




**Warm, Acrid Herbs that
Release the Exterior**

Warm, Acrid Herbs that Release the Exterior

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• acrid 
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• warm 
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LU 
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are warm, acrid, and dispersing• Use caution in patients with qi deficiency, yin deficiency, sweating, or with long term use
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotes sweating to release the exterior

má huáng

ephedra herba

Warm Acrid Herbs that Release the Exterior

má huáng

ephedra herba

Temp: warm

Taste: acrid, slightly bitter

Channels: LU, UB

Dosage: 2-9 grams

"hemp" ← 麻

"yellow" ← 黄

1. promotes sweating to release the exterior

- for Tai Yang excess syndrome with absence of sweating

2. diffuses Lung qi and stops cough 🗣️

- for coughing and wheezing due to wind-cold congesting the Lung qi

3. promotes urination to treat edema 🚰

- for acute edema (usually upper body) due to an exterior attack

4. treats bi syndrome



guì zhī

cinnamomi ramulus

Warm Acrid Herbs that Release the Exterior

guì zhī → cinnamon twig

cinnamomi ramulus

桂
枝

Temp: warm

Taste: acrid, sweet

Channels: LU, UB, HT

Dosage: 3-9 grams

1. releases the exterior and muscle layer

- harmonizes Ying and Wei; for Tai Yang deficiency syndrome with presence of sweating 🥵

2. warms and unblocks yang qi

- warms the middle-jiao → abdominal pain due to cold, watery diarrhea 🍌
- warms the chest → chest bi, chest pain, SOB, palpitations 💕
- warms the UB → edema, urine retention, can used externally as compress 🚰
- warms the channels and (indirectly) invigorates blood 🩸



Cool, Acrid Herbs that Release the Exterior

Cool, Acrid Herbs that Release the Exterior

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• acrid
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cool
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LU, LV
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use caution in patients with deficiency, sweating, or with long term use
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dispel wind-heat to release the exterior

bò hé

menthae haplocalycis herba

Cool Acrid Herbs that Release the Exterior

bò hé



mint leaf

note: this is Chinese field mint, which is NOT the same as peppermint


薄荷

menthae haplocalycis herba

Temp: cool

Taste: acrid, aromatic

Channels: LU, LV

Dosage: 3-6 grams (add last 5 minutes) 

1. disperses wind-heat

- brightens the eyes, benefits the throat, relieves headache

2. vents rashes

- for early-stage rashes and measles

3. moves Liver qi

- for chest oppression, rib-side distention, emotional instability, gynecological problems

4. expels turbid filth (harmonizes middle-jiao)

- focal distention, nausea, reflux due to warm pathogen (stems)



Herbs that Drain Fire

Herbs that Drain Fire

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bitter• sometimes sweet (moistening)
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cold
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LU, ST, HT, LV
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are cold and bitter; they may damage the Spleen
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear heat and drain fire
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs treat Qi level or Yangming channel heat, characterized by the “Four Bigs”

shí gāo

gypsum fibrosum

Herbs that Drain Fire

shí gāo  gypsum

gypsum fibrosum

Temp: very cold ❄️
Taste: sweet, acrid
Channels: LU, ST
Dosage: 15-60 grams

"stone" ← 石

"paste" ← 膏

1. clears heat and drains fire

- for qi-level or Yang Ming heat characterized by the "Four Bigs":
big fever (without chills), big sweat, big thirst, big pulse

2. clears excess heat from the Lung

- for cough with thick, yellow, sticky sputum

3. clears blazing Stomach fire

- for hunger, thirst, bad breath
- for headache, toothache, painful gums, mouth sores

Prepared Shi Gao (called Shu Shi Gao) can be applied topically to treat skin conditions such as eczema, burns, and sores.



Herbs that Cool the Blood

Herbs that Cool the Blood

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bitter and sweet• salty 🧂
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cold ❄️
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LV, HT 🍃 ❤️
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are cold and bitter; they may damage the Spleen ⚠️
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear heat from the Ying and Xue levels
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Because heat at the blood level can damage yin, some of these herbs are sweet and nourish fluids

shēng dì huáng

rehmanniae radix

Herbs that Cool the Blood

shēng dì huáng

rehmanniae radix

Temp: cold

Taste: bitter, sweet 🍭

Channels: HT, KI, LV

Dosage: 9-15 grams

1. clears heat and cools blood 🩸

- for ying (nutritive) or xue (blood) level heat
 - high fever, thirst, scarlet tongue, bleeding, etc.

