

HERBS THAT DRAIN DAMPNESS

Revised: 8/28/2019

Sources:

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Herbs that Drain Dampness

Herbs that Drain Dampness promote water metabolism and urination to leach dampness out of the body. From a biomedical perspective, many of these herbs are diuretics.

The term “dampness” can refer to two different situations:

1. fluid accumulation (edema, thin phlegm)
2. dampness combined with heat (damp-heat)

Water Accumulation: refers to an obstruction in the normal metabolism of fluids. This can involve the Lung, Spleen, and/or Kidney. These conditions sometime overlap with phlegm. For acute edema, these herbs are combined with herbs that release the exterior. For chronic edema, these herbs are combined with herbs that tonify qi and tonify yang.

Damp-Heat: includes conditions such as Lin Syndrome (painful urination), damp sores, and jaundice. These herbs are combined with herbs that clear heat and dry dampness.

Herbs that Drain Dampness

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bland • bitter
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • neutral to cold
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KI, UB, SP
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use caution with yin deficiency and depleted fluids
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote urination (edema, lin syndrome, jaundice)
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These herbs may be combined with tonics (for edema due to deficiency) or with Herbs that Clear Heat and Dry Dampness (for lin syndrome and jaundice due to damp-heat)

Herbs that Drain Dampness

Edema

- fú líng
- chī fú líng
- fú líng pí
- fú shén
- zhū líng
- zé xiè
- dōng guā zǐ
- hàn fáng jǐ
- yì yǐ rén
- shēng jiāng pí

Lin Syndrome

- chē qián zǐ
- huá shí
- mù tōng
- dēng xīn cǎo
- qú mài
- biǎn xù
- dì fū zǐ
- bì xiè
- shí wéi
- dōng kuí zǐ

Jaundice

- yīn chén

fú líng

poria

Temp: neutral

Taste: sweet, bland

Channels: HT, SP, KI, LU

Dosage: 9-15 grams

1. promotes urination to leach out dampness

- for edema, diarrhea, difficult urination

2. tonifies Spleen qi

- for Spleen deficiency with dampness; e.g. loss of appetite, diarrhea, distention

3. calms shen

茯苓

chì fú líng

poria rubra

Temp: slightly cold

Taste: sweet, bland

Channels: HT, SP, KI, LU

Dosage: 9-15 grams

1. promotes urination to leach out dampness

- for edema with **heat signs**
- for scant, dark, difficult urination

赤茯苓

Chi Fu Ling is the portion that grows closer to the skin. It is colder than Fu Ling, but does not tonify the Spleen.

fú líng pí

poria cutis

Temp: neutral

Taste: sweet, bland

Channels: HT, SP, KI, LU

Dosage: 15-30 grams

1. promotes urination to leach out dampness
 - for edema, esp. **edema under the skin**

茯
苓
皮

Fu Ling Pi is the outer portion that includes the skin, so it is said to treat skin edema. It is less tonifying than Fu Ling but better at draining dampness.

fú shén

poria sclerotium pararadicus

Temp: neutral

Taste: sweet, bland

Channels: HT, SP, KI, LU

Dosage: 6-15 grams

1. promotes urination to leach out dampness
2. **calms shen**
 - for palpitations, insomnia, forgetfulness

茯
神

Fu Shen is the section of the fungus that contains the tree root.

zhū líng

polyporus

Temp: slightly cool
Taste: sweet, bland
Channels: SP, KI, UB
Dosage: 6-12 grams

猪
苓

1. promotes urination to leach out dampness

- for edema, diarrhea, vaginal discharge, difficult urination

Zhu Ling differs from Fu Ling in three ways:

1. Zhu Ling does not tonify middle-jiao qi
2. Zhu Ling is colder than Fu Ling
3. Zhu Ling is better at promoting urination

zé xiè

alismatis rhizoma

Temp: cold
Taste: sweet, bland
Channels: KI, UB
Dosage: 4.5-9 grams

泽
泻

1. promotes urination to leach out dampness

- esp. for dampness in the lower jiao

2. drains damp-heat from lower jiao

- for lin syndrome, damp-heat diarrhea, spermatorrhea

dōng guā zǐ

benincasae semen

Temp: cold

Taste: sweet

Channels: LU, ST, LI, SI

Dosage: 9-15 grams (crush before decocting)

1. clears heat and drains dampness
 - esp. for vaginal discharge due to damp-heat
2. discharges internal pus
 - for Lung abscess and Large Intestine abscess

