

HERBAL CROSSROADS

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Addressing Women's Health with Chinese Herbal Medicine

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Over the centuries, a strong heritage has developed in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) for treating conditions of the childbearing years and beyond. From the court of the emperor to the village or farming family, the continuation and abundance of the family line was of paramount importance, so the development of remedies for the patterns of infertility garnered much focus, as did promoting longevity. The array of menstrual difficulties, abdominal masses, and sexual dysfunction, was studied and differentiated, with excellent formulas developed and refined by countless scholars.

This article will summarize women's basic TCM physiology and primary gynecological patterns, and will offer suggestions from all of Kan's formulary lines.

Women's Health Topics West and East

Premenstrual Syndrome and Dysmenorrhea

Premenstrual syndrome and menstrual pain is extraordinarily common, ranging from mild discomfort and emotional lability, to severe, nearly debilitating pain and emotional states. More than half of all menstruating women experience some degree of menstrual cramping, with at least one in seven describing them as severe. Teens and young women report the most sharp, spasmodic cramping, prompting many to take over the counter medications to quell the pain. The pain experienced may naturally moderate with age, or following childbirth.

Contraction of the uterine muscles is the natural response to the release of prostaglandins during the breakdown and expulsion of the endometrium. Cramps can be a dull ache or quite painful, periodic or continual. Normal contractions causing mild cramping are of a low pressure (50-80 mm Hg), lasting 15-30 seconds at a frequency of 1-4 contractions every 10 minutes. Increased intensity is related to elevated prostaglandin levels, with higher pressure cramps (may exceed 400 mm Hg) lasting more than 90 seconds, and often less than 15

seconds apart. Headache, nausea, or even vomiting, may accompany the cramps and, as prostaglandins cause smooth muscle contraction, their elevation may also cause constipation or diarrhea.

Western treatment for moderate menstrual cramps includes nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs), which lower the production of prostaglandins temporarily. More severe dysmenorrhea is treated with low dose birth control pills, uterine ablation, or in extreme cases, hysterectomy. Five percent of childbearing-age women are nearly incapacitated during the premenstrual phase due to Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD), and a full 30% of these women do not respond to its most commonly prescribed medication. By diagnosing and treating the deeper energetic cause of these conditions, Chinese herbs hold the hope of fully addressing them rather than temporarily alleviating the symptoms.

Research of some Chinese herbal formulas for dysmenorrhea, as well as PMDD, have found promising effects of their active ingredients. In a 2003 study in Taiwan, the classic formulation, *Wen jing tang*, which is used for Blood stasis and Cold-type menstrual difficulties, "was used to suppress spontaneous contractions and prostaglandin F2alpha-induced contractions of rat uterine smooth muscle in vitro". (Hsu CS, et al, 2003) Kan's version of *Wen jing tang* is **Women's Journey**.

The Liver Yin and Blood nourishing combination, Peony and Licorice Combination (*Shao yao gan cao tang*) was studied by a Japanese team who noted that concentrations of prostaglandins in cultured myometrial cells were significantly decreased in the presence of a medium of the two herbs. (Shibata T, et al, 1996) Kan's version of this formula is **Peony and Licorice Formula**.

Jia wei xiao yao san, a variation of the favorite patent for PMS and dysmenorrhea, *Xiao yao san* (Rambling Powder), was studied for its efficacy with PMDD. Thirty women were treated with *Jia wei xiao yao san* over six menstrual cycles; with 63% improving in their total score on the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale in the late luteal phase, associated with PMS symptoms; 46% of the women went into remission.

(Yamada K, et al, 2007) Kan's **Free and Easy Wanderer** is the traditional version of the classic Liver Qi moving *Xiao yao san*, while modern variations are **Relaxed Wanderer** and **Got Rhythm**.

Various imbalanced patterns of Qi and Blood are responsible for Premenstrual syndrome and dysmenorrhea, including Qi stagnation, Blood stasis and Blood deficiency, which can lead to more tenacious problems, such as endometriosis or masses. Deficiency of Yang or stagnation of Qi are patterns that impede the smooth flow of women's cycles.

