



# Chinese Medicine Practice, Chinese Medicinal Herbs and Cancer

The treatment and Chinese Medicine described in this booklet is mainly for reference. Readers should consult your doctors or Chinese Medicine Practitioners as necessary.

Self-administration of Chinese medicinal herbs is generally not recommended.

## Introduction

### The Role of Chinese Medicine in Cancer Treatment in Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, Chinese & western (mainstream) medicines are playing different roles in the management of cancer. Surgical intervention, radiotherapy and chemotherapy are important treatment protocol in western medicine. Early cancers can mostly be cured while advanced cases may be contained with fairly satisfactory prognosis. For late stage cancers, patients are usually supported by palliative care to improve their quality of life. However, radiotherapy and chemotherapy often bring about undesirable side effects, which adversely affect the body's immune function and thus compromise the patients' quality of life.



Chemotherapy plays a vital role in cancer treatment.

The strength of Chinese Medicine lies in its capability to regulate the human body's internal environment or to restore its systems back to an optimal functional status (homeostasis). Thus, the normal immunity capability can be restored. Chinese Medicine largely has a relatively milder side-effect. Although Chinese Medicine may not shrink the tumours as effectively as western medicine, it could nevertheless suppress or control their growth. Clinical observations demonstrate that integrated Chinese and

western medicine is able to potentiate the strengths of the two and make up for each other's inadequacies. It could improve the treatment effect, prolong the patients' survival and enhance quality of life.



### In Hong Kong, Chinese Medicine plays an active role in cancer management in the following areas:

1. Chinese Medicine being used concurrently with radiotherapy and chemotherapy to increase curative effect and reduce the severity of toxic complications;
2. For frail elderly patients or those in poor physical condition who cannot tolerate surgery, radiotherapy or chemotherapy; Chinese Medicine provides a good alternative;
3. For relapsed cases or those which are not responding to repeated western medicine treatment, Chinese Medicine can offer a kind of 'maintenance' therapy;
4. For high cancer risk individuals or those with precancerous condition, Chinese Medicine can be utilised prophylactically.

## How Chinese Medicine Helps to Relieve Discomforts for Cancer Patients at Different Stages

Chinese Medicine plays a complementary role to western medicine or acts independently in cancer management.

### 1. Chinese Medicine Complementing Surgery, Radiotherapy and Chemotherapy

#### **Complementing surgery:**

For early stage cases, surgery can quickly remove the tumour and thus efficiently reduce the systemic burden. However, it cannot totally prevent the cancer from recurring nor metastasis. According to Chinese Medicine, surgery is not only traumatic to the human body and its internal environment; it also damages the energy flow (Qi), and thus disrupting the patient's vitality.

Chinese Medicine can be used to reduce post-operative discomforts, speed up recovery and restore vitality. For example, patients having undergone lung cancer surgery, his/her lung and the spleen are both weakened and manifest signs such as coughing, chest pain, shortness of breath and general malaise. Chinese Medicine is brought into use to restore the functions and vitality of the lung and the spleen, thus to reduce the discomfort and hasten the body's recovery. Another example is on patients following a stomach or colorectal cancer surgery. He/she usually feels bloated, loses appetite, and complains about abdominal pain, constipation or diarrhea. Applying Chinese Medicine for 2-4 weeks could alleviate these problems.



Chinese Medicine helps to reduce post-operative discomfort.

Furthermore, Chinese Medicine helps to prepare one's physical condition for post-operative chemotherapy and/ or radiotherapy. For patients who do not need post-operative radiotherapy or chemotherapy, they are recommended to take Chinese Medicine to reduce the risk of recurrence or metastasis. Chinese Medicine works on regulating one's psychological/ mental status, physical status and digestion. Based on these principles and adopting a personalised approach, the Chinese Medicine Practitioner would work out a Chinese herbal formula to strengthen his/ her resilience against cancer. Patients are encouraged to practice Qi-gong or Tai-chi for relaxation and optimum peace of mind. In view to aid the digestive system, patients are advised to avoid certain foods but at the same time to choose foods that are beneficial and anti-cancer in nature.

#### **Complementing radiotherapy:**

Chinese Medicine regards radiation as a kind of pathogenic heat toxin, which can consume "Qi(energy)" and damage "Yin", as well as harm the spleen, stomach, liver and kidney. There are several ways that Chinese Medicine can help to alleviate the side-effects seen on different parts of the body:

**For head area** – Radiotherapy to the head could cause swelling and inflammation of brain tissues resulting in headache, dizziness and nausea. Chinese Medicine believes that improving the kidney & liver function, activating the blood and inducing diuresis will benefit the patient. Chinese medicinal herbs frequently used for treating such conditions include: Barbary Wolfberry Fruit, Processed Rehmannia Root, Szechwan Lovage Rhizome, Medicinal Cyathula Officinalis Root, Agaric, Sharpleaf Uncaria Stem with Hooks, Haliotidis Concha, etc.



