

Building the Blood with TCM Herbs

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In TCM, we associate the following with the blood:

The Spleen
The Liver
The Heart



The Spleen

Functions:

Transforms and transports

Controls Blood

Controls Muscles and Four Limbs

Opens into the Mouth and manifests in Lips

Controls “Raising Qi”

Houses Thought

The Liver

Functions:

Stores the Blood

Ensures the smooth flow of Qi

Controls the Sinews

Manifests in the Nails

Opens into Eyes

Houses Ethereal Soul (Hun)

The Heart

Functions:

Governs Blood

Controls Blood Vessels

Manifests in the Complexion

Houses the Mind

Opens into the Tongue

Controls Sweat

Origin of Blood

Spleen > Food Qi, goes up to Lungs > Heart >

Blood is produced.

To nourish Blood, the Spleen and Kidneys
needs to be tonified.

Blood and Qi

Inextricably linked.

Blood is a form of Qi, a very dense and material form.

Qi infuses life into Blood. Without Qi, Blood would be an inert fluid.

Qi:

Transforms ~ Food

Transports ~ Food

Holds ~ Blood, urine, sweat

Raises ~ Qi

Protects ~ Body

Warms ~ Body

Qi is Yang in Nature.

Blood:

Nourishes the body

Moistens tissues

Provides Material Foundation for the Mind

Blood is Yin in Nature.

The color red is the color of the heart and blood
Red herbs and foods often tonify blood, like red wine, lycii berries (Gou Qi Zi), pomegranates, grapes, beets.

Conditions affecting Blood:

Deficiency of Blood

Stasis of Blood

Heat in the Blood

Loss of Blood

Yang

Bright

Warm

Masculine

Expansive

The side of the mountain facing the sun.

Yin

Feminine

Dark

Cool

Expansive

The side of the mountain facing the moon

Manifestations for Blood Tonics:

Pale face and lips, dizziness, vertigo, diminished vision, lethargy, palpitations, dry skin, menstrual irregularities, pale tongue, fine pulse.

Most strengthen body and improve nutrition which increases number of circulating red blood cells

Blood Tonics

Blood tonifying herbs are best used in combination with herbs that tonify yin and qi.

They can be cloying in nature. Overuse can cause indigestion so best used with herbs to strengthen the ST.

Blood Deficiency

Relates to Spleen Qi deficiency

Affects Liver and Heart

Longstanding leads to dryness

Pale skin and lips, dizziness, poor memory, numbness, blurred vision, insomnia, pale and dry tongue, choppy/fine pulse

Common Disease / Blood Deficiency:

Anemia

Postpartum women

Elderly

Women with unregulated menses

Recovering from prolonged illness

Psychosomatic disorders

Heart failure, chronic hepatitis

Herbs for Blood Deficiency:

Shu Di Huang (Cooked Rehmannia)

“Cooked Yellow Earth” *Rehmannia Glutinosa*

Sweet, Slightly Warm

Heart, Liver, Kidney

~Tonifies Blood, Nourishes Yin, Tonifies
Essence

Shu Di Huang



Blood Tonics, continued

Shu Di Huang is often combined with:

Dang Gui, Bai Shao, E Jiao, Shan Yao, Sha
Ren

Blood Tonics

He Shou Wu (Fleeceflower, Polygonum)

“Black-Haired Mr. He” *Polygonum Multiflorum*

Bitter, Sweet, Astringent, Slightly Warm.

Liver, Kidney

~Tonifies Liver and Kidneys, Nourishes Blood,
Augments Essence, Stops leakage, Relieves
Fire Toxicity, Moistens Intestines and Frees

He Shou Wu



Blood Tonics, continued.

Bowels, Expels Wind from Skin.

Combines with: Gou Qi Zi, Lian Qiao, Jing Jie,
Ren Shen, Dang Gui

Blood Tonics

Dang Gui “State of Return”

Angelica Sinensis

Acrid, Bitter, Warm

Heart, Liver, Spleen

Tonifies Blood, Regulates Menses,
Harmonizes, Disperses Cold, Moistens
Intestines

Dang Gui



Blood Tonics continued

Dang Gui

Unblocks Bowels, Reduces Swelling

Combines with: Huang Qi, Bai Shao, Hong Hua

Blood Tonics

Bai Shao “White Peony”

Bitter, sour, Cool

Liver, Spleen

Nourishes Blood and Regulates the Menses,
Calms Liver Yang and Alleviates Pain,
Preserves Yin and Adjusts Nutritive Levels

Blood Tonics continued

Bai Shao Combines with:

Dang Gui, Shu Di Huang, Gan Cao

Bai Shao



Best TCM Formulas for Blood Def:

Si Wu Tang (Four Substance Decoction)

Dang Gui Shao Yao San (Tangkuei Powder)

Si Wu Tang

Ingredients: Shu Di Huang, Bai Shao, Dang Gui, Chuan Xiong.

Indications: Dizziness, blurred vision, pale skin and nails, irregular menses with little flow or amenorrhea, lower abdominal pain, pale tongue, thin wiry/choppy pulse.

Si Wu Tang

Also used for menorrhagia, hard, abdominal masses with recurrent pain.

Primarily Liver Blood Deficiency. LV Blood cannot rise and supply nourishment to head. LV's ability to supply luster to skin, eyes, nails=impaired.

Si Wu Tang

LV Blood ensures healthy menstrual flow, when impaired=flow is scanty. When blood is def, stasis can occur. This manifests as pain.