Anemia

Blood is of paramount importance in TCM gynecology, as it is in Western medicine. Due to the monthly loss of blood from menarche through menopause, as well as that required in pregnancy, women must consistently produce sufficient surplus blood. Along with the necessity of abundant Kidney Essence, proper functioning of the Spleen Qi and a nutritious diet is necessary in order to avoid depletion. Along with fatigue, dizziness, pale skin, and scanty or delayed menses, all classic symptoms of Blood deficiency, another condition stemming from this pattern is anemia, with iron deficiency anemia affecting 9 - 16% of menstruating women. Blood tonics such as **Four Substances** (*Si wu tang*) can help turn the tendency around.

Infertility and Endometriosis

For a detailed coverage of treating infertility, especially as it is influenced by endometriosis, please request a copy of our March 2007 Herbal Crossroads article, "The Role of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Treating Infertility and Endometriosis" by Judith Tognetti.

Leukorrhea

At some time, most girls and women are troubled by leukorrhea, or vaginal discharge, called *Dai xia* in Chinese medicine. A slight discharge midcycle is a healthy sign of fertile mucous, but discharge that is opaque, or colored, of a thicker consistency, or with an offensive odor, indicates the presence of Dampness or Damp Heat. The description of the discharge is key to its diagnosis; Spleen deficiency is reflected in a white, sticky discharge, Kidney deficiency in a profuse discharge, Cold indicated by a whitish hue, Damp Heat by a yellow, even reddish color; and a greenish tone revealing Heat in the Liver channel. Kan formulas for this condition, such as **Clear the Lower Palace**, are listed under the 'Dampness and Damp Heat' category below, and should be combined with a proper constitutional formula, especially in the case of lingering, recalcitrant leukorrhea.

Menopause

Approaching menopause, a woman's body slowly eases production of estrogen and progesterone. Menopause is considered to have been reached after 12 consecutive periods are missed, which usually occurs between age 45 - 55, but can occur as early as the 30's. Perimenopause is the time prior to and for a year after menopause. Symptoms range from changes in menstrual duration, volume, and cycle length, to hot flashes, and night sweats or sleeping problems that lead to exhaustion, vaginal dryness, difficulty focusing, and thinning hair.

In Chinese Medicine, the loss of estrogen production is attributed to Kidney Essence deficiency, for which many formulas have been created that indirectly help regulate hormonal balance. Herbal therapy differs from traditional hormone replacement therapy in that it has a regenerative effect. Due to the complex nutritional potency of the herbs and the energetics they set in motion, formulas to nourish Kidney Essence, Yin, Yang, Blood and Qi have a progressive effect which is rooted in the organs themselves. Of the many formulas addressing menopause, two favorites are **Temper Fire** (*Zhi bai di huang wan*) which nourishes Kidney Yin and Essence and controls empty Fire, and **Wise Woman's Well** which replenishes Yin, Essence and Blood.

Along with deficiency, patterns of excess, such as Dampness, Qi or Blood stagnation often play a role in the aggravation of menopausal symptoms. A 2005 study conducted at Osaka Medical College compared the effect of the Blood-moving formula, Cinnamon Twig and Poria Pill (*Gui zhi fu ling wan*), on peripheral blood flow in post-menopausal women suffering from hot flashes, to that of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT). As women with hot flashes show significantly higher blood flow under the jaw than those without hot flashes, this site was measured in both groups, finding either medication effective in lowering this excessive blood flow significantly. However, *Gui zhi fu ling wan* also significantly increased blood flow in the lower extremities, whereas HRT decreased it. The researchers' conclusion was that the herbal formula was preferable to HRT for treatment of hot flashes in the face and upper body, with concomitant coldness in the lower body, a common symptom of menopause. (Ushiroyama T, et al, 2005) Kan's **Women's Chamber** is based on *Gui zhi fu ling wan*.

Women's Unique Physiology

Kidney Essence and the Seven Year Phases

Kidney Essence (*Jing*) plays a central role in the physiology of women throughout their sexual and reproductive phases, especially puberty, fertility, pregnancy, and menopause. Essence is considered the quintessential basis for the production of *Tian gui*, which translates to Heavenly Gui, or Water, formed prenatally by essences from the mother and father, then nourished in childhood by water and food. According to TCM, the maturation phases of females proceed in seven-year stages, as opposed to those of the male, which are of eight years' duration. As the *Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine* (Huang ti nei ching su wan) recorded, "When a girl is seven years of age, the emanations of the kidneys become abundant, she begins to change her teeth, and her hair grows longer." At about fourteen there is a confluence of factors in a girl's physiology; the *Tian gui* matures, or crystalizes, transforming into menstrual blood. *The Golden Mirror of Medicine* (1742) describes the influence of the extraordinary meridians, "The Directing (*Ren*) vessel is open, the Penetrating (*Chong*) vessel is flourishing and the periods arrive."

