

HERBS THAT REGULATE QI

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Sources:

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Herbs that Regulate Qi

Pathology:

- 气滞 *qì zhì* - qi stagnation
- 气逆 *qì nì* - rebellious qi, qi counterflow
- 气郁 *qì yù* - qi depression, qi constraint

Treatment:

- 理气 *lǐ qì* - regulate qi, rectify qi
 - 行气 *xíng qì* - move qi
 - 降气 *jiàng qì* - descend qi, downbear qi
 - 破气 *pò qì* - break qi

Herbs that Regulate Qi

Spleen/Stomach Qi Stagnation:

- Abdominal fullness, distention, and pain
- Gas, bloating
- Vomiting, nausea, belching
- Loss of appetite, constipation, diarrhea

Liver Qi Stagnation:

- Headache
- Rib-side pain, stifling sensation in chest
- Depression, irritability
- Irregular menses, breast tenderness

Lung Qi Stagnation:

- Cough, wheezing, SOB

Herbs in this category tend to be acrid, warm, and drying. They may cause heat signs and damage yin. Herbs in this category may **relieve pain** by moving qi.

Herbs that Regulate Qi

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• acrid, aromatic, bitter
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• warm
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SP/ST• LV/GB
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulate qi (for qi stagnation or rebellious qi)
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are warm, acrid and drying. They may cause heat signs or damage yin• These herbs disperse qi; use caution in cases of qi deficiency

Herbs that Regulate Qi

- chén pí
- jú hóng
- qīng pí
- zhǐ shí
- zhǐ ké
- dà fù pí
- xiāng fù
- mù xiāng
- wū yào
- chén xiāng
- tán xiāng
- chuān liàn zǐ

chén pí

citri reticulatae pericarpium

Temp: warm

Taste: acrid, bitter, aromatic

Channels: LU, SP, ST

Dosage: 3-9 grams

陈
皮

1. regulates middle-jiao qi and strengthens the Spleen
 - esp. for nausea and vomiting
2. dries dampness and transforms phlegm
 - **LU:** for cough due to phlegm-damp
 - **SP/ST:** for damp obstructing middle-jiao
 - abdominal distention, loss of appetite, loose stools, thick, greasy tongue coat



In practice, Chen Pi's dosage is usually limited to 3-6 grams due to its unpleasant taste.

Chen Pi can also be used to prevent stagnation from certain tonifying herbs that are very sticky and cloying

jú hóng

citri reticulatae exocarpium rubrum

Temp: warm
Taste: acrid, bitter
Channels: LU, ST
Dosage: 3-6 grams

橘
红

1. regulates middle-jiao qi
2. dries dampness and transforms phlegm
 - for vomiting and belching, cough due to phlegm-damp



Ju Hong is the red, outer part of the tangerine peel.
It is very similar to Chen Pi, but Ju Hong is warmer and drier than Chen Pi, and better at transforming damp.

qīng pí

citri reticulatae veride pericarpium

Temp: warm
Taste: acrid, bitter
Channels: LV, GB, ST
Dosage: 3-9 grams

青
皮

1. strongly moves Liver qi (breaks the qi)
 - for pain/distention in chest, ribside, breast; or shan disorder
 - often too warm and too drying
2. resolves stagnation and clumps
 - for severe food stagnation
 - for masses and nodules due to qi and blood stagnation



Qing means green. Qing Pi is green peel. Green is the color of the Liver.

zhǐ shí

aurantii fructus immaturus

Temp: slightly cold
Taste: bitter, acrid
Channels: SP, ST, LI
Dosage: 3-9 grams

枳实

1. breaks qi and reduces accumulation
 - moves downward in direction; for constipation
 - for epigastric/abdominal pain, food accumulation
2. transforms phlegm
 - for chest and epigastric distention due to phlegm obstruction
3. raises low blood pressure
 - used in IV only



Use caution during pregnancy.

zhǐ ké

aurantii fructus

Temp: slightly cold
Taste: bitter, acrid
Channels: SP, ST, LI
Dosage: 3-9 grams

枳壳

1. regulates middle-jiao qi
 - milder
 - expands the chest
 - for cough, abdominal distention, constipation



Zhi Ke is similar to Zhi Shi, but it is much milder and safer to use.
Bensky still says use caution during pregnancy.

dà fù pí

arecae pericarpium

Temp: warm

Taste: acrid

Channels: SP, ST, LI, SI

Dosage: 4.5-9 grams

1. moves middle-jiao qi

- directs qi downward
- for gas and bloating, incomplete bowel movements

2. promotes urination

- esp. for superficial edema

Use caution during pregnancy.



大
腹
皮

xiāng fù

cyperi rhizoma

Temp: neutral (slightly cold)

Taste: acrid, slightly bitter, slightly sweet

Channels: LV, GB, SJ

Dosage: 6-12 grams

1. regulates Liver qi

- for pain in ribsides or abdomen

2. regulates menstruation and alleviates pain

- for irregular menses, painful menses, breast distention
- commonly used in OB/GYN conditions

As most herbs in this category are warm, and Liver qi stagnation tends to cause heat, Xiang Fu is special because it moves Liver qi and is slightly cold.