2. nourishes yin and generates fluids 💧

- for thirst, dry mouth, constipation

“raw” ← 生

“earth” ← 地

“yellow” ← 黃



⚠️ Sheng Di Huang is very sticky and cloying and may cause middle-jiao upset, such as nausea, diarrhea, or abdominal pain. It is often combined with Chen Pi or Sha Ren to avoid these side effects.

**Herbs that
Clear Heat and Dry
Dampness**

Herbs that Clear Heat and Dry Dampness

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bitter
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cold ❄️
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ?? 🙄
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are cold and bitter; they may damage the Spleen
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear heat and dry dampness (dysentery, urination problems, jaundice, skin problems)
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are often combined with Herbs that Drain Fire or Herbs that Resolve Toxicity

huáng qín

scutellariae radix

Herbs that Clear Heat and Dry Dampness

huáng qín

scutellariae radix

黄芩

Temp: cold

Taste: bitter

Channels: LU, ST, GB, LI

Dosage: 3-9 grams

1. clears heat and dries dampness

- for damp-heat in the Stomach, Large Intestine (diarrhea) 🍌
- for damp-heat in the lower jiao (urination problems) 🚽

2. clears heat and resolves toxicity

- clears Lung heat → fever, thirst, irritability, cough with thick yellow sputum 🫁
- clears Liver heat → headache, irritability, red eyes, bitter taste 🍃
- for hot sores and boils (also used topically)

also for Shaoyang disorder
(combine with Chai Hu)

3. cools blood to stop bleeding 🩸

4. calms restless fetus 🧒 threatened miscarriage due to heat



**Herbs that
Clear Heat and
Resolve Toxicity**

Herbs that Clear Heat and Resolve Toxicity

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bitter
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cold
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ??
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are cold and bitter; they may damage the Spleen
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear heat toxicity (skin infections with pus, dysentery, viral infections)
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some of these herbs also have anti-cancer properties

jīn yín huā

loniceræ flos

Herbs that Clear Heat and Resolve Toxicity

jīn yín huā honeysuckle

loniceræ flos

Temp: cold

Taste: sweet

Channels: LI, LU, ST

Dosage: 6-20 grams

1. clears heat toxicity

- for hot, painful sores and swellings on the throat, breast, eyes
- for large intestine abscess, diarrhea with blood or pus
- can be used internally or externally to treat skin infection

2. expels wind-heat invasion

3. clears damp-heat from lower-jiao

- for lin syndrome, diarrhea

4. use charred to stop bleeding

- for bloody dysentery

"gold" ← 金

"silver" ← 银

"flower" ← 花



Herbs that Clear Heat from Deficiency

Herbs that Clear Heat from Deficiency

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bitter
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cold ❄️
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LV, KI
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are cool in temperature; use caution with weak middle-jiao
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear heat due to Liver and Kidney yin deficiency
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs also treat aftermath of febrile disease where heat has damaged the yin

qīng hāo

artemisiae annuae herba

Herbs that Clear Heat from Deficiency


qīng hāo

artemisiae annuae herba

Temp: cold

Taste: bitter, acrid (aromatic)


Channels: KI, LV, GB

Dosage: 6-12 grams (add at end of cooking) 

"blue-green" ← 青

"artemisia" ← 蒿

1. clears deficiency heat

- esp. for latent heat, lingering fever after warm disease, fever due to blood deficiency, or fever worse at night and better in the morning
- for steaming bone disorder 

2. clears summerheat

- for fever, headache, thirst

3. cools blood and stops bleeding

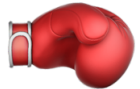
- for rashes or nosebleed due to heat in the blood