Each seven-year phase reflects the arc and decline of Kidney Essence, with an emphasis on a woman's fertility through her twenty-eighth year, when "her body is flourishing and fertile", through her seventh seven-year phase, at age forty-nine, when the *Chong mai* no longer flows with the abundant surplus of *Tian gui* and Blood needed for menstruation and fertility, and she is no longer able to conceive.

Uterus - Baby's Palace

In TCM theory, the Uterus resides in the *Dan tian*, or Lower Field of Elixir, an area which in men is 'the Room of Essence [or Sperm]'. One of the six Extraordinary organs, it has the Yin function of storing essential substances, in the form of Blood and ability to nurture and hold a fetus, yet has the hollow shape of a Yang organ, which conduits substances through, during menses and childbirth. Although not associated with any particular organ, the Uterus is strongly connected with the Kidney. Only when Kidney Essence (*Jing*) is ample will the menses occur regularly and pregnancy be possible. Normal menstruation also relies on the Liver function of storing blood and regulating circulation.

Due to the dual role of Water and Fire of the Kidney in the health of the Uterus, women's health pathologies often involve a deficiency of both Kidney Yin and Kidney Yang, or an imbalance of the two. The Water of the Kidney, in the form of Kidney Essence and Yin, is the source of menstrual Blood. The Fire within the Kidney, the Kidney Yang, generates warmth in the Uterus, balancing the cooler, fluid Yin qualities, sparking sexual desire and making conception possible. Yang insufficiency allows Cold obstruction, presaging low libido, infertility, and painful menses, while Yang in excess may overheat the Blood, leading to menorrhagia, or miscarriage.

Nourishing Channels

Two extraordinary channels are especially associated with the Uterus, both arising in the area between the Kidneys, then flowing down through the Uterus; the Directing or Conception channel (*Ren mai*) known as the Sea of Yin, which regulates the functioning of all Yin channels and nurtures the developing fetus, and the Penetrating channel (*Chong mai*), or Sea of Blood, which regulates the Qi and Blood of all twelve regular channels, and must be abundant for fertility. Together they infuse and regulate the Uterus, affecting the menstrual cycle and flow. The Uterus is also related to the Kidneys through the Uterus channel (*Bao luo*) and the Heart via the Uterus vessel (*Bao mai*). As a result of these connections, normal menses and fertility require the nourishment of Heart Blood and Kidney Essence.

Blood and Qi

Vibrancy of women's menstrual health is especially reliant on the interdependence of the Blood and the Qi. The generation, circulation, and control of the Blood hinges on its regulation by the Qi while, simultaneously, the Qi requires nourishment from Blood. The ancient axiom that "Qi is the commander of the Blood, while Blood is the mother of Qi" reflects this pivotal relationship.

Beneath the broad umbrella of Blood and Qi, each organ confers specific influences on these vital substances. The Kidneys store Essence, necessary for the generation of Blood; the Liver stores and regulates Blood, generating a strong influence on the rhythm of the menses; the Heart governs the Blood, while the Spleen restrains it within proper bounds. The vitality of the Spleen and Stomach are emphasized as the source of Qi.

The main Blood and Qi pathologies in TCM derive primarily from the domains of the Liver and Spleen. Imbalances of the Liver tend to be responsible for Qi stagnation, Blood deficiency, Blood stasis,

and Blood Heat. The Spleen is usually implicated in Qi deficiency, sinking Qi, and its inability to generate Blood, an underlying cause of Liver Blood deficiency. Blood Cold in the Uterus is brought on by exposure to cold, or due to Kidney Yang deficiency.

Certain TCM patterns underlie numerous gynecological pathologies. If untreated, they will usually evolve into common combinations of patterns, such as Yin deficiency with empty Heat rising. This also occurs as a natural progression in relation to a woman's life stages. For instance, Blood deficiency may cause late menarche or light periods, underlie infertility, hinder postpartum recovery, or with Qi stagnation may create menstrual cramps and scanty periods. In the menopausal years, Blood deficiency may be further aggravated by declining Kidney Yin. Addressing an underlying pattern when it first appears can prevent it from causing of a plethora of conditions later.

Kan Formulas for Common Patterns in Women's Health

For the purposes of this article, the broadly encompassing patterns and their symptoms will be listed, with combined patterns generally listed under those. Although formulas often address numerous intermingling patterns, Kan's formulas are listed here only once, under the prominent pattern treated.