Barbary Wolfberry Fruits  
enrich & supplement liver &  
kidney function.

**For nasopharynx and the throat (nasopharyngeal, larynx and oral cancers)** – After radiotherapy, patients often suffer from inflammation of the soft tissue/ mucosa lining of the nasopharynx and the buccal cavity resulting in swelling, blistering, ulceration, severe pain and extreme dryness. The treatment should focus on "cooling", nourishing "Yin", engendering body fluid and rehydrating cells. Chinese Medicine frequently used for these conditions include: Snakegourd Root (Trichosanthis Radix), Glehnia Root, Dwarf Lilyturf Root Tuber, Reed Rhizome and Raw Liquorice Root.

Recommended food therapy recipe: using 300 ml of water, add 10g of Honeysuckle Flower Bud (dried), 10g of Noble Dendrobium Stem Herb (dried) and a sliced Chinese pear (Pyrus nivalis) to boil then drink in place of tea throughout the day. Frequent sips during the day are suggested.

**For the chest (lung & post-operative breast cancers)** – There are always risks of post-radiotherapy pneumonia and skin inflammation following radiation to the chest. Patients may feel nauseated, shortness of breath, dry coughs, etc. The treatment should focus on nourishing "Yin" and rehydrating the lung (at cellular level). Chinese medicinal herbs frequently used for treating such conditions include: Snakegourd Root, Glehnia Root, Dwarf Lilyturf Root Tuber, almonds, lily bulbs, etc.



Lily bulbs can nourish yin  
and rehydrate lung.

**For oesophageal cancer** – Oesophagitis commonly occurs after radiotherapy. Side effects include difficulties in swallowing and pain behind the sternum during swallowing. The treatment should focus on clearing away "heat" and to detoxicate, and relieving chest tightness by guiding the "qi" downwards. Chinese medicinal herbs frequently used include: Snakegourd Root, Mongolian Dandelion Herb, Lotus Leaf Stem, Noble Dendrobium Stem Herb, Glehnia Root, Notoginseng Radix, etc.

**For upper abdomen** – Loss of appetite and feeling nauseated are common after radiotherapy. In order to fortify the spleen, harmonize the stomach and stop the vomiting, Chinese medicinal herbs frequently used for treating such conditions include: Largehead Atractylodes Rhizome, Poria, Villous Amomum Fruit, Tangerine Peels, Bamboo Shavings, etc.

**For lower abdomen (colo-rectal cancer)** – After radiotherapy, patients usually suffer from abdominal pain, diarrhea, tenesmus and hematochesia. Thus, clearing “heat” and removing “dampness”, cooling the blood to stop bleeding, and astringing the bowel to stop diarrhea are the principles of treatment. Chinese medicinal herbs frequently used include: Garden Burnet Root, Black Locust Flower, Chinese Pulsatilla Root, Purslane Herb, Patrinia, Rice Bean, etc.

**For pelvic area (cervical, prostate cancer)** – Urethritis is one of the common side-effects after radiotherapy, presenting as urinary frequency, urgency, dysuria, etc. Clearing the “heat” and to detoxicate, inducing diuresis to relieve stranguria, cooling the blood to stop bleeding are required. Chinese medicinal herbs frequently used include: Field Thistle, Adhesive Rehmannia Root, Lalang Grass Rhizome, Fringed Pink Herb, Common Knotgrass Herb, etc.

Recommended food therapy recipe: 15g Lalang Grass Rhizome; 10g Rice Bean; 10g Kudzu Root; 15g Processed Coix Seed. Use all ingredients to cook as soup and have it once a day.



Coix seed can fortify the spleen to remove “dampness”.

### Complementing chemotherapy:

Chemical drugs are meant to kill cancer cells but inevitably destroy normal cells at the same time and systemic damage is done to the circulatory, digestive and neurological systems. Chinese Medicine is capable of rectifying these problems.

**For general adverse reactions** – general malaise, dizziness, mental exhaustion, urinary and bowel disturbance are common problems. Chinese Medicine can help to improve these conditions by boosting “qi” and nourishing blood as well as enriching liver & kidney. Chinese medicinal herbs frequently used include: Pilose Asiabell Root, Astragalus, Suberect Spatholobus Stem, Barbary Wolfberry Fruit, etc.

**For gastro-intestinal tract reaction** – After chemotherapy, majority of the patients would lose appetite, feel nauseated, abdominal pain, diarrhea and constipation. In order to fortify their spleen, harmonise the stomach and relieve undesirable side effects, the following Chinese medicinal herbs are frequently used: Largehead Atractylodes Rhizome, Poria, Villous Amomum Fruit, Tangerine Peel, Bamboo Shavings, etc.