4. treats malaria

- for alternating chills and fever with malaria; use fresh juice



Downward-Draining Herbs:
Purgatives



Purgatives

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bitter
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cold
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LI
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are strong, bitter, and have a downward nature; use caution in cases of deficiency and pregnancy
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purge the Large Intestine and clear heat

dà huáng

rhei radix et rhizoma

Purgatives

dà huáng ^{↪ rhubarb root}

rhei radix et rhizoma

Temp: cold

Taste: bitter

Channels: HT, LI, LV, ST

Dosage: 3-15 grams (for strong purgative effect, cook only 3-5 min.) 🕒

“big” ← 大

“yellow” ← 黄

1. purges Large Intestine to relieve constipation 🍌

- for Yang Ming Bowel disease (fever, constipation, abdominal pain)

2. clears heat and drains fire 🔥

- for heat in the intestines and upper body (fever, sore throat, painful eyes)
- cools blood to stop bleeding (hemorrhoids, blood in stool); use charred

3. invigorates blood 🩸

- for fixed, sharp pain; abdominal masses; amenorrhea due to stagnation
- for injury and trauma (can be used externally)

4. drains damp-heat

- for jaundice and lin syndrome

Contraindicated during pregnancy and breastfeeding. May turn the sweat yellow.



Downward-Draining Herbs:
Moist Laxatives



Moist Laxatives

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sweet
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• neutral
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LI
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• none
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moistens the Large Intestine to gently relieve constipation

huǒ má rén

cannabis semen

Moist Laxatives

huǒ má rén ^{↪ hemp seed}

cannabis semen

Temp: neutral

Taste: sweet

Channels: LI, SP, ST

Dosage: 9-15 grams (crush before decocting) 

"fire" ← 火

"hemp" ← 麻

"seed" ← 仁

1. moistens Large Intestine to relieve constipation

- for dry constipation due to yin or blood deficiency 🦌
- for constipation after febrile disease, in the elderly, or postpartum 🧓 🧑

2. nourishes yin

3. clears heat and heals sores

- used internally or externally for mouth sores due to Stomach heat
- mild; used as an auxiliary herb


Overuse of Huo Ma Ren can cause upset stomach or mild shen problems (agitation, restlessness, confusion).



Downward-Draining Herbs:
Harsh Expellants



Harsh Expellants

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• toxic 
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cold (or hot)
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LI, KI, LU
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toxic; use caution in pregnancy or cases of deficiency
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purge water accumulation

gān suì

kansui radix

Harsh Expellants


gān suì

kansui radix

Temp: cold

Taste: bitter, sweet, toxic 

Channels: KI, LU, LI

Dosage: 0.5-1.5 grams 

“sweet” ← 甘

“process” ← 遂

1. induces watery diarrhea to treat edema

- for severe accumulation of fluid in the chest and abdomen
- for general edema, facial edema, abdominal distention



2. drives out phlegm

- for severe phlegm accumulation, e.g. seizures due to wind-phlegm, shen problems due to phlegm

3. used topically to reduce swelling

- for skin problems due to damp-heat



“This is a violent, cathartic herb that causes one to pass water anally.” -Bensky  

Contraindicated during pregnancy.

Herbs that Drain Dampness

Herbs that Drain Dampness

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bland• bitter
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• neutral or 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)

fú líng

poria

Herbs that Drain Dampness

fú líng

poria

Temp: neutral

Taste: sweet, bland

Channels: HT, SP, KI, LU

Dosage: 9-15 grams

茯
苓

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

- for palpitations, insomnia, forgetfulness



Herbs that Dispel Wind-Dampness

Herbs that Dispel Wind-Dampness

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• acrid, bitter• sweet (if tonifying)
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• warm
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LV, KI
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most of these herbs are warm, acrid and aromatic. They can easily cause dryness.
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treats bi syndrome

dú huó

angelicae pubescentis radix

Herbs that Dispel Wind-Dampness

dú huó

angelicae pubescentis radix

Temp: warm

Taste: bitter, acrid

Channels: KI, UB

Dosage: 3-9 grams

"independent" ←

独

"existence" ←

活

1. dispels wind-damp to treat bi syndrome

- esp. for **lower body** (lower back and legs) 🦵
- can be very drying in nature 🌵

2. releases the exterior

- for exterior wind-cold attack with dampness 💧

3. treats shao-yin headache and toothache 🤔

splitting headache deep in the brain and stretching to teeth



Qiang Huo treats bi in the upper body; Du Huo treats bi in the lower body.

