, or by internal pathogenic factors like chronic bronchitis or asthma. Coughing caused by cold or flu has a sudden onset and usually lasts less than 3 weeks. However, if it is not cured, such coughs may become chronic. Cough due to chronic bronchitis is likely chronic and is harder to cure. It may render the body more susceptible to colds or flu attack and get acute cough symptoms.

B) Whether phlegm is coughed up and what is the type of phlegm. A cough is dry if little phlegm is generated. Phlegm may have many variations such as clear, sticky, whitish, gray, yellow, hot etc.

C) Whether cough comes with other symptoms. For example, cough may occur with wheezing and short of breath; cough may be associated with digestive problems like stomach fullness, loose or dry stool.

In pursuit of providing best Chinese medicines for cough, ActiveHerb has the privilege of fully appreciating the breath and depth of TCM on cough and, as a result, makes a spectrum of cough Chinese medicines available for our customers. Please read more about each formula to make a suitable choice. Consultation with a doctor is advised.

1. **CoughsOff™ (Zhi Qi Guan Pian/Wan):** Our signature formula for coughs due to colds and flu. It is also useful when the cough comes with wheezing. The Chinese herb can be combined with other Chinese herbs for colds like Cold Signoff™, Sang Ju Wan (Pian) and Yu Ping Feng Wan (Pian).
2. **Xiao Qing Long Wan (Pian) (Minor Blue Dragon):** The classic Chinese medicine is used for cough and asthma caused either by colds and flu or by chronic bronchitis. It is most suitable when phlegm is excessive and thin and the body feels chilly. The Chinese herb does not apply to dry cough or cough with thick or yellow phlegm.
3. **Ke Chuan Pian (Wan):** Our signature Chinese herbal formula for both cough and asthma, whether they are due to colds, flu or chronic bronchitis.
4. **Sang Ju Wan (Pian) (Sang Ju Yin):** The classic formula is used at the early stage of the cold/flu when sore throat just appears and cough is still light. The Chinese medicine is also used for whooping cough.
5. **Bai He Gu Jin Wan (Pian):** The herbal formula is for dry cough due to Ying deficiency of the lung. Phlegm is little and may occasionally contain traces of blood. The cough may come with hectic fever, heat sensation in the palm of your hands, sweating, and thirsty mouth.
6. **Qing Qi Hua Tan Wan (Pian):** The Chinese herb is for chronic cough producing thick, yellow phlegm.
7. **Zhu Li Da Tan Wan (Pian):** Another Chinese herb for chronic cough producing thick, sticky, yellow phlegm. It may be hard to spit out phlegm and comes with short of breath and chest tightness.
8. **Qing Fei Yi Huo Wan (Pian):** Chinese herb is also for cough producing thick, yellow phlegm. The cough comes with dry mouth, dry stool, and even constipation and may be chronic.
9. **Er Chen He San Zi Yang Qin Wan (Pian):** Formed by combining two classic formulas, the Chinese medicine is for cough caused by digestive problems. The cough is associated with chest fullness, fatigue, nausea, loose stool.

All Chinese Herbs ActiveHerb carries are 100% natural herbal remedies. They are time-tested and safe, contain no pharmaceuticals, no preservatives, no artificial colors.

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