

# Traditional remedy for respiratory problems

**T**HE primary function of the respiratory system is to supply our blood with oxygen. It does this through our breathing. When we breathe, we inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide.

The respiratory system consists of:

- > Lungs – the main organs of the respiratory system. In the lungs, oxygen is taken into the body and carbon dioxide is exhaled. The red blood cells carry the oxygen from the lungs to all the body cells that need it. They pick up the carbon dioxide which is then transported back to the lungs and we breathe it out when we exhale.

- > Trachea – also known as the windpipe. The trachea filters the air we breathe and branches into the bronchi.

- > Bronchi – two air tubes that branch off from the trachea and carry air directly into the lungs.

- > Nose – it takes in the outside air into the respiratory system. The hairs that line the wall are part of the air-cleaning system.

- > Mouth – air also enters through the mouth, especially for people who have a mouth-breathing habit or whose nasal passages may be temporarily obstructed, as by a cold or during heavy exercise.

- > Throat – it collects incoming air from the nose and mouth and passes it downward to the windpipe (trachea).

## What causes respiratory problems?

Respiratory problems can be acute (short term) or chronic (ongoing). Acute respira-

tory problems can develop quickly and may require emergency treatment. Chronic respiratory problems develop more slowly and last longer. Causes of these respiratory problems may be due to environmental pollution, cigarette smoke, indoor air pollution, occupational risks, unhealthy diet, obesity and overweight and physical inactivity.

Some examples of respiratory problems are:

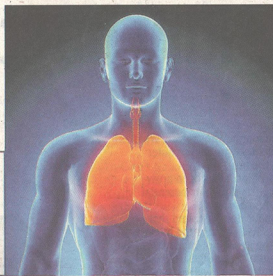
- > Asthma
- > Common cold, running nose and stuffy nose
- > Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

- > Pneumonia
- > Acute respiratory distress syndrome
- > Pulmonary embolism
- > Cystic fibrosis
- > Laryngitis
- > Bronchitis
- > Tuberculosis
- > Emphysema
- > Lung cancer
- > RDS (respiratory distress syndrome) or IRDS (infant respiratory distress syndrome)

Symptoms of respiratory problems may include:

- > Chronic cough
- > Shortness of breath
- > Laboured or difficult breathing
- > Chronic mucus production
- > Wheezing
- > Coughing up blood and chronic chest pain

Those who are prone to respiratory problems include people with diseases or conditions that affect the muscles, nerves, bones or



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tissues that support breathing.

Children, the elderly and pregnant women are susceptible, especially when they are exposed to indoor and outdoor air pollution in the long run.

## Treating respiratory problems

To treat these problems, positive changes in lifestyle and environment must be made, such as avoiding exposure to tobacco, reducing the intake of fatty foods and keeping a balanced diet, limiting exposure to common allergens, maintaining hygiene at all times, exercising, staying hydrated, reducing alcohol intake and getting enough rest.

## Herbal remedy – the Tiger Milk Mushroom

Hailed as Malaysia's national treasure, the Tiger Milk Mushroom or *Lignosus rhinocerus* is a rare medicinal mushroom that is believed to contain medicinal values.

Its name is derived from a Malaysian aboriginal folklore and is said to grow on the spot the tigress dripped its milk while feeding her cubs.

The mushroom consists of a cap, stem and sclerotium. The sclerotium is the part of the mushroom that contains medicinal value and features white tissue that looks and tastes like milk when ground and mixed with water.

The Tiger Milk Mushroom's properties are scientifically proven to be anti-inflammatory and immune-modulating.

Its key health benefits include:

- > Relieves symptoms of asthma.
- > Relieves chronic cough.
- > Relieves nasal and sinus conditions.
- > Relieves respiratory allergy.
- > Helps to repair inflamed tissues and improve respiratory functions.
- > Works as a general tonic to strengthen a weak constitution, especially for the elderly and those with busy and hectic lifestyles.
- > Helps to protect the lungs and respiratory system.
- > Helps to strengthen the immune system of children who are susceptible to colds and flu.

■ This article is contributed by Ligno & Us Sdn Bhd.