Herbs that Cool and Transform Phlegm-Heat

Herbs that Cool and Transform Phlegm-Heat

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bitter
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cold
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LU, SP
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resolve phlegm-heat
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs also treat scrofula, goiter, and convulsions caused by phlegm-heat• Some of these herbs are sweet because they moisten the Lung and make phlegm thinner and easier to expectorate• Since phlegm-heat often damages the yin fluids, these herbs are commonly combined with herbs that tonify yin

guā lóu

tricosanthis fructus

Herbs that Cool and Transform Phlegm-Heat

guā lóu

tricosanthis fructus

瓜
蒌

Temp: cold

Taste: sweet 🍬

Channels: LI, LU, ST

Dosage: 9-21 grams

1. clears Lung heat to transform phlegm 🫁

- makes phlegm thinner and easier to expectorate
- Gua Lou Pi is best for this

2. opens the chest to treat chest bi

- for stifling sensation, chest pain, chest pressure
- Quan Gua Lou is best for this

3. moistens Large Intestine to relieve constipation 🍌

- Gua Lou Ren is best for this



Warm Herbs that Transform Cold-Phlegm

Warm Herbs that Transform Cold-Phlegm

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• acrid, toxic 🌶️ ☠️
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• warm
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LU, SP
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some herbs are toxic. They must be prepared properly.
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transforms cold-phlegm and phlegm-dampness.

zhì bàn xià

pinelliae rhizoma preparatum

Warm Herbs that Transform Cold-Phlegm

zhì bàn xià

pinelliae rhizoma preparatum

Temp: warm

Taste: acrid, toxic



Channels: LU, SP, ST

Dosage: 3-9 grams

1. dries dampness and transforms phlegm

2. resolves phlegm nodules

- for focal distention in the chest, goiter, scrofula, plum pi qi

3. directs rebellious Stomach qi downward

- for nausea, vomiting, morning sickness 🤢 🤮 🤰

- Zhi Ban Xia is prepared by stir-frying it with ginger juice to reduce its toxicity. It is used so commonly in this form that if you say “Ban Xia” people will assume you mean “Zhi Ban Xia”.
- The antidote for poisoning from unprepared Ban Xia is Sheng Jiang, Fang Feng, and Gan Cao.
- Zhi Ban Xia is so good at transforming phlegm and stopping vomiting that it is also used for heat conditions by combining it with cold herbs.

“prepared” ←

制

“half” ←

半


“summer” ←

夏



Herbs that Relieve Coughing and Wheezing

Herbs that Relieve Coughing and Wheezing

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• acrid/bitter/sweet
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• warm or cold
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LU 
Main Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stop coughing and wheezing
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs treat branch symptoms only. Combine with other herbs to treat the root.

xìng rén


armenicae semen

Herbs that Relieve Coughing and Wheezing

xìng rén apricot seed

armenicae semen

Temp: slightly warm

Taste: bitter, slightly toxic 

Channels: LU, LI

Dosage: 3-9 grams

杏
仁

1. stops cough and wheezing

2. moistens Large Intestine to gently relieve constipation 

- Due to its cyanogenic glycoside content, this herb is toxic.
- 10-20 seeds is toxic for children; 40-60 seeds for adults. 50-120 seeds can cause death.
- Peeled seeds are less toxic than unpeeled seeds. Cooked seeds are less toxic than raw seeds.
- That being said, no toxic side effects are expected within the normal dosage range. Apricot kernels are used widely in food and candy in China.



Aromatic Herbs that Transform Dampness

Aromatic Herbs that Transform Dampness

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• acrid, aromatic• bitter (sometimes)
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• warm
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SP/ST
Main Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awaken the Spleen to transform dampness
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are warm, acrid and drying. They may exhaust qi or dry up yin.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add last five minutes (theoretically)

hòu pò

magnolia officinalis cortex

Aromatic Herbs that Transform Dampness

hòu pò ↪ magnolia bark

magnolia officinalis cortex

Temp: warm

Taste: bitter, acrid

Channels: LI, LU, SP, ST

Dosage: 3-9 grams

1. moves qi and dries dampness

2. moves middle-jiao qi ↓

- for qi stagnation or food stagnation
- moves qi downward

3. transforms phlegm and stops cough

- for cough and wheezing due to phlegm obstructing the Lung

Due to its downward nature, use caution during pregnancy.