Recommended food therapy recipe: add 5g Tangerine Peel, 5g Villous Amomum Fruit (Shelled), five Jujubes and 15g Chinese Yam into 100g of Rice and cook into congee. Serve with a little shredded ginger.



Atractylodes Macrocephala can fortify spleen, boost “qi”, dry “dampness” and induce urination.

**For bone marrow function suppression problem** – Most of the chemotherapy drugs cause different degree of bone marrow function suppression. For those with low hemoglobin level and short of vitality, Chinese Medicine can boost “qi” and nourish the blood. Frequently used medicinal herbs include Ginseng, Donkey-hide Gelatin, Processed Rehmannia Root, etc.

For those with low white cell count, Chinese medicinal herbs such as Pilose Asiabell Root, Astragalus, Suberect Spatholobus Stem and Glossy Privet Fruit can be used to strengthen the spleen and supplement the “qi” as well as supporting/ enhancing liver and kidney functions. For those with low platelet counts, treatment should focus on supplementing the “qi” and cooling blood to stop bleeding. Chinese medicinal herbs such as Ginseng, Notoginseng Radix, Adhesive Rehmannia Root, and Peanut Seed Testa can be applied in this case.

**For liver damage** – Some of the chemotherapy drugs may weaken the liver function and patients will suffer from liver discomfort and jaundice. So, the treatment focuses on soothing the liver, clearing “heat” and removing “dampness”. Chinese medicinal herbs frequently used include: Capillary Wormwood Herb, Linearstripe Rabdosia Herb, Stringy Stonecrop Herb, etc.

**For alopecia** – Chinese Medicine treats this condition by tonifying blood to restore hair, strengthening kidney function, nourishing “yin”, cooling blood and promoting blood circulation. Chinese medicinal herbs frequently used: Processed Rehmannia Root, Fleeceflower Root, Glossy Privet Fruit, etc.

**For urological system toxicity** – patients undergoing chemotherapy may suffer from urinary frequency, urgency and dysuria. Chinese Medicine focuses on inducing diuresis to percolate “dampness” as well as “cooling” the blood to stop bleeding. Chinese medicinal herbs frequently used: Plantain, Lalang Grass Rhizome, Lophatherum Herb, etc.



Suberect Spatholobus Stem helps to tonify the blood and promote its circulation as well as unblock collateral circulation & relax muscles.

**For neurological toxicity** – Some chemotherapy drugs cause numbness in finger tips and decrease reflex in Achilles. The aims of Chinese Medicine treatment are not only to dispel “wind” and promoting blood circulation, but also unblocking the meridians and collateral circulation. Chinese medicinal herbs frequently used: Beautiful Sweetgum Fruit, Suberect Spatholobus Stem, Mulberry Twig, Twotoothed Achyranthes Root, etc.

Recommended prescription for external bathing: boil 20g Suberect Spatholobus Stem, 8g Safflower and 10g Argy Wormwood Leaf in 2500ml water and reduce to 1000ml. Soak your hands and legs in the warm potion for 20 minutes once a day.

### Using Chinese Medicine Treatment Solely:

Chinese Medicine as independent treatment for frail elderly patients or those in poor physical condition who could not tolerate radiotherapy or chemotherapy.

These patients usually suffer from other chronic illnesses as well and their decreased organ functions makes it difficult for them to undergo aggressive cancer treatment. Therefore, Chinese Medicine treatment would be tailored to enhance their individual condition holistically. Their treatment plans should be different from those to young cancer patients or patients with fair physical condition or with solely chronic illnesses. Instead, Chinese Medicine is a systemic treatment of the whole body but not just the disease. It would differentiate both the syndrome and disease for determining the treatment. For the syndrome differentiation, it focuses more on supporting healthy energy and reinforcing primary “qi”. Whereas, for the disease differentiation, it aims to dissipate the tumour and detoxification.

## Characteristics of Chinese Medicine and Precautions in Its Application

Although most of the Chinese Medicines originated from natural plants, animals or minerals, they are not totally free from side effects as the public believes. It has been observed that patients sometimes suffer from toxic or severe side effects after taking some over-the-counter Chinese medicines without first consulting a Chinese Medicine Practitioner. Moreover, long-term consumption of the same Chinese medicine is believed to induce drug resistance and would lower its efficacy.

Chinese medicines (mostly herbs) have different characteristics, including four natures (“cold”, “hot”, “warm” and “cool”), five tastes (acrid, sweet, sour, bitter and salty), some are for “lifting” while some are for “lowering” effects, and some are “exterior releasers” while some are “astringent (to be kept within) medicine”. Some act mildly while some act strongly. Illness occurs when there is deviation on the individual’s “yin”, “yang”, “zang fu (internal organs)”, “channel (meridians)”, “qi” and blood. Therefore, Chinese Medicine applies the theory of using different characteristics of medicines to correct the pathological deviation and restore the balance. Syndrome differentiation, formula composition and medication contraindication are also vital in the application of Chinese Medicine. Chinese Medicine can help increase treatment efficacy and lower side effects when it is applied carefully with sound principles.



