

The ancient Chinese turned to roots, bark, leaves, flowers, minerals and even animal parts in an attempt to cure disease. Chinese herbal medicine is a form of treatment that evolved from over two thousand years of experience. The majority of herbs used are of plant origin.



chinese herbal medicine

how does it work?

Each herb is thought to have various properties such as cooling, dispersing stagnated *Qi*, tonifying etc. A combination of herbs, tailored to the individual situation, is used to treat imbalances in the body. For example, if *Qi* is thought to be low, herbs to tonify *Qi* will be chosen with other herbs added to balance the formula.

Modern research has shown that Chinese herbs have active compounds that have physiological effects. For example, the herb Dang gui, which is commonly used in gynaecology, contains compounds that stimulate the uterus, dilate blood vessels, and inhibit blood clotting.

can chinese herbal medicine work for me?

Chinese herbal medicine may be useful as a complementary therapy in the treatment of:

- **Respiratory** conditions such as asthma, allergies, sinusitis, sore throat
- **Gynaecological** conditions such as premenstrual syndrome, infertility, problems after childbirth, thrush
- **Gastrointestinal** conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome
- **Men's health** problems such as infertility, enlarged prostate
- other **miscellaneous** problems such as insomnia, ringing in the ears, chronic pain, rheumatoid arthritis

As interest in research into Chinese herbs grows, there will be stronger evidence for the efficacy of Chinese herbal medicine in the treatment of other diseases.

Parker MJ. Traditional Chinese herbal medicine. In: Novey DW, ed. *Clinician's Complete Reference to Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. St. Louis, Mo: Mosby; 2000:203-218.

how do I take chinese herbs?

Herbs may be taken in various forms:

- raw herbs are boiled into a decoction
- raw herbs are ground into powders, which can then be made into pills
- raw herbs are distilled into granules

At the Five Seasons Clinic, herbs are dispensed as high quality granules, which are convenient and effective.

In general, one teaspoon of granules is taken twice a day.

You will find that your individual herb prescription may change from week to week, according to your clinical response.

will the herbs interact with my medications?

All herbs have the potential to interact with medications.

It is important that you bring a list of all your medications and the current doses so that your practitioner can prescribe the safest possible combination. Each prescription comes with a list of the botanical names of the herbs used, for you and your GP's information.

are there any side effects from the herbs?

Chinese herbs are generally gentle in action. In fact, many herbs are taken as everyday foods in Chinese culture.

However, there is the potential for dangerous interactions, should you be on prescribed medications. Like any medication, herbs can have a variety of side effects, and it is beyond the scope of this brochure to mention them all. Your practitioner will discuss with you the possible side effects of your herbal formula.

Some herbs are known to have serious adverse effects, such as causing kidney cancer. These herbs have been withdrawn from the market by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

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