厚朴



Herbs that Relieve Food Stagnation

Herbs that Relieve Food Stagnation

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sweet
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• neutral, warm
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SP/ST
Main Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce/dissolve/digest food stagnation• Guide out accumulation
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• none
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often combined with herbs that regulate middle-jiao qi

shān zhā

crataegi fructus

Herbs that Relieve Food Stagnation

shān zhā  hawthorn berry

crataegi fructus

Temp: slightly warm

Taste: sour, sweet

Channels: LV, SP, ST

Dosage: 9-12 grams

山
楂

1. relieves food stagnation

- esp for food stagnation caused by meats and fatty foods 

2. invigorates blood

- for postpartum abdominal pain and clumping due to blood stagnation

3. stops diarrhea

4. lowers high blood pressure and cholesterol



Shan Zha is hawthorn berry.

To enhance Shan Zha's ability to relieve food stagnation, Shan Zha should be stir-fried.

Large doses are contraindicated during pregnancy, as this can lead to fetal death.

Herbs that Regulate the Qi

Herbs that Regulate the 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)
Other	<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

chén pí

citri reticulatae pericarpium

Herbs that Regulate the Qi

chén pí → aged tangerine peel

citri reticulatae pericarpium

Temp: warm

Taste: acrid, bitter, aromatic

Channels: LU, SP, ST

Dosage: 3-9 grams

“aged” ← 陈

“peel” ← 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

Herbs that Stop Bleeding

Herbs that Stop Bleeding

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acrid (if they invigorate)• Bitter (if they clear heat)• Some of these herbs are astringent as well
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ???
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LV
Main Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invigorate blood to stop bleeding• Clear heat and cool blood to stop bleeding• Induce astringency to stop bleeding• Warm the channels to stop bleeding
Cautions & Contraindications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Herbs that invigorate blood should be used with caution during pregnancy• Herbs that clear heat should not be used with cold patternsInduce astringency to stop bleeding• Warm the channels to stop bleeding
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs should be combined with other herbs that treat the underlying conditions (e.g. Herbs that Invigorate Blood, Herbs that Clear Heat, etc.)• Many herbs can be used in their charred form (tan)

sān qī

notoginseng radix

Herbs that Stop Bleeding

sān qī

notoginseng radix

Temp: warm

Taste: sweet, slightly bitter

Channels: LV, ST

Dosage: 3-9 grams (crush before decocting)

"three" ←



"seven" ←



1. invigorates blood to stop bleeding 🏃

- for external or internal bleeding (nosebleed, vomiting blood, blood in urine or stool)

2. invigorates blood to stop pain

- esp. for injury and trauma 🥊



Can be taken as a single herb: crush into powder and swallow with alcohol.

Use caution during pregnancy. ⚠️ 🤰

Herbs that Invigorate the Blood

Herbs that Invigorate the Blood

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• acrid• bitter
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• warm
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LV
Main Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invigorate blood; remove blood stasis
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use caution during pregnancy.• Use caution with heavy menses.

chuān xiōng

chuanxiong rhizoma

Herbs that Invigorate the Blood

chuān xiōng

chuanxiong rhizoma

川
芎

Temp: warm

Taste: acrid

Channels: LV, GB, PC

Dosage: 3-9 grams

1. invigorates blood and moves qi

- for any type of blood stasis pattern
 - dysmenorrhea, amenorrhea, difficult labor, retained lochia
 - pain in chest, ribside, abdomen; chest bi
 - painful swellings and bruises from injury/trauma
- stops pain

2. expels wind and treats headache 🤕

- for any type of headache due to any cause (depending on combination)