Blood Deficiency

Blood deficiency commonly underlies many gynecological complaints. If the Blood is unable to properly nourish the Uterus, the Sea of Blood (*Chong mai*), and Sea of Yin (*Ren mai*) become depleted and insubstantial. As the Uterus is so reliant on the Liver, especially Liver Blood, when it is deficient many menstrual problems may ensue, as well as infertility. In treating Blood deficiency, herbal medicine is more important and effective than acupuncture due to the need for deeply nourishing substances. Common gynecological conditions stemming from Blood deficiency are absent or scanty menses, infertility, and delayed menses. The hallmarks of Blood deficiency will also be apparent; pale menses, dull complexion, dry skin, hair and nails, tiredness, depression, insomnia and possibly palpitations, blurred vision or tingling limbs.

Harmonize the Vessels (*Jiao ai tang*) replenishes depleted Blood with a Cold conformation, reducing bleeding and regulating the menses by replenishing the *Chong* and *Ren mai*, which directly control the Uterus. A classic formula for heavy menses, postpartum, or breakthrough bleeding of thin, pale blood without clots, accompanied by abdominal pain.

Luminescence (*Dang gui yin zi*) replenishes Liver Blood deficiency that has led to Blood Dryness. Primarily a formula for dry, itchy skin, it also balances a shortened menstrual cycle, and dry skin disorders that worsen after menses, or childbirth.

Tonify Blood potently tonifies Blood and nourishes Essence, indicated for absent, scanty, intermittent, or irregular menstruation, postpartum weakness and anemia, infertility, recurrent miscarriage or premature labor, lusterless hair, skin and nails, weakness and dizziness.

Blood and Qi Deficiency

Empty-type painful periods may be due to the combined patterns of Blood and Qi deficiency. Conditions due to Qi deficiency include early periods, and uterine prolapse.

Reishi mushroom (*Ling zhi*) is categorized as a Blood and Qi tonic, as well as having a soothing, elevating effect to the Spirit, or Shen.

Women's Precious (*Ba zhen yi mu wan*) is the classic formula for Blood and Qi deficiency in women. It replenishes the *Chong* and *Ren mai*, and Uterus and is used widely for dysmenorrhea, absent, scanty or heavy menses, inability to conceive, habitual miscarriage and postpartum recovery, as well as to fortify frail, depleted women, and beautify hair, skin, and nails.

Blood Deficiency with Blood Stasis

Blood deficiency is often accompanied by Blood stasis, and is commonly at its root; an insufficient quantity and vitality of Blood will lead to stagnation of its movement. As these patterns often occur together in gynecological conditions, a dual action treatment plan is necessary, simultaneously nourishing and moving the Blood. Blood moving herbs can damage the Yin, while Blood tonifying herbs can become too cloying and sticky. A harmonious balance yields the best results. Note that formulas with Blood moving properties are prohibited in pregnancy.

Angelica Restorative Formula (*Dang gui pian*) nourishes and circulates Blood, and tonifies Qi, excellent for recovery from childbirth or postpartum blood loss, anemia, and Qi deficient uterine bleeding; contraindicated during acute, severe blood loss.

Augmented Four Substances (*Tao hong si wu tang*) is a Blood tonifying and invigorating variation on the important Liver and Heart Blood tonic, *Si wu tang*. It regulates the menses, treating dysmenorrhea with a shortened cycle, darker or sticky blood, breast distention, fibroids, and endometriosis.

Four Substances (*Si wu tang*) is an essential Liver and Heart Blood tonic balanced to nourish as well as invigorate the Blood, treating irregular menses with little flow, dysmenorrhea, amenorrhea or menorrhagia, anemia, and history of 'restless fetus'; use with caution in pregnancy.

Blood Stasis

The pattern of stasis of the Blood is quite often the result of prolonged Qi stagnation, Blood deficiency, or Cold. These formulas are for when the pattern of Blood stasis takes precedence. Dysmenorrhea, heavy, clotted, dark menses, scanty periods, mid-cycle bleeding, abdominal pain, and abdominal masses, such as uterine fibroids all indicate Blood stasis. All these Blood invigorating formulas are strictly prohibited in pregnancy.

Cluster Dissolving dispels Heat and Toxins, and eliminates Blood stasis and ecchymosis, reducing swelling and dissolving masses, indicated for breast and ovarian cysts, and uterine myomas.