The application of Chinese Medicine emphasises on symptom-oriented , combination and contraindication.

**Use of medicines based on “symptom-orientation (diagnosis)” :** Misuse of certain medicines will lead to the imbalance of “yin, yang” and deterioration of the illness.

**Appropriate formulation with various medicines:** According to the organising principle in the use of Chinese Medicine, it is beneficial to choose drugs that can potentiate each other rather than restricting each other's efficacy. In a Chinese Medicine formula, these are usually the “lead component”, “2nd lead component(s)”, “assisting component(s)” and “catalytic component(s)”.

**Dosage adjustment:** Practitioners would adjust the dosage of medicine (usually in dried weight of herbs/ components) according to patients' illness and physical condition. Long term use of the same medicine may cause toxic side-effects or even worsen the condition.

**Dietary guidelines/ contraindications:** Chinese Medicine also has established principles regarding one's diet and whether certain food items are not compatible with certain medicines and thus may affect their benefits/ efficacy. For example, patients taking “yang” or “warm” medicine(s) should avoid food with “cool” nature; patients taking medicine(s) for regulating the spleen and the stomach should avoid oily food with strong flavour. Beans are prohibited for those taking medicine for reducing swelling and rectifying “qi”; those taking medicines for calming panting and suppressing coughing should avoid seafood.

**Standardised and proper preparation:** Some Chinese medicines need specific way of preparation. Medicine such as Red Ginseng should be decocted first so as to release its active ingredients optimally while medicine such as Prepared Common Monkshood Daughter Root should also be decocted first to reduce its toxicity. Some medicines with strong volatility should be added at the end and some need to be wrapped by cloth to decoct. These specific ways of decoction can ensure the efficacy and safety of Chinese Medicine.

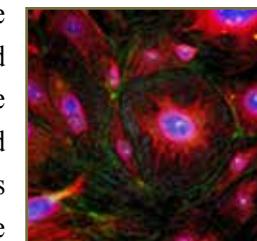


Fully automated Chinese Medicine preparation machine

## How Chinese Medicine Restores Normal Body Functions and Enhance Vitality to Reduce Risk of Relapse

Relapse occurs when residual cancer cells remain in the body after the first line treatments may it be surgery, chemotherapy or radiotherapy. They may thrive again when conditions become favourable. These residual cancer cells will spread to other parts of the body through the circulatory or lymphatic system.

Chinese Medicine named this condition as “latent pathogen”. Extreme emotions, tiredness or exhaustion may cause further weakening of one's immune system and consequently hasten the proliferation of these residual cancer cells. Therefore, prevention and treatment of cancer recurrence and metastasis should be done in two aspects. On one hand, we should reinforce the healthy energy and primary “qi”. On the other hand, we have to “resolve the evil” which is the cause of the disease. It is crucial to assess each patient's condition thoroughly in terms of his/ her stage of disease, pathological type, physical condition, etc. in order to target the root causes of the problem. Integrated western and Chinese medicine may be helpful in the process.



Dividing cancer cells

“Triple-regulation” is the key to Chinese Medicine to support healthy energy and regulate individual physical condition. Firstly, regulating psychological/ mental status promotes the individual's emotional well-being. For cancer patients, the objective is to alleviate their anxiety, worries, fears, as well as avoiding negative thinking and depression so they could confront cancer with a positive mindset and promote their recovery process.



Spicy and irritating food should be avoided.

## Food to Avoid for Certain Body Conditions

There has always been controversy over the dietary restrictions among cancer patients. Some people believe that their lives would be meaningless with strict dietary restrictions. Therefore, they advocate the principle of “all taboos are off” and continue to smoke and drink. On the contrary, some people are exceedingly cautious on their diet resulting in sub-optimal nutrition which affects their recovery.

To determine what food to be restricted mostly depends on experience cumulated rather than scientific evidence. It is believed that appropriate dietary restriction is beneficial to a patient’s recovery provided that a well-balanced diet is maintained. Meanwhile, the restriction should depend on the patient’s illness, physical condition and types of treatment received. For instance, esophageal cancer patients should avoid extremely hot food and alcohol; gastric cancer patients should avoid smoked and spicy food; liver cancer patients should avoid extremely hard and deep fried food and alcohol; breast cancer patients should avoid strongly-flavoured spicy food, animal fat and Hasma and to eat less papaya and Kudzu Root; colorectal cancer patients should avoid alcohol, processed meat and animal fat; lung cancer patients should avoid smoking and alcohol; kidney cancer patients should eat less lamb, salty and spicy food and avoid smoking and alcohol; prostate cancer patients should avoid food that contains androgen such as sea horses, antlers and leeks.