HT is also dependent on LV Blood, when def, palpitations

Si Wu Tang

Shu Di Huang strongly affects the KI and LV which nourishes the “yin” of the blood. Very effective for treating problems with menstruation, conception, and birth. To a lesser effect, *Bai Shao* tonifies the blood and preserves the yin. These herbs are the blood of the blood.

Si Wu Tang

The following herbs treat problems related to the “qi of the blood” or the yang of the blood. *Dang Gui* moistens the intestines and regulates the relationship between LV and KI. *Chuan Xiong* invigorates the blood and promotes the movement of qi. Addresses constraint and pain (LV). The combo of two engenders blood production.

Si Wu Tang

Basic formula for tonifying blood and regulating menses.

Dang Gui Shao Yao San

Ingredients: Dang Gui, Shao Yao, Fu Ling, Bai Zhu, Ze Xie, Chuan Xiong

Actions: Nourishes LV Blood, Spreads LV Qi, Strengthens SP, Resolves Dampness

Dang Gui Shao Yao San

Indications: Continuous cramping in abdomen that is not severe, urinary difficulty, slight edema (esp lower limbs). Occurs during pregnancy.

Pain d/t LV/SP disharmony. LV stores blood that nourishes fetus. LV sustained by blood but needs qi to perform. LV blood def impedes LV

Dang Gui Shao Yao San

When LV overcontrols the SP, water metabolism is disrupted creating dampness. Dampness engenders abdominal pain, urinary difficulty, and edema (dampness goes below)

Chief herbs: Dang Gui, Chuan Xiong, and Bai Shao to harmonize LV. Bai Shao softens LV, stops pain, nourishes blood.

Dang Gui Shao Yao San

Deputies: Fu Ling, Bai Zhu, Ze Xie to strengthen SP and leach out dampness.

Combo of Bai Shao and Bai Zhu treats recurring SP/LV problems.

Dang Gui Shao Yao San

Best use: pain d/t LV def with Blood Stasis and SP def d/t dampness. Can be used anytime LV has lost control and SP has lost transformative function (causes water to accumulate).
Extremely well balanced formula.

Blood Stagnation

Fixed, stabbing pain

Liver, most common

Derives from: *Stagnation of Qi, Deficiency of Qi, Heat in the Blood, Blood Deficiency, Interior Cold*

Dark skin and lips, masses, dark blood and clots, wiry/choppy pulse.

Herbs for Blood Stagnation:

Yan Hu Suo

Yu Jin

Yi Mu Cao

Tao Ren

Hong Hua

Ru Xiang/Mo Yao

Blood Stagnation Formulas:

Wen Jing Tang (Warm the Menses Decoction)

Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang (Drive Out Blood Stasis in the Mansion of Blood)

Warm the Menses Decoction

Wen Jing Tang: Wu Zhu Yu, Gui Zhi, Dang Gui, Chuan Xiong, Shao Yao, E Jiao, Mai Men Dong, Mu Men Dong, Mu Dan Pi, Ren Shen, Gan Cao, Sheng Jiang, Ban Xia

Drive out Stasis in the Mansion of Blood

Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang: Tao Ren, Hong Hua, Dang Gui, Chuan Xiong, Chi Shao, Niu Xi, Chai Hu, Jie Geng, Zhi Ke, Sheng Di Huang, Gan Cao

Heat in the Blood

Skin diseases, feeling of heat, dry mouth, bleeding, anxiety, mental illness, itching, dryness, mouth ulcers, red tongue, rapid pulse.

If Blood Heat affects uterus, may be excessive blood loss during periods.

Herbs for Heat in the Blood:

Chi Shao “Red Peony Root”

Paeonia veitchii

Sour, Bitter, Slightly Cold

Liver, Spleen

Invigorates blood, dispels stasis, clears heat and cools blood, clears Liver Fire.

Blood Heat Formula:

Qing Re Zhi Beng Tang (Cool Menses and Stop Bleeding)

Si Sheng Wan (Four Fresh Pill)

Loss of Blood

Epistaxis, hematemesis, menorrhagia

Deficient Qi cannot hold the Blood (Deficiency type) or Heat pushes Blood out of vessels (Excess type).

Herbs for Blood Loss:

Ce Bai Ye “Biota, Arborvitae”

Biota orientalis

Bitter, Astringent, Slightly Cold

Heart, Liver, Large Intestine

Cools blood, stops bleeding, stops coughing
and expels phlegm, heals burns

Blood Loss Formula:

Bai Ye Tang (Biota Twig Decoction)

Ce Bai Ye (Chief), Gan Jiang (Deputy), Ai Ye (Assistant).

Indications: Vomiting, nosebleeds, pale tongue and complexion. Cold d/t def. of SP Qi to control the Blood.

Bai Ye Tang

Ce Bai Ye cools and descends, conducts blood downward reversing its reckless upwards movement.

Gan Jiang warms the channels, reinforces the yang, stops bleeding.

Bai Ye Tang

Ai Ye warms and protects yang of MJ and enables SP to govern blood.

Thermal Properties

Cool foods push energy in and down

Warm foods push energy up and out

Plants that take longer to grow (roots) more warming than those that grow quickly (leaves)

Thermal Properties

Blood def: Warm foods best, avoid raw

Add: Dao Zao, congee, cooked vegetables,
bone broth

Add moxibustion (ai ye) to ST 36, RN 4 and 6,
SP 6, KI 3 and 6