

RESTORE THE LUNG FORMULA BU FEI TANG

ORIGINS: By Li Zhong-nan in
*Everlasting Categorization of
Inscribed Formulas* 1331

Restore the Lung Formula (*Bu Fei Tang*) was first published in 1331 by Li Zhong-nan in *Everlasting Categorization of Inscribed Formulas*. It is used for weak or damaged lungs.

GENERAL SIGNS/SYMPTOMS

Chronic or recurring weak cough that is dry or with thin sputum, dyspnea or shortness of breath, wheezing, low energy, weak voice, spontaneous sweating, frequent external invasions, aversion to wind. The pulse will be either floating and empty, or thin and weak. The tongue will be pale with a thin white coat and may have teeth marks on the sides.

CLASSICAL ACTIONS

1. Augments the qi and stabilizes the exterior.

2. Supports both lung and kidney to reinforce their proper relationship.

3. Resolves phlegm and stops cough.

INGREDIENTS

| PINYIN | LATIN | ENGLISH | PERCENT OF FORMULA |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Huang Qi (Chief)</i> | Astragali Radix | Astragalus root | 20% |
| <i>Shu Di Huang (Assistant)</i> | Rehmanniae Radix Preparata | Cured Rehmannia Root | 20% |
| <i>Dang Shen (Chief)</i> | Codonopsis Pilosae | Codonopsis Root | 15% |
| <i>Sang Bai Pi (Deputy)</i> | Mori Cortex | White Mulberry Root Bark | 15% |
| <i>Zi Wan (Deputy)</i> | Asteris Radix | Tartarian Aster Root | 12% |
| <i>Jie Geng (Deputy)</i> | Platycodi Radix | Platycodon Root, Balloon Flower Root | 10% |
| <i>Wu Wei Zi (Deputy)</i> | Schisandrae Fructus | Schisandra Fruit | 8% |

GENERAL INDICATIONS / MODERN APPLICATIONS

- Asthma
- Bronchitis, chronic or post-acute
- COPD
- Cough, chronic (dry or productive)
- Eczema, root treatment of
- Emphysema
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating, spontaneous
- Wheezing

FORMULA DISCUSSION

The history of the patient for whom **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*) was designed usually includes one of the following scenarios:

- + Constitutionally weak lungs (can be from premature birth);
- + A long lasting or serious illness that damaged the lung qi;
- + Someone whose lung qi has been damaged from exposure to toxin; or is
- + An elderly patient with lung qi and kidney yin deficiency who gets frequent colds

The common thread of all these scenarios is weak or damaged lung qi, a condition for which **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*) is especially well-suited to rectify. Cough is almost always a part of the symptomology, and can be either dry or productive. Both types have to do with the communication between lung and kidney.

The dry cough addressed by **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*) is dry because the compromised afflux of qi and fluids between the lung and kidney does not allow the kidney yin to nourish the lung. The compromise is due primarily to the qi deficiency of the lung and not from deficiency of the kidney yin. But as governor of the qi, the lung must have sufficient capacity to draw up the yin from below to nourish itself. Unable to accomplish this, dry cough develops. The other side of this, a productive cough, is explained by the role of the lung as being the upper source of water metabolism. As the upper source for water metabolism, a properly functioning lung not only moves the fluids through the skin and pores, but is able to descend the fluids, along with the qi, down into the lower warmer to be grasped by the kidney. But when it is damaged or significantly weakened, the fluids accumulate in the lungs, congeal, and a productive cough develops. Both the dry and the productive cough are chronic.

FORMULA ACTIONS

- Augments the qi and stabilizes the exterior
- Supports both lung and kidney to reinforce their proper relationship
- Resolves phlegm and stops cough

TONGUE

Pale, with a thin white coat.

PULSE

Either floating and empty or thin and weak.

CONTRAINDICATIONS / CAUTIONS

Since a qi deficiency is assumed when a patient requires this formula, they should be advised to avoid difficult-to-digest foods, such as cold and raw foods, while taking this formula.

DOSAGE

Standard dosage is 2-3 tablets, 2-3 times daily.

When the quality of the lung qi is compromised, the condition of the *wei* (defensive) qi often suffers as well and the patient becomes unable to ward off frequent external invasions or prevent exterior conditions from penetrating deeper into the interior. **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*) not only rectifies the lung-kidney relationship and restores the lung qi, it also effectively stabilizes the exterior to prevent recurrent illness.

In Oriental Medicine there is a close relationship between the lungs and the skin. Patients presenting with chronic eczema will often have an underlying lung and kidney qi deficiency. This condition can often be seen with allergic asthma. Eczema in the acute stage is usually diagnosed as a wind-heat or a damp-heat. After the acute stage has been cleared you can use **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*) to tonify the root condition.

SYNERGY OF INGREDIENTS

The two chiefs in **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*) are both qi tonics. They combine to boost the lung qi, stabilize the exterior, and eliminate fatigue by supporting the primal qi. Astragalus (*Huang Qi*) is especially effective at stabilizing the exterior and supporting the ability of the qi to generate and properly regulate fluids. Its rising action can help pull the fluids from the kidney up into the lungs. Codonopsis (*Dang Shen*) also supports the qi function of fluid production. It eliminates fatigue and strengthens the middle warmer to restore the body's ability to convert food and drink into qi and blood.