Disperse Blood promotes healthy Blood circulation, nourishes Blood and invigorates Qi, ideal for dysmenorrhea, and irregular or intermittent periods, as well as painful breast distention.



Women's Chamber (*Gui zhi fu ling wan*) transforms the Blood stasis of congealed Blood in Lower Burner, which is presenting with endometriosis, and palpable, fixed masses that may be painful and tender, such as fibroid tumors or ovarian cysts.

Invigorate the Collaterals (*Huo luo xiao ling dan*) quickens the Blood and opens the Connecting (*Luo*) vessels, focusing on relieving the pain due to dysmenorrhea, endometriosis, blocked tubes, and fibroids.

Purge Blood vigorously invigorates Blood, breaking up congealed Blood, alleviating painful swelling in conditions such as masses in the breasts, or pelvic region, and delayed and painful menses, with large clots, and a dark, scanty flow.

Qi and Blood Stasis

Blood stasis is a common progression from prolonged stagnation of Qi, causing such symptoms as painful periods, long periods, or amenorrhea.

Women's Rhythm (*Tong yu jian* and *Si wu tang*) disperses stagnant menstrual Qi and congealed menstrual Blood, and builds Blood, used for sharp, localized, and persistent menstrual pain with clotting, breast distention, and mood swings.

Qi Deficiency

Qi deficiency, along with its numerous symptoms related to digestion and vitality, affects the body's ability to provide for the proper tone gynecologically to restrain the Blood in its proper vessels, or fully maintain a pregnancy, as well as affects libido.

Tonify Qi supplements the Nutritive (*Ying*) and Defensive (*Wei*) Qi, and consolidates Essence, treating declining libido, infertility, a history of miscarriage, and prolonged labor.

Ginseng and Astragalus Combination (*Ren shen huang qi san*) tonifies Qi, Yin and Blood deficiency, which causes Steaming Bone Syndrome, with a sensation of fever in the late afternoon or evening, spontaneous sweating, and hot flashes.

Liver Qi Stagnation

Stagnant Liver Qi is commonly implicated in PMS, with breast distention, bloating, cramping, and emotional lability, and painful, often late or irregular periods, as well as the hallmark hypochondriac discomfort, digestive disturbances, irritation, and wiry pulse.

Bupleurum Soothing Liver Formula (*Chai hu shu gan tang*) spreads Liver Qi and harmonizes the Blood, to alleviate premenstrual and menstrual cramps, breast tenderness, gastrointestinal pain and nausea, belching, and temporary depression, anger or frustration.

Free and Easy Wanderer (*Xiao yao san*) is a classic medicine chest formula to disperse Liver Qi stagnation, and tonify Liver Blood and Spleen Qi, as well as harmonize the *Chong* and *Ren mai*; relied on for centuries for premenstrual syndrome, irregular menses, breast tenderness and distention, and mastitis.

Got Rhythm is adapted from Rambling Powder (*Xiao yao san*) and Four Substances Soup (*Si wu tang*) to adjust the circulation of Qi, and amend Qi and Blood, soothing premenstrual syndrome, irregular, clotted, or heavy bleeding, mid cycle spotting, or pelvic inflammation.

Harmonize Liver & Spleen balances these two organs so key in women's health, dispersing Qi and moving building Blood, ideal for PMS with breast distention and soreness, abdominal bloating, irritability, irregular and painful menses, and food cravings with unstable blood sugar, which is worse premenstrually.

Relaxed Wanderer (*Xiao yao san*) is a variation on the classic Liver Qi stagnation formula, treating PMS, irregular and painful menses, breast distention, agitation and emotional anxiety.

Kidney Yin and Essence Deficiencies

Kidney Essence is pivotal to the reproductive process in all its phases, from its influence on *Tian gui*, the menstrual process, and childbearing, to its deep sustenance throughout life, which requires careful, conscious preservation. Conditions due to Kidney Yin and Essence deficiency include infertility, symptoms of dryness and warmth, concerns about the health of bones, teeth and hearing, all associated with the Kidney, and are especially common in the menopausal phase.

Nourish Jade Yin (*Yang jing zhong yu tang* and *Er zhi wan*) enriches Kidney Yin & Essence, Liver Yin, and Blood, and regulates the *Chong* and *Ren mai*; it is excellent for irregular or early menses, scanty red flow with no clots, amenorrhea, long term infertility in male or female, miscarriage, and night sweats.

