



# Cold and Hot Theory and Allergy

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<http://www.ck-wong.ca/China/hot%20cold%20theory%20and%20allergy%2020060101.pdf>

## Introduction

Chinese medicine is a very tough academic area for Chinese not to mention the Westerner. The difficulties lie in three areas: the language, the fundamental theory and practice. Most texts are written in archaic Chinese which is not understood by most of the Chinese. On top of this, the technical language is also so much different from the common language that Chinese medicine has to be imparted through the apprenticeship for the last couple of thousand years. The fundamental theory again is also very different from the any discipline in Chinese culture. Although it uses the five elements concept and share some common computational operation but it has its meanings and definitions. The last and the most difficult part of the discipline is the practical side. Chinese medicine heavily depends on the sensing of pulse and observation on various parts of body and secretions. For example, the color of spit will inspire the causes of the ailment. Without proper documentation, the only way to learn is from the master personally.

In this piece, I am going to discuss very superficially a small area of the theory of cold and hot related to allergy.

## Cold and Hot Concept

Other than the five elements concept (metal, wood, water, fire and earth), there is a concept of cold and hot as another dimension of the prognosis. Five elements maps to the five virtual body systems. Each system could have the state of positive and negative. Positive at the extreme will become too active. Negative at the extreme will become inactive. These two states are also combined with the cold and hot. Treatment will be guided by the quadrant of positive/negative and cold/hot.

Together with the five elements, the doctor will prescribe the remedy accordingly. This is an extreme simplified and generalized description of Chinese medicine.

Another interesting point is that Chinese medicine does not have the concept of germs. It uses a broader concept of evil and wind. Both does not only cover the effect of germs but also the environment and psychological impact.

## Allergy

Allergy if described at a very abstract and high level can be explained as the consequence of the influence of the external. In Western medicine, it starts to accept the allergens could be physical and psychological. One the most prominent example is peanut. Some people could get the peanut allergy symptom when someone mentions the word peanut. The allergen could also be the change of weather. It is amazing how the east and the west are converging.

Another interesting Chinese medicine concept the western can explore would be the classification of allergen. It could be just my ignorant but my understanding is that every substance could be classified as cold or hot. There is also many sublevels and dimensions which will be way beyond the scope of this little piece.

The physique of everyone is also has the classification of cold or hot. This classification is neutral. Hot does not mean something better than cold. The classification again has many sublevels and dimensions. In general a strong guy with stubby build could be hot but not necessary. Someone who looks pale and weak would usually cold.

Hot food are the deep fried and barbequed or roasted. Cold are those cool at temperature and raw vegetables that did not grow under sunlight (but there are many not following these rules) like bean sprout. The general rule of thumb for the older generation of Chinese is to balance the hot and cold. A hot guy should eat more cold food rather than hot food to maintain the balance. Caucasian is generally regarded as hot so it is highly recommended salad and beer. It is also believe that too much BBQ food and deep fried food could cause Caucasian nose breeding. Asians are generally considered as cold so too much salad could cause diarrhea.

There are some specific scenarios that if a cold guy eats cold food, they would have dizziness, faint, hyperventilation, headache and other light to heavy symptoms. These reactions are very close to the allergenic reaction. The remedy would usually using counter measures. For example, if one got dizziness and cold sweat, you could use the hot stuff such as ginger tea to counter the effect.

It would also worth to mentioned that some food could be come code by simply stirring it.

## **Folk Medicine**

The practice of cold hot concept has been passed from my grand parents to me. There are no vigorous theories or clear guidelines. Yet they create a lot of awareness to avoid food allergy and balanced diet. There may be a parallel practice among the Western. I hope one day I could have the opportunity.