Prepared Rehmannia (*Shu Di Huang*) is the only assistant herb and has the most interesting role in the formula. It is the inclusion of *Shu Di Huang* that completes the connection between the lung and kidney, but it also contributes to the resolution of the cough, whether dry or productive. This may seem like a contradiction, because the reputation of *Shu Di Huang* as "the primary herb for tonifying the liver and kidneys" and its justifiably strong association with yin and blood supplementation, might lead one to determine that its inclusion is chiefly for addressing the dry cough pattern that this formula treats. But if this were so, we would be talking about a different pattern, one for which **Eight Immortals Formula** or **Lily Preserve Metal Formula** might be more appropriate, both of which contain hefty percentages of rehmannia. But the pattern under question here is decidedly qi deficiency and the role of the *Shu Di Huang* not only makes possible the reestablishment of the proper relationship between lung and kidney, but aids in the resolution of the phlegm in the lungs because this phlegm is not a product of an excess, but due to congealed fluids in the lung. When the proper relationship between lung and kidney is restored, the phlegm resolves as soon as the lung is able once again to descend the fluids efficiently.

Of the four deputies, white mulberry root bark (*Sang Bai Pi*) disperses latent heat in the lungs and causes the lung qi to descend. It therefore is working to help stop the cough and to clear out any vestige of the original pathogen that may still be lingering. Aster root (*Zi Wan*) is a primary herb for stopping many types of cough. It warms and moistens the lung, while also draining pathogenic factors and descending the lung qi. It is believed to enter the blood that circulates in the lung, where it gently nourishes while strongly dispersing and descending. Schisandra fruit (*Wu Wei Zi*) is well known to effectively preserve the lung qi through its astringent action. Along with *Shu Di Huang*, *Wu Wei Zi* helps the kidney grasp the lung qi. The final deputy, platycodon (*Jie Geng*) is not part of Li's original formulation. It is included

here to augment the ability to resolve phlegm and stop cough. It has a rising property and helps to direct the action of the entire formula to the lungs, and so works harmoniously with *Sang Bai Pi* and *Zi Wan*, which both descend the lung qi, to help restore proper upward and downward movements of the lung qi.

MODERN APPLICATIONS

Pulmonary Diseases due to Lung Qi Deficiency

Restore the Lung Formula (*Bu Fei Tang*) is classically used to treat chronic cough due to lung qi deficiency.

A research study was done giving **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*) to 31 patients with cough due to lung qi deficiency. Cough was the main sign and symptom. Patients also had accompanying signs and symptoms of cold or fever, chills or sweating, itchy throat, phlegm congestion with expectoration. Additions were added depending on individual signs and symptoms for spontaneous sweating, yang type cough, yin type cough, yellow sticky sputum, white sputum, dry cough with no phlegm, wheezing. 10 cases were cured with alleviation of cough and accompanying signs and symptoms. 19 cases showed improvement of cough, reduction of sputum, and reduction of accompanying signs and symptoms, and two cases had no effect with a total effective rate of 93.55%.ⁱ

Asthma

Asthma is a common disease that causes inflammation and narrowing of the bronchial airway leading to periodic attacks of wheezing, shortness of breath, tight chest, and coughing. **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*) focuses on the underlying deficiency, and can be used to treat asthma in the remission stage due to lung qi deficiency. In this stage, patients' main presentations are chronic wheezing, aversion to wind, and spontaneous sweating. Other signs and symptoms that may also be present are dyspnea, shortness of breath, low voice, weak voice, and sputum (can be clear, white, scanty, or sticky). The wheeze and cough are often weak and forceless. Patients usually have a lowered immune system and easily catch a cold. Kidney deficiency signs and symptoms may also be present. A study was done on the treatment of bronchial asthma in the remission period. 35 patients were given **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*). There was significant improvement in lung function as observed through pulmonary function testing (FVC%, FEV1, FEV%) with a total effectiveness rate of 94.28%.ⁱⁱ

Chronic Bronchitis

Chronic Bronchitis is a chronic inflammation of the bronchi in the lungs. It is characterized by repeated attacks of persistent cough with phlegm lasting for at least three consecutive months in a year, two years in a row, and is considered a form of Chronic Obstructive

Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Chronic bronchitis is often accompanied with wheezing, tight chest, or breathlessness. In Chinese medicine, chronic bronchitis is usually considered a lung qi deficiency, often with phlegm or phlegm-damp accumulation. Acute attacks can be brought on by a wind-cold or wind-heat invasion.