Dietary restriction for different body constitutes includes the following:

- For patients with weak and cold spleen & stomach and easily suffer from abdominal pain and diarrhea, they should avoid seafood, raw or cold foods, gourds and fruits such as water-melon, seaweed, bitter gourd and pear.
- For patients with hot and weak “yin”, they should avoid spicy and hot food such as chili, Chinese Angelica, lamb, etc. For those with decreased “yang” and edema, they should avoid raw, cold and salty food.



Medicinal food taken to suit individual conditions.

Secondly, “adjusting and supplementing one’s physical well-being”- This aims at raising one’s immune function and the ability to fight against disease. There are Chinese medicines which can help promote the above. In Chinese Medicine, kidney is regarded as the foundation of one’s innate constitute. There are formulae which supplement primary “qi” and kidney “qi” gently. Acupuncture based on a meridians theory, is another way to attain the equilibrium of “qi” and blood, and strengthen one’s immune function.

Thirdly, “regulating the stomach - “qi” - spleen and stomach are regarded as the foundation of one’s acquired immunity”. “Vital qi” is developed from “stomach-qi” which is essential in maintaining the normal metabolism after ingested food/ nutrients are being absorbed through stomach (and the spleen). Chinese Medicine advocates that both medicines and food have therapeutic effects on human diseases. Some medicines can be prepared and assimilated into one’s diet according to the individual’s constitute.

In Chinese Medicine, these are some delicious medicinal food which can help to increase patients’ appetite. At the same time, normalisation of excretion is also important. Diarrhea and constipation should be treated appropriately. Only when excretion is normal, the patients would then be able to absorb adequate nutrients to fight against cancer.

Cancer treatment targets at specific areas but the “Triple-regulation” aims to enhance the well-being of the whole person. The principle of application is to reinforce the cancer treatment according to the presentation of the cancer by either resolving stasis, detoxification or dissipating mass (the tumour). The overall objective is to maintain quality of life and achieve long-term survival.

## Recommended Herbal Medicine Food Therapy Recipes

“Dietary therapy” is specifically targeted to treat or prevent illness by taking into account of individual illness and physical condition. Some common recipes are as follows:

### Pilose Asiabell Root, Astragalus and Crucian Carp Soup

**Ingredients:** 20g Pilose Asiabell Root; 20g Astragalus; 15g Chinese Yam; 250g Crucian Carp; ten Dried Mushrooms; two slices of Ginger

**Method:** Fry the Crucian Carp first; add all other ingredients and appropriate amount of water into a pot. Bring to a boil over high heat, and then simmer for around 30 minutes. Enjoy the fish and the soup.

**Efficacy:** For supplementing lung and spleen “qi”, suitable for individuals with suboptimal “qi” and weak physique



Pilose Asiabell Root can supplement and boost lung and spleen.

### Glehnia Root Soup for Nourishing the Lung

**Ingredients:** 10g Lily Bulbs; 10g Glehnia Root; 15g Fragrant Solomonseal Rhizome; 10g White Fungus; 100g Pig’s Lung

**Method:** Wrap the Lily Bulbs, Glehnia Root and Fragrant Solomonseal Rhizome in a thin cloth, put them into a pot to cook with thoroughly cleaned pig’s lung, white fungus, chopped green onion and appropriate amount of water. Bring to a boil over high heat, and then simmer for around 1 hour. The pig’s lung should be well-cooked. Then season the soup with salt and enjoy.

**Efficacy:** For nourishing “yin” and “moistening” lung, suitable for lung cancer patient with sub-optimal “yin” status

### Walnut, Chinese Yam and Gordon Euryale Seed Congee

**Ingredients:** 100g Chinese Yam; 50g Gordon Euryale Seed; 30g Walnut; 100g Japonica Rice; six Jujubes

**Method:** Put all the ingredients into a pot, add water and cook till it turns into a congee. Serve warm.

**Efficacy:** For warming “yang” and re-inforcing kidney function, suitable for patients with insufficient kidney “yang” and suffering from frequent nocturia



Walnut can warm “yang”, strengthen kidney, promote “qi” absorption & relieve asthma.

### Indian Buead Tuckahoe Congee

**Ingredients:** 10g Indian Buead Tuckahoe; 15g Processed Coix Seeds; 100g Japonica Rice; little White Pepper and Salt

**Method:** Put rice together with the Indian Buead Tuckahoe and the Processed Coix Seeds into a pot. Add appropriate amount of water and bring to a boil over high heat. Then simmer till it turns into a porridge. Season with little salt and white pepper.

**Efficacy:** For fortifying spleen and resolving phlegm, suitable for patients with spleen vacuity and phlegm persistent “dampness”



Indian Buead Tuckahoe can fortify spleen, relieve mental stress, induce diuresis to drain “dampness”.