Use caution during pregnancy. ⚠️ 🙇

Herbs that Warm the Interior and Expel Cold

Herbs that Warm the Interior and Expel Cold

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• acrid
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• warm to hot
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• depends on what area it's warming• KI, SP/ST, HT, LU, LV
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are warm, acrid, and drying• May cause heat signs• Use caution with yin/blood deficiency
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treats bi syndrome
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often combined with Herbs that Tonify Yang

zhì fù zǐ

aconiti radix lateralis preparata

Herbs that Warm the Interior and Expel Cold

zhì fù zǐ ^{aconite}

aconiti radix lateralis preparata

Temp: hot

Taste: acrid, toxic 🦠

Channels: HT, KI, SP

Dosage: 3-15 grams (boil 30-60 minutes longer) ☹️

1. warms the interior

- warms Kidney Yang
- warms Spleen Yang
- warms Heart Yang

2. rescues devastated Yang 🤪

- for Yang collapse (two syndrome)

3. warms the channels

- for pain and bi syndrome where cold is predominant
- for yin-type flat abscesses

“prepared” ← 制

“appendage” ← 附子



Symptoms of Fu Zi poisoning include numbness, abdominal pain, nausea, palpitation.

To treat Fu Zi poisoning, use Gan Jiang, Gan Cao, or Lu Dou.

Contraindicated during pregnancy. 🚫👶

Herbs that Tonify the Qi

Herbs that Tonify the Qi

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sweet
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• warm
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LU, SP
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are sweet and rich• Excessive or chronic use may cause fullness in chest or heat signs
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tonify qi of the Spleen and Lung
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Combine with herbs that move or regulate qi to prevent stagnation (e.g. chen pi, mu xiang, sha ren)

rén shēn

ginseng radix

Herbs that Tonify the Qi

rén shēn ginseng

ginseng radix

Temp: slightly warm

Taste: sweet, slightly bitter

Channels: LU, SP

Dosage: 3-9 grams (often cooked separately in double boiler) 

"man" ← 

"root" ← 

1. tonifies qi

- tonifies Spleen qi → lethargy, poor appetite, chronic diarrhea 🥱🤢💩
- tonifies Lung qi → wheezing, SOB, labored breathing on exertion
- tonifies Heart qi → palpitations, anxiety, insomnia, forgetfulness 💓
- tonifies original qi; for qi collapse 😓

2. generates fluids and alleviates thirst

- for wasting and thirsting disorder
- for febrile diseases where both the qi and fluids have been damaged



Herbs that Tonify the Blood

Herbs that Tonify the Blood

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• acrid
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• warm
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LV, SP, HT
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are sweet and cloying; overuse can cause digestive problems
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tonify blood and nourish yin
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Combine with herbs that move or regulate qi to prevent stagnation

shú dì huáng

rehmanniae radix preparata

Herbs that Tonify the Blood

shú dì huáng

rehmanniae radix preparata

Temp: slightly warm

Taste: sweet

Channels: HT, KI, LV

Dosage: 9-30 grams

1. **tonifies blood** 🩸 → pale face, dizziness, palpitations, insomnia, irregular menses

2. **tonifies Liver and Kidney yin** → weak low back and legs, tidal fever, steaming bones, night sweats, nocturnal emission, wasting-thirst

3. **tonifies Kidney essence**

- for delayed development, premature aging, etc. 🧘
greying of hair, diminished mental acuity, memory loss, impotence

“prepared” ← 熟

“earth” ← 地

“yellow” ← 黄

Shu Di Huang is prepared by soaking it in alcohol and then steaming it.

It is very sticky and cloying, and may cause digestive problems. If this occurs, it can be combined with herbs like Chen Pi, Mu Xiang, or Sha Ren.



Herbs that Tonify the Yang

Herbs that Tonify the Yang

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sweet
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• warm
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• KI, SP, HT
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are warm and acrid; they may cause heat signs if used longterm
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tonify Kidney, Spleen, Heart yang (mostly Kidney)
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often combined with <i>Herbs that Warm the Interior</i>

lù róng

cervi cornu pantotrichum

Herbs that Tonify the Yang

lù róng → deer velvet 

cervi cornu pantotrichum

Temp: warm

Taste: sweet, salty

Channels: KI, LV

Dosage: 1-2 grams (pill or powder)

“deer” ← 鹿

“sprout/bud” ← 茸

1. tonifies Kidney yang

- fatigue, cold extremities, weak low back and knees, copious urination, impotence
- stabilizes Ren and Chong; for uterine bleeding, vaginal discharge, infertility with cold womb 🩸

2. tonifies Kidney essence → “tonifies Du Mai”

- strengthens tendon and bone 💪🦴
 - ▶ for bi syndrome, wei (atrophy) syndrome, delayed development in children
- heals long-standing sores and wounds

Lu Rong is best taken in herbal wine, or swallowed as a pill or powder with decoction.

