



Chest Release™

Classic antecedent: Qing Qi Hua Tan Tang *Clearing Qi and Resolving Phlegm Decoction.*

Chen Pi *Pericarpium Citri reticulatae*
Fu Ling *Poria*
Qian Hu *Radix Peucedani*
Huang Qin *Radix Scutellariae*
Pi Pa Ye *Folium Eriobotryae*
Xing Ren *Semen Armeniacae*
Gua Lou *Fructus Trichosanthis*

Sang Bai Pi *Cortex Mori*
Zi Wan *Radix Asteris*
Zhi Shi *Fructus Aurantii immaturus*
Da Qing Ye *Folium Isatidis seu Baphicacanthi*
Gu Ya *Fructus Oryzae sativae germinatus*
Da Zao *Fructus Jujubae*
Gan Cao *Radix Glycyrrhizae uralensis*

The remedy Chest Release is for an acute chest infection following an upper respiratory infection. The main symptoms are cough, breathlessness and profuse expectoration of phlegm; the child may also have a temperature. From the Chinese perspective, this corresponds to the Qi Level of the 4 Levels with Phlegm-Heat in the Lungs. The pulse is Rapid and Slippery and the tongue has a sticky-yellow coating.

Children are very prone to upper respiratory infections (more of the Wind-Heat than Wind-Cold type) and also prone to developing bronchitis following such an acute infection. Children are particularly prone to respiratory infections between the ages of 2 and 6. Before the age of 2, they are not in contact with other children much and therefore they have less exposure to viruses and bacteria; after the age of 6, their Wei Qi and Lung-Qi have usually strengthened enough so that they do not fall ill to infections so readily.

The initial stages of an acute upper respiratory infection correspond to the Wei Level of the 4 Levels. When diagnosing and treating respiratory infections in children, I generally follow the model of the 4 Levels (Wei, Qi, Ying and Blood) rather than that of the 6 Stages (Tai Yang, Shao Yang, Yang Ming, Tai Yin, Shao Yin and Jue Yin). I find the theory of the 4 Levels much more clinically relevant. Indeed, one of the most common consequences of an invasion of Wind if it progresses to the Qi level is Phlegm-Heat in the Lungs: such a pattern is not even contemplated in the model of the 6 Stages.

The theory of the 4 Levels is a brilliant model for the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of external origin. The first level is the Wei level: at this level, Wind is on the Exterior and the main symptoms are fever and aversion to cold occurring simultaneously. "Fever" (or emission of heat by the patient's body) is an objective sensation that we feel when we touch the patient's forehead and hands: they are hot to the touch. "Aversion to cold" is a subjective sensation of the patient who feels cold and may even shiver in bed under blankets. The treatment principle at this level is to expel

exterior Wind, restore the diffusing of Lung-Qi, release the Exterior. The remedies *Expel Wind-Cold* and *Expel Wind-Heat* (in the *Three Treasures* range) expel exterior Wind, restore the diffusing of Lung-Qi and release the Exterior.

If the Wind is not expelled at the Wei level, it will change into Heat and penetrate the Qi level. The Qi level is the first of the three internal-Heat levels. A brilliant feature of the 4-Level model is that there are three depths of penetration in the Interior. At the Qi Level, the condition is purely Full and is characterized by interior Heat: from the 8- Principle perspective, it is Full-Interior-Hot. At the Qi Level, the body's Qi is reacting against the pathogenic factor in the Interior (at the Wei Level the body's Qi is fighting the pathogenic factor on the Exterior).

The main clinical manifestations at the Qi Level are feeling of heat, possibly fever, sweating, thirst, Red tongue with yellow coating and Rapid pulse. These are the general clinical manifestations and others depend on the pattern. With the pattern of Lung-Heat there will be in addition, cough, breathlessness and, if there is Phlegm, expectoration of yellow phlegm.

The remedy *Chest Release* is for the pattern of Phlegm-Heat in the Lungs at the Qi Level: it is a variation of Qing Qi Hua Tan Tang *Clearing Qi and Resolving Phlegm Decoction* in which "clearing Qi" refers to the Qi Level, i.e. clear Heat at the Qi Level.

An important feature of the Qi Level is that the tongue has a Red body and also a thick coating: indeed, if during the Qi Level, the tongue loses its coating, it is a sure sign that the Heat has penetrated to the Ying or Blood Level.

Chest infections and antibiotics

It should be noted that the use of antibiotics is not contradictory with the use of herbal remedies as they work in different ways. Antibiotics work by directly attacking the bacteria while Chinese herbs work by stimulating the immune response (although some Chinese herbs also have an anti-bacterial effect). Antibiotics will kill the bacteria but they will not clear Heat nor resolve Phlegm as herbs do: for this reason I do not see the combination of Western and Chinese treatment as contradictory in such a case (there are cases when the two treatment are indeed contradictory).

Indeed, I find that the use of Chinese herbs concomitant with that of antibiotics may prevent the formation of residual pathogenic factor.

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