Restore the Lung Formula (*Bu Fei Tang*) is an excellent formula to treat chronic bronchitis, immediately addressing the chronic cough. It also strengthens the underlying deficiency as well as strengthening the *wei* qi, thus helping to prevent further attacks. A clinical research study was conducted giving 36 patients with chronic bronchitis **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*). The study used 3 indicators: cough, expectoration volume, and lung capacity. Patients were given **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*) in granule form for 21 days. 6 cases reported significant improvement, 10 cases showed moderate improvement, 14 cases showed some improvement, 6 cases showed no improvement with an overall effectiveness of 83.3%.ⁱⁱⁱ

COPD

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, COPD, is a progressive disease with the main sign and symptom being difficult breathing due to chronic bronchitis and / or emphysema. In addition to difficult breathing, other signs and symptoms may include shortness of breath, cough with or without sputum, fatigue, wheezing, and susceptibility to upper respiratory infections. A study was conducted using **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*) to treat COPD. 50 patients diagnosed with COPD were divided into a treatment group and control group. The main signs and symptoms included cough, expectoration, and shortness of breath. Other signs and symptoms included wheezing, weak voice, spontaneous sweating, palpitations, fatigue, and loose stools. In the treatment group, 5 cases showed complete relief from sign and symptoms, 13 showed marked improvement, 9 showed some improvement, and 3 cases showed no improvement, with a total effectiveness rate of 90%. In comparison, the control group, who were treated with conventional methods, showed 3 cases cured, 9 with marked improvement, 3 with some improvement, and 5 ineffective, with a total efficiency of 75%. The study also monitored number of acute attacks. During a three month period the treatment group had 15 cases with no attacks, one case with one acute attack, and 7 cases with two to four attacks. The control group had 3 cases of no attacks, 6 cases with one attack, and 11 cases with two to four attacks during the three months.^{iv}

FORMULA COMPARISONS

Restore the Lung Formula & Sheng Mai Formula
Restore the Lung Formula (*Bu Fei Tang*) and **Sheng**

Mai Formula (*Sheng Mai San*) both treat chronic cough due to lung qi deficiency. They share similar accompanying signs and symptoms like fatigue, shortness of breath, and spontaneous sweating. **Sheng Mai Formula** also strongly treats lung yin deficiency and body fluid deficiency due to a heat disorder damaging the lung yin. The cough can present with little or no sputum that is difficult to expectorate and will be accompanied with dry mouth or tongue and thirst. The tongue will be dry with a thin or no coat. The pulse will be deficient and rapid or deficient and fine. The main pattern differentiation between application of these two formulas is that **Restore the Lung Formula** is primarily used to treat patterns of lung qi deficiency where cough is the main symptom, while **Sheng Mai Formula** treats a qi and yin deficiency. So, when there are marked signs of yin deficiency and dryness, the latter formula should be chosen over **Restore the Lung Formula**. In some cases, **Restore the Lung Formula** can be used to resolve cough and strengthen lung qi for a few weeks, then the prescription can change to **Sheng Mai Formula** to nourish the yin and preserve the qi.

Restore the Lung Formula & Jade Windscreen Formula
Restore the Lung Formula (*Bu Fei Tang*) and **Jade Windscreen Formula** (*Yu Ping Feng San*) both have a similar function of strengthening the *wei qi* and stabilizing the exterior. **Jade Windscreen Formula** focuses on stopping spontaneous sweating and recurrent colds while **Restore the Lung Formula** focuses more on tonifying the lung and resolving the cough.

Restore the Lung Formula & Ling Zhi Lung Formula
Restore the Lung Formula (*Bu Fei Tang*) and **Ling Zhi Lung Formula** (*Ling Zhi Fei Pian*) can both treat cough with phlegm, and can both be used to treat wheezing and asthmatic breathing, but if wheezing or asthmatic breathing are the main symptom, use **Ling Zhi Lung Formula**. A good way to distinguish between application of the two formulas is to focus on what exactly is the main recurring symptom. If it is frequent colds, susceptibility to infection, and cough is chronic, then use **Restore the Lung Formula**. If recurrent asthmatic breathing/wheezing is the main symptom, use **Ling Zhi Lung Formula**.

USEFUL COMBINATIONS

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| For severe qi deficiency | Combine with Six Gentlemen Formula . |
| For signs of lung qi and yin deficiency | Add <i>Sha Shen</i> and <i>Mai Men Dong</i> or combine with Sheng Mai Formula . |
| For spontaneous pneumothorax | Combine with Blood Palace Formula . |

ENDNOTES

¹Zou Zhidong, et al., "Modified Bu Fei Decoction in the Treatment of Lung Qi Cough: 31 Cases", *Shaanxi Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, Vol. 22, No. 10, 2001.

²Chen Sining, et al., "To Observe Bu Fei Decoction in the Treatment of Bronchial Asthma and Explore the Influences on Immune System", *Shaanxi Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, August 2009.

³Li Fujian, et al., "Treating 36 Cases of Chronic Bronchitis with Bu Fei Conji", *Zhejiang Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, Vol. 37, No. 9, 2002.

⁴Li Xun, "Clinical Observation of Jia Jian Bu Fei Tang Treatment of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease of Lung and Spleen Deficiency", *Ji Lin Traditional Chinese Medicine*, November, 2008.

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