Overtaking Lu Rong can lead to heat signs, such as palpitations, headache, bloodshot eyes, and nosebleed.



Herbs that Tonify the Yin

Herbs that Tonify the Yin

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sweet
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cold
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LU, ST, LV, KI
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• tonify yin, moisten dryness
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are cold, sweet, sticky, and cloying. They can easily obstruct the Spleen and Stomach

mài mén dōng

ophiopogonis radix

Herbs that Tonify the Yin

mài mén dōng

ophiopogonis radix

Temp: slightly cold

Taste: sweet, slightly bitter

Channels: HT, LU, ST

Dosage: 6-15 grams

- 1. tonifies Lung yin** 🫁
 - for dry cough, cough with thick phlegm, or coughing up blood
- 2. tonifies Stomach yin** 🍷
 - for dry mouth and dry tongue 🌱
- 3. clears Heart heat** ❤️
 - for irritability and fever that worsens at night
- 4. moistens Large Intestine** 🍌
 - for constipation due to dryness

“wheat” ← 麦

“gate” ← 门

“winter” ← 冬



Herbs that Stabilize and Bind

Herbs that Stabilize and Bind

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sour/astringent
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• warm or neutral
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LU, LI, KI
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Induce astringency to stop leakage
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are used to treat leakage due to deficiency.• <i>Avoid detaining evil:</i> if a pathogen is still present, astringent herbs can trap the pathogen in. Expel the evil first before giving astringent herbs.• These herb treat the branch symptoms. They should be combined with tonifying herbs to treat the root.

wǔ wèi zǐ

schisandrae fructus

Herbs that Stabilize and Bind

wǔ wèi zǐ

schisandrae fructus

Temp: warm

Taste: sweet, sour

Channels: KI, HT, LU

Dosage: 3-6 grams


1. constrains Lung qi leakage

- for coughing and wheezing due to deficiency

2. stops sweating and generates fluids

- for spontaneous sweating, night sweats (esp. with thirst or dry throat)

3. stops Kidney leakage

- for leakage of essence: nocturnal emission, spermatorrhea, vaginal discharge, frequent urination
- for early morning diarrhea due to KI/SP yang deficiency 

4. calms shen

- holds Heart qi together; prevents qi from scattering
- for irritability, insomnia, palpitations, dream-disturbed sleep

"five" ← 五

"flavor" ← 味

"seed" ← 子



**Substances that
Anchor, Settle, and
Calm the Spirit**

Substances that Anchor, Settle, and Calm the Spirit

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sweet
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• neutral or cool
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HT, LV
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anchor and calm the spirit
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are minerals, which are difficult to digest. They may injure Stomach qi.• Not for longterm use.
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These are heavy substances that weigh down Heart to calm shen. They can also weigh down ascendant Liver yang or rebellious Lung qi.• These substances mainly treat branch symptoms of shen disturbance. Combine with other herbs that treat the root.

lóng gǔ

fossilia ossis mastodi

Substances that Anchor, Settle, and Calm the Spirit


lóng gǔ  dragon bone 

fossilia ossis mastodi

Temp: neutral

Taste: sweet, astringent

Channels: HT, LV, KI

Dosage: 15-30 grams (boil 30-60 minutes longer) 

1. anchors and settles the spirit 

- for restlessness, insomnia, palpitations, anxiety, mania-withdrawal

2. anchors Liver yang rising 

- for irritability, restlessness, dizziness, blurred vision, irascibility (bad temper) due to yin deficiency with yang rising

3. induces astringency to stop leakage 

- for seminal emission, vaginal discharge, frequent urination, flooding and spotting, spontaneous sweating, night sweating
- use calcined Long Gu (called *Duan Long Gu*)

4. closes sores and generates flesh

- for chronic, non-healing sores
- use calcined *Duan Long Gu* and apply topically as powder

