

Summary of the Forum: TCM and the H1N1 Flu.

Only a few days after the sudden death of an Etobicoke teenager who had been infected with the H1N1 virus, the fear of the flu spreading in Toronto reaches its peak and sends massive crowds of Torontonians to get the H1N1 vaccine.

In the Chinese community, numerous people are calling TCM practitioners to express their worries and anxiousness. Concerns most often heard are whether one should get the vaccine, how to decide whether one has the flu, and whether Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has any practical methods to control the spread of the flu virus.

Dr. Adam Chen, president of the Traditional Chinese Medicine Physicians' Association of Canada, held a forum with TCM practitioners to discuss TCM and the H1N1 flu. The forum, which was held at 11:00 a.m. at AC99 Health Centres in Markham on October 30, asked the Chinese community to be highly vigilant, but at the same time, not to be overly tense and fearful. Besides Dr. Adam Chen and Linda Xu (vice-president of the association), TCM doctors in attendance included David Bai, James Fu, Karen Wong, Guonan Xu, Guoyun Mao, Panggang Zhang, WenchengLiu, Yan Li, Jianzhong Yan, Jacob Kim, Yongseok Cha, Changwoo Ho, JonghoYang and others.

The discussion concluded the following points:

- The H1N1 flu can be categorized in TCM terms as “wen bin” (a highly contagious and, fever-containing disease).
- During the Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE) and the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) many theses and books discussed the causes of disease; clinical symptoms; diagnosis and detailed treatment strategies; recipes; prognosis and prevention methods of such disease.
- In recent years, China mainly used the TCM method, in combination with conventional medicine, to effectively control the spread of SARS and local outbreaks of meningitis.
- The attendees of the meeting all agreed that prevention is the key to controlling the spread of the H1N1 flu. We will establish a clinic menu and ask all TCM practitioners to take strict actions in their practices to prevent disease from spreading through their clinics.
- For patients, education and guidance are essential.
- For high-risk groups, such as pregnant women and infants, we strongly urge them to get the vaccine. We ask people to reduce contact with others by not going to crowded places unless necessary. People should avoid touching their noses and rubbing

their eyes. We encourage frequent hand washing.

- We suggest people adjust their life-style to help keep them healthy by doing the following: getting sufficient sleep; drinking more fluids; eating a balanced diet, including fruits and vegetables; and exercising regularly.
- We noted that some people refuse to be vaccinated and that for others, vaccination may not be suitable. Some people may feel insecure even after getting the vaccine. TCM provides some simple herbal recipes for the public to try. These recipes have proven records of effectiveness in history. They have been recently recommended by a group of TCM experts to the Chinese government in order to protect the public:
 - *For weak people:* Huangqi (Astragali), Fangfeng (Saposhinkoviae), Baizhu (Atractylodis), Jinyinhua (Lonicerae), Gancao (Licorice);
 - *For strong people:* Gegen (Puerariae), Huangqin (Scutellariae), Huoxiang (Pogostemonis), Yiyiren (Coicis), Gancao (Licorice);
 - *For “heat-constituted” people:* Sangye (Mori), Yuhua (Chrysanthemi), Lianqiao (Forsythiae), Daqingye (Polygonum).
- The daily dose of each ingredient is 10 grams, except for Licorice, which is 3 grams. The herbal mixtures are brewed into a tea. Children would take a reduced dose.
- We also decided to post the H1N1 updates at the www.tcmpac.org as quickly as they become available.