

HEALTH

Edited by Suzanne Harrison suzanne.harrison@scmp.com

TCM

Rose Tse and
Jenny Eagleton
info@shen-nong.com

Bug barrier

Traditional Chinese medicine's holistic view of health maintains that when you have a lot of healthy energy, or *zheng chi*, pathogenic forces can't take hold.

The lungs, spleen, kidneys, liver and heart form the core of immune defence. The lungs preside over the immune barrier of the body. This distributes

protective *chi* to the body surface to ensure the skin and hair are the first barrier against pathogens.

The spleen is the source of nutrients and determines the abundance and depletion of healthy energy.

The kidneys form the basis of immunity, as essence (*jing*) stored there propels overall body functioning. The liver co-ordinates the immune activities by promoting the flow of fundamental substances in the body.

The heart, which influences both physiological and mental activities, works as a



"higher control unit" of the immune system.

To support the balancing process, TCM uses different methods to adjust the body's *yin* and *yang*, *chi*, blood or organ functions. For example, those with shortness of breath and excessive perspiration may easily catch a cold or flu and

their lungs become weakened. For this, TCM suggests lung tonics with ingredients such as lily buds, almond, white fungus, pear, peanuts, ginkgo, ginseng, milk, cheese and garlic.

A soup including astragalus root (25g), largehead atractylodes root (20g), ledebouriella root (20g), lotus seeds (25g) and any lean meat (200g) can be consumed once a week. The ingredients are said to boost resistance.

In some cases, weakness may be because of a spleen deficiency associated with gastritis,

hepatitis or other digestive problems. For this, TCM recommends eating spleen-related tonics such as Chinese yam, pumpkin, lotus seeds, dates, corn, beef, sweet potato, potato, cabbage and animal stomach organs.

Kidney deficiency can also result in constant fatigue, a low spirit, cold limbs and a sore back. TCM advises Chinese long bean, Chinese chives, cashew nut, chestnut, walnut, mutton, shrimps, eels and animal kidneys.

Before taking any medicine, consult your TCM or medical doctor