

The Skinny on Snot

With Steven Horne, RH(AHG)





What is your...

–Snot

–Mucus

–Phlegm

...telling you?

What is Mucus?

- A thin, slippery secretion that coats mucus membranes
- Composed primarily of water with some glycoproteins to thicken it and make it slippery
- Also contains inorganic salts, antiseptic enzymes, immunoglobulins and proteins
- Some of these compounds are part of the body's infection-fighting system



What Mucus Does

- It forms a protective coating for the membranes of the respiratory and digestive tract
- It also coats urogenital passages and is found in both the eyes and the ears
- It protects these tissues from both particulate matter and infection



Your Inner Skin

- Your body's first line of defense is it's protective barriers
 - Skin - 2 sq. meters
 - Mucus Membranes – 400 sq. meters
- Mucus membranes are the largest surface area of the body and the most vulnerable
- This is why mucus is so important that your body produces between one to one and a half liters per day



Biological Terrain

- Herbs work best when applied to restore balance to the biological terrain
- It's easiest to understand biological terrain as it applies to the skin and mucus membranes because the signs of imbalance are more clearly seen
 - Temperature
 - Hot: warm, red, overactive
 - Cold: cool, pale, underactive
 - Moisture
 - Damp: excess moisture, swollen
 - Dry: deficient moisture, hardened
 - Tension
 - Constricted: tight, not flowing
 - Relaxed: loose, excess flow

What to Check Out

- You can assess the biological terrain of the mucus membranes by examining:
 - Mucus drainage from sinuses
 - Mucus coughed up from lungs
 - Coating on the tongue



Normal Mucus

- Is thin, clear and forms a light coating over all mucus membranes
- Cilia sweep mucus from the sinuses to the back of the throat
- Cilia also sweep mucus from the lungs into the throat

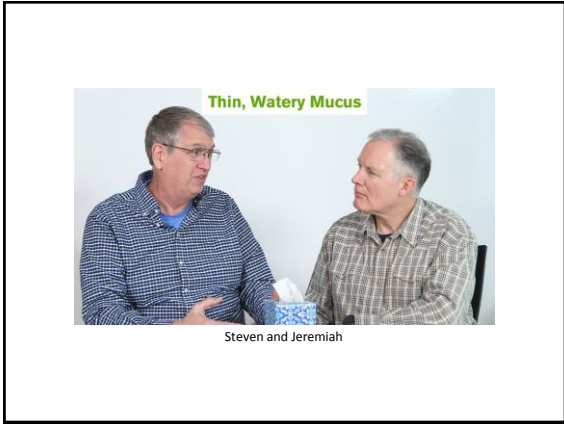


Abundant Thin, Watery Mucus

- The body is actively trying to flush away some irritation:
 - Allergen like pollen or pet hair
 - Dust
 - Irritating chemicals
 - Infection
- Herbalists would consider this a damp and/or relaxed terrain




Steven and Jeremiah



White Mucus

- White mucus is the sign you are becoming congested
- Mucus is thickening and not moving as easily
- Can be an early sign of an infection or the result of dehydration
- In TCM this is considered "cold" mucus or phlegm
- The body is flushing an irritant, but the mucus is congested and is no longer flowing freely
- This is a condition of dampness, congestion or stagnation



Thick, White Mucus

Steven and Bill

A photograph of two men, Steven and Bill, sitting at a table. Steven is on the left, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt. Bill is on the right, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and a tan baseball cap. They are both looking at each other. A small box of tissues is on the table between them. The text 'Thick, White Mucus' is overlaid in green at the top, and 'Steven and Bill' is at the bottom.



Brown Mucus

- Could be dried blood, but more likely it's dirt or other materials that got inhaled and trapped in the mucus
- That's your mucus membranes doing their job



Steven and Obediah

Brown, Crusty Mucus



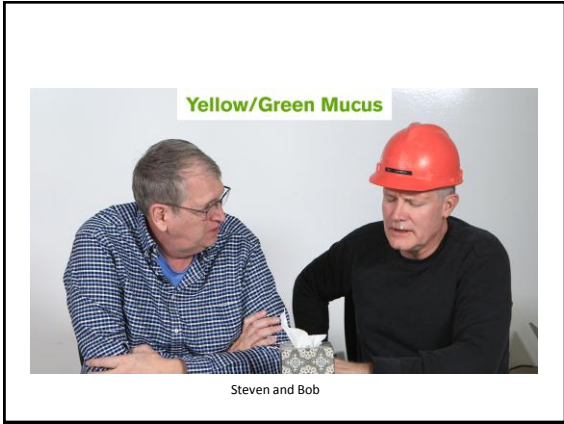
Steven and Obediah

Yellow/Green Mucus

- Means white blood cells are at work fighting off an infection
- The yellow color is due to spent white blood cells being carried off in the mucus
- This is considered "hot" phlegm in TCM
- Caused by the presence of large numbers of neutrophils, which contain a greenish-colored enzyme
- This means the immune battle is more serious and the infection could be bacterial, instead of viral
- This is also considered "hot" phlegm in TCM



Steven and Bob



Red or Pink Mucus

- There is blood in the mucus
- This means that there is minor bleeding from nasal membranes
- It is typically the result of dryness and irritation, but can also be a sign of injury

A video frame showing two men, Steven and Joe, sitting at a table. Steven is on the left, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt and glasses. Joe is on the right, wearing a brown jacket. They are looking at each other. A box of tissues is on the table. A green label at the top of the frame reads "Red Mucus". Below the frame, the caption "Steven and Joe" is visible.