冬
瓜
子

hàn fáng jǐ

stephaniae tetrandrae radix

Temp: cold

Taste: bitter, acrid

Channels: UB, SP, KI

Dosage: 4.5-9 grams

1. promotes urination to treat edema
 - esp. for lower-body edema
2. expels wind-damp to treat bi syndrome
 - esp. for hot bi syndrome

漢
防
己

yì yǐ rén

coicis semen

Temp: slightly cold
Taste: sweet, bland
Channels: LU, SP, ST, KI
Dosage: 9-30 grams (or use in food therapy)

1. promotes urination and leaches out dampness
 - for edema, diarrhea, difficult urination
2. tonifies Spleen qi
3. treats bi syndrome
 - esp. for joint mobility and spasms
4. clears heat and discharges pus
 - for Lung abscess and Large Intestine abscess

To enhance its ability to strengthen the Spleen, use dry-fried Yi Yi Ren (Shu Yi Yi Ren or Chao Yi Yi Ren).

薏
苡
仁

shēng jiāng pí

zingiberis rhizomatis cortex

Temp: cool
Taste: acrid
Channels: LU, SP, ST
Dosage: 1-3 grams

1. promotes sweating to release the exterior
2. harmonizes the middle jiao
3. promotes urination to treat edema
 - esp. for edema just under the skin

生
姜
皮

chē qián zǐ

plantaginis semen

Temp: cold

Taste: sweet

Channels: UB, KI, LV, LU

Dosage: 9-15 grams (put in bag)

1. promotes urination and clears damp-heat
 - for lin syndrome or edema due to damp-heat
 - promotes urination to solidify stool; for diarrhea due to damp-heat or damp-summerheat
2. clears Liver heat to brighten eyes
3. clears Lung heat
 - for cough with yellow, copious phlegm

车
前
子

huá shí

talcum

Temp: cold

Taste: sweet, bland

Channels: ST, UB

Dosage: 9-15 grams (put in bag)

1. promotes urination to treat lin syndrome
 - important herb for hot lin syndrome
 - also for diarrhea due to damp-heat
2. clears summer heat
3. used topically to treat skin problems
 - absorbs dampness; for eczema, damp sores, summer rash

滑
石

mù tōng

akebia caulis

Temp: slightly cold
Taste: bitter
Channels: UB, HT, SI
Dosage: 3-6 grams

木
通

1. promotes urination to treat lin syndrome
 - for difficult urination due to damp-heat in the lower jiao
2. clears Heart heat
 - for Heart heat pouring into Small Intestine
 - irritability, mouth sores, difficult urination
3. promotes lactation
4. unblocks the channels to treat hot bi syndrome

dēng xīn cǎo

junci medulla

Temp: slightly cold
Taste: bitter
Channels: HT, LU, SI
Dosage: 3-6 grams

灯
心
草

1. promotes urination to treat lin syndrome
 - for hot lin syndrome
2. clears Heart heat
 - for Heart heat pouring into Small Intestine
 - esp. for childhood sleep disorders with irritability and dark, scanty urine (night terrors)
 - milder than Mu Tong
 - also for insomnia due to Heart and Kidney not communicating

qú mài

dianthi herba

Temp: cold
Taste: bitter
Channels: UB, HT, SI
Dosage: 9-15 grams

瞿
麦

1. promotes urination to treat lin syndrome
 - for any type of lin syndrome, esp. bloody lin
2. invigorates blood
 - secondary herb for amenorrhea due to blood stasis

Qu Mai and Bain Xu are paired herbs and often used together.

biǎn xù

polygoni avicularis herba

Temp: slightly cold
Taste: bitter
Channels: UB
Dosage: 9-15 grams

扁
蓄

1. promotes urination to treat lin syndrome
 - for lin syndrome due to damp-heat
2. kills parasites
 - for intestinal parasites; e.g. tapeworm, hookworm, pinworm
 - used externally for fungal infection; e.g. tinea, damp skin lesions with itching

Qu Mai and Bain Xu are paired herbs and often used together.

dì fū zǐ

kochiae fructus

Temp: cold
Taste: sweet, bitter
Channels: UB, KI
Dosage: 9-15 grams

1. promotes urination to treat lin syndrome
 - for lin syndrome due to damp-heat
2. clears damp-heat
 - used internally and externally for skin problems due to damp-heat with itching; e.g. eczema, scabies, fungal infections, genital itching