### Ginseng Root, Notoginseng Radix and Silky Fowl Soup

**Ingredients:** 5g Ginseng; 6g Notoginseng Radix; 250g Silky Fowl; 3 slices of Ginger

**Method:** Put the Ginseng Root, Notoginseng Radix and silky fowl into a stewpot and add appropriate amount of water. Place the stewpot into a pan of hot water for 2 hours. Then season with salt.

**Efficacy:** To supplement “qi” and activate the blood which is suitable for patients with “qi” vacuity and blood stasis

## Dietary Therapy for Alleviating Treatment Side Effects :

### (1) Poor Appetite

#### Appetising Congee with Spleen Nourishment

**Ingredients:** 5g Tangerine Peel (chopped); 5g Villous Amomum Fruit (shelled); 10g Hawthorn Fruit; five Jujubes (stoned); 20g Chinese Yam; 100g Japonica Rice; little sliced Ginger

**Method:** Put all ingredients in a pot with appropriate amount of water to cook into congee.

**Efficacy:** For improving appetite and nourishing the spleen



Tangerine Peel can adjust “qi” & nourish the spleen.

#### Finger Citron Fruit Congee

**Ingredients:** 10g Dried Finger Citron Fruit; 100g Japonica Rice; appropriate amount of Rock Sugar and Green Onion

**Method:** Cook the dried Finger Citron Fruit with water and reserve the extracted liquid. Add the rice and extracted liquid to 1000ml of water and cook into a congee. Season with rock sugar and green onion to taste.

**Application:** Once or twice a day

**Efficacy:** For harmonizing the stomach and adjusting the “qi”



Finger Citron Fruit can soothe the liver, adjust “qi” and harmonize the stomach.

### (2) Post Chemotherapy Nausea and Vomiting

#### Lotus Root Ginger Juice Congee

**Ingredients:** 500g Lotus Root (removed the head); 10g Ginger Juice; 100g Japonica Rice

**Method:** Add the lotus root and rice to 1000ml of water, simmer for around an hour and cook into a congee. Serve with ginger juice.

**Application:** Once a day

**Efficacy:** For harmonizing and nourishing the spleen and stomach



Cooked lotus roots can supplement and boost spleen and stomach functions.

#### Carrot Congee

**Ingredients:** 150g Carrots; 100g Japonica Rice; appropriate amount of Ginger Power and Hawthorn Power

**Method:** Slice the carrots and cook with the rice in 1000ml of water. Cook for around one hour to make it into a congee. Add in ginger powder and hawthorn powder when it is done.

**Application:** Once a day

**Efficacy:** For soothing the stomach and channeling the “qi”, suitable for patients with poor appetite and abdominal distension during the chemotherapy



Carrots can soothe the stomach.

### (3) Post Chemotherapy Spleen Vacuity and Diarrhea

#### Largehead Atractylodes Rhizome, Pig's Tripe Congee

**Ingredients:** Pig's Tripe (half); 50g Fried Largehead Atractylodes Rhizome; 30g White Hyacinth Bean; little Ginger; 100g Japonica Rice

**Method:** Wash the Pig's tripe, cut it into small pieces, and decoct the Pig's tripe with largehead atractylodes rhizome, white hyacinth bean and ginger. Remove the dregs. Cook the decoction with rice to make a congee.

**Application:** Once a day for breakfast

**Efficacy:** For fortifying the spleen and boosting "qi" as well as decreasing "dampness" and stopping diarrhea



Largehead Atractylodes Rhizome can decrease "dampness".

#### Lotus Seed & Chinese Yam Congee

**Ingredients:** 30g Lotus Seed Powder; 20g Fried Chinese Yam Powder; 100g Japonica Rice

**Method:** Put the lotus seed powder, fried Chinese yam powder, washed Japonica rice and water into a pot, cook on high heat and bring to a boil. Then further cook on low heat and simmer for 20-30 minutes and until it turns to a congee.

**Application:** Twice a day for breakfast and dinner

**Efficacy:** For fortifying the spleen and stopping diarrhea



Chinese Yam can fortify function of the spleen.

### (4) Low White Cell Counts

#### Chinese Red Dates and Peanuts Congee

**Ingredients:** 30g Peanuts; 30g Chinese Red Dates; 10g Dried Longan Pulp; 50g Japonica Rice

**Method:** Put the peanuts, Chinese Red Dates, dried Longan Pulp and Japonica rice in a pot, add 500ml of water and make it a congee.

**Application:** Take it morning and night

**Efficacy:** For boosting "qi" and nourishing the blood

#### Peanut Pork Bone Soup

**Ingredients:** 100g Red Peanuts with skin on; 15g Pilose Asiabell Root; 30g Chinese Red Dates; 25g Brown Sugar; 600g Pork Backbone and Pork Shoulder Blade

**Method:** Put the peanuts, Pilose Asiabell Root, Chinese Red Dates, pork backbone and pork shoulder into a pot and add 1000ml of water, stew it on low heat for around 2 hours. Then add in brown sugar and bring to a boil.

