



# Awakening Qi Immunity through Chinese Medicine

by Shoshanna Katzman

Throughout the ages, Chinese culture has emphasized the importance of preventative measures to stimulate the body's natural defense mechanisms. Chinese medicine boosts immunity to reduce likelihood of disease or infection through awakening the flow of Qi, a precious vital energy flowing throughout the body. When Qi is strong and balanced the capacity to prevent illness and maintain health is enhanced. Health maintenance through prevention methodologies has thus become deeply rooted within the Chinese healthcare system through Chinese herbs, acupuncture, dietary therapy and therapeutic exercise such as Tai Chi and Qigong.

Acupuncturists recommend preventative treatments at change of seasons to maintain vibrant health and wellness. Numerous scientific studies have been conducted to elucidate the mechanism with which acupuncture works. The most agreed upon concepts is acupuncture increases production of natural "pain killer" hormones, also considered immunity enhancers. Research has also shown that acupuncture increases T-cell count and ability to destroy bacteria.

Qi building herbs such as ginseng and astragalus are commonly recommended by Chinese medicine

practitioners to build immunity. Numerous forms of ginseng exist such as Panax, Korean, and American varieties - each with its own characteristics that must be appropriately matched to one's constitution. Many studies have proven the efficacy of ginseng as a stimulant of the immune system. Studies investigating the role of astragalus as a Qi immunity enhancer have shown it increases white blood cells. A University of Texas Medical Center study found astragalus to completely restore immune cell function in cancer patients.

Both ginseng and astragalus are taken individually or combined with other herbs in the form of decoction, tea, pill, syrup or tincture to balance overall health and ward-off disease. Specialists in Chinese herbal medicine provide specialized guidance as to best form along with instructions on preparation, dosage and precautions such as drug interactions. Chinese dietary therapeutic recommendations also include these herbs as a healthful addition to a culinary delight.

Astragalus is traditionally added to chicken or vegetable soup alone or along with other herbs to produce an immune boost broth – quite delicious and nutritious during the winter months. Another soup traditionally

recommended for weakness and lowered immunity is called "Bone Broth" of which many recipes exist. One recommended by the late acupuncturist Miriam Lee includes organic pork ribs, rice vinegar, fresh ginger and bean sprouts cooked for hours to yield a mineral rich broth used as a soup stock or health drink.

Shitake mushrooms are also a prized immune enhancing food. They contain lentinan which both strengthens immunity and fights viruses. Shitake mushrooms can be sautéed with other vegetables such as carrots and onions served over rice. A few drops of tamari which is a naturally fermented soy sauce can be added to strengthen the Qi of the Kidneys.

Chinese medicine practitioners are available throughout the United States and the world guiding others how to enhance their immunity through Qi building – providing millions of people with the opportunity to naturally prevent illness through these "tried and true" health maintenance protocols. These age-old Qi enhancement techniques are gentle, natural simple methods that awaken enormous healing results.

*Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S., is the author of Qigong for Staying Young, co-author of Feeling Light and the director of the Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center in Shrewsbury, NJ. For more information, visit: [Healing4u.com](http://Healing4u.com).*