地
肤
子

bì xiè

discoriae hypoglauciae rhizoma

Temp: neutral
Taste: bitter
Channels: UB, LV, ST
Dosage: 9-15 grams

1. drains damp turbidity to treat gao lin (cloudy lin)
 - for cloudy urine (excess or deficiency) and vaginal discharge
2. treats bi syndrome
 - expels wind-damp, relaxes the the channels
 - mild
3. treats damp-heat skin problems
 - for eczema, pustular sores

萆
解

dōng kuí zǐ (dōng kuí guǒ)

malvae fructus

Temp: cold

Taste: sweet

Channels: UB, LI, SI

Dosage: 3-9 grams

1. promotes urination to treat lin syndrome

- for hot lin, bloody lin, or stone lin
- also for edema

2. benefits breasts

- for insufficient lactation (due to stagnation), painful swollen breasts, early stage breast abscess

3. moistens Large Intestine to relieve constipation

Use caution during pregnancy.

冬
葵
子

shí wéi

pyrrosiae folium

Temp: slightly cold

Taste: bitter, sweet

Channels: UB, LV, ST

Dosage: 6-9 grams

1. promotes urination to treat lin syndrome

- for hot lin, bloody lin, or stone lin due to damp-heat

2. clears heat and stops bleeding

- for vomiting blood, uterine bleeding, bloody lin

3. clears Lung heat

- for cough, wheezing, and phlegm

石
葳

jīn qián cǎo
lysimachiae herba

Temp: slightly cold
Taste: sweet, salty
Channels: UB, LV, ST
Dosage: 15-30 grams

1. promotes urination and expels stones
 - for various types of lin, but especially for urinary tract stones
 - can be taken alone as tea
2. clears LV/GB damp-heat and expels stones
 - for gallstones
3. used externally to treat skin infection

Jin Qian Cao means "gold coin herb."
There are three herbs that treat stones with "gold" in the name: Jin Qian Cao, Hai Jin Sha, Ji Nei Jin

金
钱
草

yīn chén (yīn chén hāo)
artemisiae scopariae herba

Temp: slightly cold
Taste: bitter
Channels: LV, SP, GB, ST
Dosage: 9-30 grams

1. resolves dampness to treat jaundice
 - for jaundice due to damp-heat or damp-cold
 - best herb for treating jaundice
2. used externally to treat damp-related skin problems

茵
陈
蒿

Summary

fu ling <i>poria</i>	drains damp	• tonifies SP qi
chi fu ling <i>poria rubra</i>	drains damp • for edema with heat signs	
fu ling pi <i>poria cutis</i>	drains damp • for edema under the skin	
fu shen <i>poria sclerotium peraradicus</i>	drains damp	• calms shen
zhu ling <i>polyporus</i>	drains damp	
ze xie <i>alismatis rhizoma</i>	drains damp • for damp and damp-heat in lower jiao	
dong gua zi <i>benincasiae semen</i>	drains damp • for vaginal discharge	• discharges internal pus (LU and LI abscess)
han fang ji <i>stephaniae tetrandrae radix</i>	drains damp • for lower body edema	• treats hot bi
yi yi ren <i>coicis semen</i>	drains damp	• tonifies SP qi • treats bi syndrome

che qian zi <i>plantaginis semen</i>	promotes urination to treat lin syndrome • lin syndrome, edema, diarrhea	• clears LV heat to brighten eyes • clears LU heat
hua shi <i>talcum</i>	promotes urination to treat lin syndrome • hot lin, diarrhea	• clears summer heat • treats damp skin problems
mu tong <i>akebiae caulis</i>	promotes urination to treat lin syndrome • drains damp-heat, clears HT heat	• promotes lactation • treat bi syndrome
deng xin cao <i>junci medulla</i>	promotes urination to treat lin syndrome • hot lin, clears HT heat	
qu mai <i>dianthi herba</i>	promotes urination to treat lin syndrome • bloody lin	• invigorates blood
bian xu <i>polygoni avicularis herba</i>	promotes urination to treat lin syndrome	• kills parasites (worms and fungus)
di fu zi <i>kochiae fructus</i>	promotes urination to treat lin syndrome	• damp-heat skin problems
bi xie <i>discoriae hypoglauciae rhizoma</i>	promotes urination to treat lin syndrome • gao lin	• treats bi syndrome • skin problems
shi wei <i>pyrrosae folium</i>	promotes urination to treat lin syndrome • stone lin	• clears heat to stop bleeding • clears LU heat
dong kui zi <i>malvae fructus</i>	promotes urination to treat lin syndrome	• benefits breasts • moistens LI
yin chen <i>artemisiae scopariae herba</i>	relieves jaundice • yin and yang type jaundice	