**Application:** Have the soup together with the peanuts and meat, once or twice a week

**Efficacy:** For nourishing the blood and supplementing the bone marrow, suitable for patients with anaemia and low white cell counts after chemotherapy

#### Astragalus, Suberect Spatholobus Stem and Hen Soup

**Ingredients:** One Hen; 30g Astragalus; 30g Suberect Spatholobus Stem

**Method:** Remove the internal organs of the hen, then mix the chicken blood with Astragalus and Suberect Spatholobus Stem evenly, put the mixture inside the hen, add appropriate amount of water to stew it on a low heat, season with little salt.

**Application:** Have the soup with the meat once or twice a week

**Efficacy:** For supplementing and boosting the "qi" and blood

## Chinese Red Dates, Barbary Wolfberry Fruit & Pig's Heart Soup

**Ingredients:** One Pig's Heart; 30g Chinese Red Dates; 20g Barbary Wolfberry Fruit

**Method:** Cut open the pig's heart, put the Red Dates and Wolfberry inside the pig's heart. Stew it on a low heat for an hour with some water.

**Application:** Once or twice a week

**Efficacy:** For boosting "qi" and nourishing blood, suitable for patients with insufficient "qi" (physical weakness) and low white cell counts after chemotherapy



Chinese Red Dates nourish blood.

## Sea Cucumber and Poria Thickened Soup

**Ingredients:** 20g Barbary Wolfberry Fruit; 10g Poria; 250g Sea Cucumber (fresh)

**Method:** Decoct the Wolfberry and Poria with water, cook the decoction with the sea cucumber till soften. Season with salt.

**Application:** Once a day

**Efficacy:** For supplementation and enrichment of the spleen and kidney, also nourishing "yin" and engendering blood, suitable for patients with "yin" vacuity, low white cell counts, vertigo or palpitations after chemotherapy



Sea cucumber can supplement the kidney.

## (5) Alopecia

### Fleeceflower Root and Egg Soup

**Ingredients:** 30g Prepared Fleeceflower Root; one Egg

**Method:** Use 250ml of water to boil the Fleeceflower Root for 30 minutes. Use the reduced soup to cook the egg.

**Application:** Once a day

**Efficacy:** For nourishing blood and reinforcing hair growth, suitable for patients with alopecia due to vacuity of blood, liver and kidney



Fleeceflower can promote hair growth.

### Walnut and Sesame Congee

**Ingredients:** 30g Walnut; 30g Black Sesame; 100g Japonica Rice

**Method:** Grind walnut and black sesame to powder. Boil the Japonica rice with water to make it into a congee. Serve with walnut and black sesame powder.

**Application:** Once or twice a day

**Efficacy:** For supplementation of kidney, nourishing blood and hair growth, suitable for patients with alopecia due to vacuity of kidney



Walnut can supplement the kidney.

## (6) Toxicity After Radiotherapy

### Five Juice Beverages

**Ingredients:** One Chinese Pear (skinned); One section of Lotus Root (washed); a little Leeks; 100ml Fresh Coconut Water; 100ml Milk; 5ml Ginger Juice

**Method:** Extract 50ml of juice from the Chinese pear and lotus root and 10ml of juice from the leeks. Mix them with 100ml coconut water and 100ml milk. Then cook on a low heat and bring to a boil. Add ginger juice to serve.

**Application:** Sip frequently during the day. One to two doses a day for a course of 5-7 days

**Efficacy:** For nourishing the spleen, harmonising the stomach and controlling nausea, mainly for esophageal cancer patients with nausea and poor appetite after chemotherapy and radiotherapy



Milk can supplement & boost lung & stomach.

### Heartleaf Houttuynia Herb & Mung Bean Beverage

**Ingredients:** 50g Heartleaf Houttuynia Herb (dried); 50g Mung Bean

**Method:** Wash the Heartleaf Houttuynia Herb and let it dry, mince it and put it into a casserole pot, add appropriate amount of water and cook for 30 minutes. Then filter and reserve the juice. Wash the mung beans and cook them with water for 30 minutes until tender. Then cook on a low heat until it becomes a concentrated lotion. Mix it with the extracted Heartleaf Houttuynia Herb juice and serve.

**Application:** Take it morning and evening

**Efficacy:** For clearing the lung and detoxifying, discharging heat and acting against cancer, mainly for esophageal cancer patients suffer from post radiotherapy complications such as pneumonia and esophagitis. These patients usually have dry cough, chest pain and swallowing difficulty



Mung Bean can discharge heat & resolve toxin.