“dragon” ← 龙

“bone” ← 骨



Herbs that Nourish the Heart and Calm the Spirit

Herbs that Nourish the Heart and Calm the Spirit

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sweet
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• neutral
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HT, SP, LV
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nourish the Heart and calm the Shen
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These herbs are mild with few side effects

suān zǎo rén

ziziphi spinosae semen

Herbs that Nourish the Heart and Calm the Spirit


suān zǎo rén

ziziphi spinosae semen

Temp: neutral

Taste: sweet, sour

Channels: GB, HT, LV, SP

Dosage: 9-15 grams (crush before decocting) 

1. nourishes the Heart to calm shen

- for irritability, insomnia, palpitation, and anxiety due to yin-blood deficiency of the HT and LV

2. induces astringency to stop sweating

- for spontaneous sweating and night sweats

"sour" ← 酸

"date" ← 枣

"seed" ← 仁

The raw form is slightly cool and better for yin-deficiency insomnia with heat.

The dry-fried form (Chao Suan Zao Ren) is slightly warm in temperature.

For insomnia, Suan Zao Ren can be taken as a single herb swallowed as powder (1.5-3g)



Aromatic Substances that Open the Orifices

Aromatic Substances that Open the Orifices

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• acrid, aromatic
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• warm
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HT, SP
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open the orifices and awaken the spirit
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not use for abandonment or desertion patterns• These are “scattering” herbs that can drain qi. Only use for short periods of time.
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Almost always taken in pill or powder form• Combine with other herbs

shí chāng pú

acori tatarinowii rhizoma

Aromatic Substances that Open the Orifices

shí chāng pú

acori tatarinowii rhizoma

Temp: warm

Taste: acrid, bitter, aromatic

Channels: HT, ST

Dosage: 3-9 grams

1. opens the orifices and quiets the spirit

- for phlegm-dampness blocking the sensory orifices
- for deafness, tinnitus, forgetfulness, dulled senses, seizures and stupor

2. transforms dampness and harmonizes the Stomach

- for fullness in chest and epigastrium, abdominal distention, dysentery with inability to eat

石
菖
蒲



Also used internally or topically for hoarse voice, bi syndromes, abscesses, scabies and lichen, and injury/trauma. Avoid longterm use.

**Substances that
Extinguish Wind Stop
Tremors**

Substances that Extinguish Wind and Stop Tremors

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• acrid, sweet, salty
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• slightly cold
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LV
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calm Liver and extinguish internal wind
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many of these substances are cold; use caution with Spleen deficiency
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Combine with other herbs that clear heat, tonify yin, or tonify blood

gōu téng

uncariae ramulus cum uncis

Substances that Extinguish Wind and Stop Tremors


gōu téng  cat's claw

uncariae ramulus cum uncis

Temp: slightly cold

Taste: sweet

Channels: PC, LV

Dosage: 6-15 grams (do not boil longer than 20 minutes) 

1. extinguishes wind and stops spasm 

- for tremor, convulsion, seizure, child fright wind

2. clears Liver heat and subdues Liver yang rising 

- for headache, irritability, red eyes, dizziness
- also for hypertension with this pattern

3. releases the exterior

- for wind-heat with headache and red eyes
- for incomplete expression of rashes

"hook" ← 钩

"vine" ← 藤



Herbs that Expel Parasites

Herbs that Expel Parasites

Taste:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bitter, sweet
Temperature:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ?
Channels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ST, SP
Main Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expel intestinal parasites
Cautions & Contraindications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use caution during pregnancy
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Usually taken on empty stomach

bīng láng

arecae semen

Herbs that Expel Parasites

bīng láng ^{betel nut}

arecae semen

Temp: warm

Taste: acrid, bitter

Channels: LI, ST

Dosage: 6-15 grams

1. kills parasites 🐛

- best for tapeworm
- also for fasciolopsis, pinworm, roundworm, blood fluke

2. moves qi and disperses accumulation

- for food accumulation and qi stagnation with abdominal distention, constipation, or diarrhea with tenesmus

3. moves qi and promotes urination

- for edema and leg qi with swelling and pain

Also used for malarial disorders.

檳榔