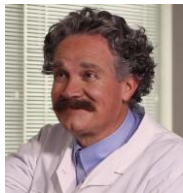
Black Mucus

- Can be from smoking or drugs
- Otherwise it is a sign of a serious fungal infection
- This is a sign to see a doctor right away, if you aren't already doing so



Hardened Mucus

- Occurs from mucus membranes being dried out due to:
 - Smoking
 - Dry air
 - Dehydration
- This is a dry condition of the mucus membranes



Deficient Mucus

- A sign of chronic lung problems, often due to smoking, or dehydration
- This is a dry condition of the mucus membranes



Aromatic and Pungent Herbs

- Helpful for cold, damp phlegm
- Excess mucus production with clear or white mucus
- Taken with plenty of water (preferably warm) these assist the body in flushing irritants by increasing mucus drainage
- Examples: Capsicum, garlic, ginger



Bitter Herbs

- Bitter herbs, especially those containing berberine, are typically used with hot, damp phlegm
- Excessive mucus, discolored yellow or green
- They have a cooling and drying action
- Examples: Goldenseal, Oregon grape



Mucilaginous Herbs

- Mucilaginous herbs are used for hot, dry phlegm
- Deficient or hardened mucus, white or pale yellow
- These herbs are cooling, soothing and moistening
- Examples: Marshmallow, slippery elm



Astringent Herbs

- Used for:
 - Very damp phlegm (copious watery drainage)
 - Pink or red phlegm
 - Chronic heavy mucus production
- These herbs tighten tissues to tone tissues and reduce excessive secretion
- Examples: Bayberry, yerba santa



Salty Herbs and Salt

- This herbs are used for dryness, deficient or hardened mucus
- Taken with plenty of water, they hydrate mucus membranes to thin and loosen mucus
- They are moistening in nature
- Examples: mullein, red clover



Sweet (tonic) Herbs

- Work on cold and dry phlegm
- Helpful for deficient mucus with lack of mucus drainage
- Moistens and nourish tissues to lubricate membranes and nourish tissues
- Examples: Cordyceps, licorice, astragalus



Some Great Formulas



Combination A

- Ingredients: Boneset aerial parts, fennel seeds, fenugreek seeds, horseradish root and mullein leaves extract
- Drying and stimulating for damp phlegm
- Helpful for people living in damp climates



- For cold, damp phlegm use with:
 - Garlic
- For hot phlegm, use with:
 - Echinacea and Goldenseal
 - Berberine

Combination B

- Ingredients: Nettle leaf, quercetin, fructus aurantia immaturi fruit, bromelain, di-calcium phosphate
- Drying and cooling for hot, damp phlegm
- For a greater cooling effect, use with:
 - Antioxidant Drink



Combination C

- Ingredients: Astragalus root, aster root, qinjiao root, inula flower, anemarrhena rhizome, bupleurum root, Panax ginseng root, lycium fruit, ophiopogon root, dang gui root, atractylodes rhizome, blue citrus peel, citrus peel, pinellia rhizome, schizandra fruit, and licorice root
- Warming and moistening for cold, dry phlegm
- Very helpful for cold, dry winter air
- For weak function, combine with
 - Cordyceps
- For increased moistening effect, combine with
 - Mullein and marshmallow
 - Licorice root

Combination D

- Ingredients: Blessed thistle aerial parts, catnip leaf, pleurisy root, yerba santa leaf
- Cooling and drying for cold, damp phlegm



Combination E

- Fenugreek, thyme
- Warming and moistening for cold, dry phlegm
- Especially helpful for the sinuses
- To enhance moistening effect, combine with
 - Marshmallow and fenugreek



Combination F

- Ingredients: Citrus peel, Typhonium rhizome, bamboo sap, bupleurum root, fritillaria bulb, hoelen sclerotium, perilla leaf, platycodon root, xingren apricot seed, magnolia bark, morus root bark, ophiopogon root tuber, tussilago flower buds, ginger rhizome, schizandra fruit, licorice root

- Cooling and drying for cold, damp phlegm



Combination G

- Adhatoda vasica leaf extract, licorice root extract, Verbascum thapsus leaf, Alpina galanga rhizome extract, Clerodendrum indicum root, Inula racemosa root extract, Myrica nagi bark extract, Hedychium spicatum root, Pimpinella anisum fruit, Pistacia integerrima gall, ginger rhizome, Picrorhiza kurroa root extract, Ocimum sanctum leaf extract, Tylophora asthmatica leaf, Abies webbiana leaf, Elettaria cardamomum seed, Ferula assafoetida gum

- Warming and moistening for cold, dry lung conditions
- Especially helpful for the bronchial area



Thank you Steven!