## Frequently Asked Questions

Do those so-called “anti-cancer products” in the market work?  
Will they bring any adverse effects?

Majority of those products are the extract of natural plants or animals but their anti-cancer effect was not yet proven by scientific studies. Since the cause of cancer is complex, it is unwise for the public to rely on those products to prevent cancer. Instead, people should lead a healthy lifestyle, take a balanced diet, have adequate exercise and carry out regular physical check-up.

Furthermore, Chinese Medicine Practitioners believe that different plants have their own characteristics, some are “cold” and some are “hot”. Thus, we have to be aware of our physical condition before choosing those products. For example, if “hot” persons take red ginseng which is considered “hot”, they might experience excessive internal heat and develop boils or sore throat. Conversely, for “cold” persons, they might have diarrhea after drinking green tea because of its “cold” nature. It is recommended to consult a Chinese Medicine Practitioner or dietitian when in doubt.



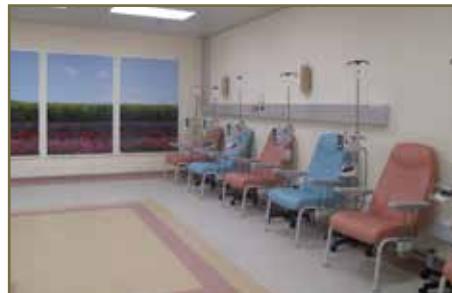
Cancer prevention can be achieved by having balanced diet and adequate exercise.

## Can patients take Chinese medicines while undergoing chemotherapy and / or radiotherapy?

Most oncologists in Hong Kong do not recommend patients taking Chinese medicine during chemotherapy because they are not sure if this would compromise the treatment efficacy or increase the toxic side effects of chemotherapy drugs. Therefore, oncologists and patients alike normally agree that patients may take Chinese medicine after completing chemotherapy with the purpose of consolidating the chemotherapy's efficacy. It is increasing popular in the mainland China to use Chinese medicines concurrently with chemotherapy, aiming to increase the efficacy and lower the side effects of chemotherapy.

Nowadays, more evidence showing that Chinese Medicine can help patients with digestive disorder, anaemia, low white cell counts and thrombocytopenia after chemotherapy. Yet, more evidence is needed to support the effect of Chinese Medicine on increasing the efficacy of chemotherapy drugs.

If Chinese medicine is used inappropriately, the toxic side effects of chemotherapy may be intensified and the efficacy of chemotherapy may be compromised. Thus, it is essential to seek advice from a Chinese Medicine Practitioners who process good understanding about chemotherapy and the principle of Chinese Medicine in order to maximise the treatment effect. Apart from Chinese herbs, acupuncture can also help to relieve chemotherapy-induced digestive disorder.



Chemotherapy Day Centre

## Can Ganoderma help to prevent cancer recurrence?

Even though Ganoderma may help raise one's immune function, there is no strong evidence to prove that Ganoderma can help to prevent cancer recurrence. Thus, it is not recommended to use it for this purpose. The causes for cancer recurrence are complicated and the risk differs from patient to patient. For those with higher cancer recurrence risk, they are suggested to seek advice from experienced Chinese Medicine Practitioners.



## When should the patient seek help from the Chinese Medicine Practitioners? How can they find an appropriate practitioner?

Frail elderly or people in poor physical condition who are not responsive to surgery, chemotherapy or radiotherapy, should seek advice from Chinese Medicine Practitioners. For patients undergoing chemotherapy or radiotherapy, they can consider taking Chinese medicines in-between cycles. This will help lower the side effects and improve the patients' physical wellness. Taking Chinese medicine after treatment could help consolidate the treatment effect as well. Due to the advancement in internet and mass media, people could easily obtain information on Chinese Medicine. People could look for a practitioner who is experienced in cancer treatment from the list of registered Chinese Medicine Practitioners under the HK Government website:

<https://www.gov.hk/en/residents/health/chinesemedicine/>



## Acknowledgement

This English booklet is based on the Chinese version written by Dr. Liu Yu Long

Reviewed by

### **Dr. Liu Yu Long**

Chief Lecturer, Clinical Department, School of Chinese Medicine,  
Hong Kong Baptist University

Management Committee Member and Center Head (Oncology),  
The Hong Kong Anti-Cancer Society - Hong Kong Baptist University Chinese Medicine Centre  
Member of Cancer Education Subcommittee, HKACS

### **Mr. Ling Wai Man**

Nurse Consultant (Oncology), PYNEH  
Registered Chinese Medicine Practitioner  
Member of Cancer Education Subcommittee, HKACS

Cover photo from

### **Ms. Eva Chen**

September 2018



30 Nam Long Shan Road,  
Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong  
Tel: (852) 3921 3821  
Fax: (852) 3921 3822  
Email: public@hkacs.org.hk  
Website: www.hkacs.org.hk