Bronchial asthma is a disease with reversible tracheospasm and tracheostenosis due to excessively increased tracheal-bronchial reactivity induced by sensitinogen or non-sensitinogen. Although its etiology is complicated, the disease is generally caused by internal injury resulting from accumulation of phlegm in the lungs, damage to the spleen by improper diet and impairment of the kidneys by overstrain and excessive coitus; or it can be caused by six exogenous pathogenic factors, with obstruction of the airways by phlegm and upward adverse flow of the lung-qi. TCM usually categorizes the disease into the following 3 types: invasion of the lungs by wind and cold, stagnation of phlegm and heat in the lungs, and deficiency of the kidneys and lungs, which should be respectively treated by promoting the dispersing function of the lungs and expelling the cold, clearing away heat to resolve phlegm, and nourishing the kidneys to improve respiration.

For Prevention
Asthma can be prevented by drinking the decoction of white turnips and eating ginkgo seeds or apricot seeds (10 cooked seeds a day), walnut kernels, pumpkin and dry earthworm powder.

Diets Prescribed for Each TCM Syndrome

1. Invasion of the lungs by wind and cold
The main symptoms and signs include panting, coughing, an oppressed feeling in the chest, shortness of breath, thin and white phlegm, aversion to cold, fever, headache, itching in the throat and nose, white, thin and slippery tongue fur, and a floating and tense pulse, which should be treated by invigorating the lungs, resolving the phlegm, arresting the cough and relieving asthma.

   a) Zi Su Gruel: Prepare 100g of round-grained and non-glutinous rice cooked into gruel. Add 15g of Zi Su (歩いて Perillae) and cook slightly. The gruel is taken twice a day.

   b) Ma Huang Gan Jiang Gruel: Prepare 100g of round-grained and non-glutinous rice cooked into gruel with the decoction of 6g Ma Huang (麻黄 Herba Ephedrae), 6g, Gan Jiang (干姜 Rhizoma Zingiberis), 3g Gan Cao (甘草 Radix Glycyrrhizae). Then 3g Sui Cong Bai (碎葱白 Bulbus Allii Fistulosi) is added. The gruel is taken in the morning and evening.

   c) Jiang Zao Gruel: Boil 100g of round-grained and non-glutinous rice, then add 10g Sheng Jiang (生姜 Rhizoma Recens) and 10g Da Zao (大枣 Fructus Ziziphi Jujubae) and cook the mixture into gruel, which is taken 2–3 times a day.

2. Stagnation of phlegm and heat in the lungs
The main symptoms and signs include dyspnea with flushed face, oppressed feeling in the chest, dry mouth, thick and yellow phlegm, red tongue with dry, yellow and greasy fur, and slippery and rapid pulse, which should be treated by clearing away heat, resolving phlegm, and facilitating the flow of the lung-qi to relieve asthma.

   a) Chuan Bei Decoction: The prescription is composed of 12g Chuan Bei Mu (川贝母 Bulbus Fritillariae Cirrhosae), 50g Xian Lu Gen (鲜芦根 Rhizoma Phragmitis), and 9g Sheng Jiang (生姜 Rhizoma Recens) with some salt added. The decoction is taken once a day for 5–7 days as one course of treatment.

   b) Shen Tao Decoction: Is made from 20g Dang Shen
(党参 Radix Codonopsis Pilosulae), 15g Tao Ren (桃仁 Semen Persicae) and 5 pieces of Sheng Jiang (生姜 Rhizoma Zingiberis Recens), with 2.5 bowls of water boiled until it is reduced to 1.5 bowls of decoction. The decoction is taken one dose a day.

c) Xing Ren Niu Nai Gruel: Soak 10g Xing Ren (杏仁 Semen Armeniacae Amarum) in water to remove its peel, then grind it into powder and mix with 250ml of milk. Prepare a decoction from 10g Sang Bai Pi (桑白皮 Cortex Mori Radicis), 10g Sheng Jiang Pian (生姜片 Rhizoma Zingiberis Recens) and 6 pieces of Da Zao (大枣 Fructus Ziziphi Jujubae) boiled in water. Prepare a gruel from 100g of round-grained and non-glutinous rice, add the milk mixture and the decoction and boil the gruel again. This is taken in the morning and evening.

3. Deficiency of the lungs and kidneys
The main symptoms and signs include pale complexion, cold limbs, palpitations, dyspnea, cough with foamed phlegm, enlarged tongue with pale fur, and deep-thready pulse, which should be treated by nourishing the lungs and kidneys, and improving respiration to relieve asthma.

a) Shen Ge Chong Cao Spirit: Ren Shen (人参 Radix Ginseng), 30g Dong Chong Xia Cao (冬虫夏草 Cordyceps), 30g He Tao Ren (核 桃仁 Semen Juglandis) and a couple of Ge Jie (蛤蚧 Geckos with the heads and claws cut off) are soaked in 2 liters of spirit for 20 days. Drink 10ml of the supernatant liquid on an empty stomach in the morning and evening.

b) Jian Pi Cake: 180g Qian Shi (芡实 Semen Euryales), 90g Shan Yao (山药 Rhizoma Dioscoreae) and 90g Yi Yi Ren (薏苡仁 Semen Coicis) are ground into powder, and then sieved, and soaked in hot boiled water for half a day. Mixing this with 400g of flour and some sugar to make thin cakes. The cake is the eaten.

c) Ge Jie Powder: 2 couples of Ge Jie (蛤蚧 Geckos) are baked and grounded into powder, and then mixed with 15g of crystal sugar. Take 5–6 grams of the powder with water or in capsules once a day for 20–30 days.

Cautions and Precautions
1. Asthma patients should pay attention to their caloric intake, supplementing calories and proteins by eating lean meat, eggs, milk, bean products, rice and flour, along with foods rich in vitamins and minerals that will help strengthen the body’s resistance.

2. Patients should continue physical exercises, Qigong, Taijiquan, and slow running.

3. Patients should eat less of the foods which may induce asthma, such as shrimp, crab, salty fish, raw milk, and greasy, fried, raw or cold foods. And adult patients should give up smoking and drinking alcohol. It is advisable for asthma patients to eat light foods in order to eradicate the phlegm-generating sources.

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