Note, even though it is used for menstruation problems and pain, Xiang Fu does **not** move blood.



香
附

mù xiāng

aucklandiae radix

木香

Temp: warm
Taste: acrid, bitter
Channels: SP, ST, LI, GB, SJ
Dosage: 3-9 grams

1. regulates middle-jiao qi and **stops pain**
 - for abdominal distention and pain
 - also for LV/GB qi stagnation
2. moves Large Intestine qi stagnation
 - for stagnation transforming into damp-heat
 - for diarrhea, dysentery, and tenesmus



Mu Xiang's is very warm and very drying.
Mu Xiang's is also used to prevent stagnation from tonifying herbs.

wū yào

linderæ radix

乌药

Temp: warm
Taste: acrid
Channels: UB, KI, LU, SP
Dosage: 3-9 grams

1. regulates qi
 - moves middle-jiao qi
 - moves Liver qi
 - stops pain
2. warms the interior and the channels
 - warms the Liver channel: hernia pain, shan disorder, painful menses
 - warms the UB: for urinary frequency or incontinence due to Kidney yang deficiency



chén xiāng

aquilariae lignum resinatum

Temp: warm

Taste: acrid, bitter, aromatic

Channels: SP, ST, KI

Dosage: 1-1.5 grams (add last five minutes)

沉香

1. regulates middle-jiao qi

- for stagnation due to **coldness**
- stops pain
- moves downward; for hiccup, belching, n/v

2. warms the Kidney

- for yang deficiency related respiratory problems
- for Kidney unable to grasp Lung qi

Chen Xiang can be used as a single herb without cooking. Swallow 1-1.5 grams as powder with warm water.

tán xiāng

santali alibi lignum

Temp: warm

Taste: acrid, aromatic

Channels: LU, SP, ST

Dosage: 2-5 grams

檀香

1. regulates qi and stops pain

- moves middle-jiao qi to stop abdominal pain
- opens chest to treat chest pain and chest bi

Tan Xiang is sandalwood.

Tan Xiang can be used as a single herb without cooking. Swallow 1-3 grams as powder with warm water.

chuān liàn zǐ

toosendan fructus

Temp: cold

Taste: bitter, slightly toxic

Channels: LV, GB, UB, SI

Dosage: 4.5-9 grams (crush first)

1. regulates Liver qi and stops pain
 - for Liver qi stagnation with heat
2. kills parasites
 - used internally for roundworm and tapeworm
 - used externally for fungal infections on scalp



川
楝
子

xiè bái

allii macrostemi bulbus

Temp: warm

Taste: acrid, bitter

Channels: LI, LU, ST

Dosage: 5-9 grams

1. unblocks qi and disperses phlegm
 - for chest bi due to cold phlegm
2. descends qi and reduces stagnation
 - for diarrhea or dysentery with tenesmus due do damp stagnation in the Large Intestine

薤
白

fó shǒu

citri sarcodactylis fructus

Temp: warm

Taste: acrid, bitter

Channels: LV, LU, ST, SP

Dosage: 3-9 grams

佛
手

1. regulates Liver qi

- for ribside pain, stifling sensation in chest

2. regulates middle-jiao qi

- for epigastric pain, poor appetite, belching, vomiting

3. transforms phlegm and stops cough

- for enduring cough with copious phlegm

Fo Shou is Buddha's hand.

méi guī huā

rosae rugosae flos

Temp: warm

Taste: sweet, slightly bitter

Channels: LV, SP

Dosage: 1.5-6 grams

玫
瑰
花

1. regulates Liver qi and middle-jiao qi

- harmonizes LV and SP/ST
- for stifling sensation in the chest, belching, ribside pain, and poor appetite due to Liver overacting on SP/ST

2. gently regulates qi and blood

- regulates menses
- for irregular menstruation, premenstrual breast tenderness, and painful menses due to blood stagnation

Mei Gui Hua is rosebud.

Summary

chen pi

citri reticulatae pericarpium

regulates middle-jiao qi

- dries dampness
- transforms phlegm

ju hong

citri reticulatae exocarpium rubrum

regulates middle-jiao qi

- dries dampness

qing pi

citri reticulatae viride pericarpium

regulates Liver qi

- food stagnation
- nodules and masses

zhi shi

aurantii fructus immaturus

regulates middle-jiao qi

- for constipation

- transforms phlegm

zhi ke

aurantii fructus

regulates middle-jiao qi

- expands chest

da fu pi

arecae pericarpium

regulates middle-jiao qi

- gas and bloating

- promotes urination to treat edema

xiang fu

cyperii rhizoma

regulates Liver qi

- OB/GYN, menstruation
- neutral or cool temp

mu xiang

aucklandiae radix

regulates middle-jiao qi

- stops pain

- transforms dampness

wu yao

linderæ radix

regulates middle-jiao & Liver qi

- warms channels (shan disorder, hernia pain)

chen xiang

aquilariae lignum resinatum

regulates middle-jiao qi

- for cold stagnation

- Kidney unable to grasp Lung qi

tan xiang

santalii albi lignum

regulates middle-jiao qi

- opens chest

chuan lian zi

toosendan fructus

regulates Liver qi

- cold in temperature

- kills parasites