Marrow Matters replenishes Essence and invigorates the Kidneys, strengthening bones and enriching marrow. It is ideal as an adjunct therapy to prevent age related osteoporosis following menopause. Not for acute stage of injury.

Quiet Contemplative (*Liu wei di huang wan*) is an essential Kidney Yin and Essence tonic, ideal for sexual uneasiness, lack of sexual fluids, functional uterine bleeding, chronic vision, hearing, or dental problems, and a sense of instability causing falls.

Replenish Essence supplements and consolidates Kidney Essence and invigorates Yang, nurturing fertility and alleviating

menopausal symptoms. It is also indicated for aging skin, thinning hair, weakening of the bones and sensory acuity.

Replenish the Left (*Zuo gui yin*) tonifies Kidney Yin and Essence, nourishes Liver Blood, and strengthens the Spleen, benefiting those lacking vitality and failing to thrive, with thirst, night sweats, and urinary disturbances.

Tonify Moisture replenishes Yin and body fluids, cooling night sweats and hot flashes, flushing, and feverishness. This formula also assists with difficulty gaining weight, sudden hunger, and dryness with thirst.

Wise Woman's Well strengthens the Kidney Yin and Yang, secures Essence, and harmonizes the Kidney and Heart, indicated for peri- and post-menopausal hot flashes and dryness, diminished libido, prolonged menstrual bleeding, shortened cycle, and postpartum anemia.

Kidney Yin Deficiency with Empty Heat

Conditions due to Kidney Yin deficiency with empty Heat are very common in the peri-menopausal phase, as well as during periods of depletion, causing symptoms of unwelcome warmth, dryness of bodily tissues, emotional agitation, and possibly longer periods. If Kidney and Liver Yin deficiency has given rise to Empty Heat menopathies, such as early periods and bleeding between periods, may occur.

Female Comfort (*Kun bao tang*) addresses Kidney and Liver Yin deficiency with ascendant Liver Yang and deficiency Heat, relieving peri-menopausal and post-menopausal discomfort such as heat sensations and sweating, occasional irritability, depression, agitation, and dryness.

Graceful Transition (*Zuo gui yin*) nourishes Kidney Yin and enriches Essence, supports Yang and clears deficiency Heat, easing menopausal hot flashes and night sweats, vaginal dryness, fatigue, sore lower back and legs, occasional dizziness, anxiety, depression and insomnia.

Temper Fire (*Zhi bai di huang wan*) is the classic variation on Quiet Contemplative (*Liu wei di huang wan*) to address deficient Fire arising from Kidney Yin deficiency, excellent for menopausal complaints of night sweats, hot flashes, vaginal dryness, and urinary difficulty.

Heart Yin and/or Kidney Yin Deficiency

This pattern commonly causes insomnia and disrupts the Mind, along with symptoms of dryness and deficiency warmth.

Celestial Emperor's Blend (*Tian wang bu xin dan*) is a classic moist tonic for insomnia that nourishes Heart and Kidney Yin and calms unsettled Spirit (*Shen*), ideal for menopausal 'empty' energy, night sweats, flushed cheeks, anxiety and poor concentration.

Clear Mind (*Bu nao wan*) nourishes Heart Yin, Heart and Liver Blood, and Kidney Essence, while transforming Heart Phlegm, and calming the Spirit (*Shen*). It is ideal for poor concentration, restlessness and insomnia accompanying Menopause, or following a depleting lifestyle.

Rescue Formula (*Gan mai da zao tang*) nourishes the Heart Yin and calms the Spirit. It is a classic formula for the pattern of 'Zang

visceral agitation', essentially extreme emotions, and comforts and stabilizes emotional states such as melancholy, crying spells and disorientation along with PMS, postpartum depression, and menopausal hot flashes and sweats.

Kidney Yin and Yang Deficiency

Combined deficiencies of Yin and Yang of the Kidney reflect symptoms of both empty Heat, with the hallmark depletion and dryness, as well as a loss of the healthy vitality and warmth of Yang energy, often reflected in low libido, and various menopathies.

Passion Potion is an original formula based on the classical Kidney Qi Pill (*Jin gui shen qi wan*), supplementing Yin, Yang, and Essence, excellent for addressing infertility, and diminished libido and enthusiasm, as well thinning, drying skin and membranes.

Two Immortals (*Er xian tang*) is a classic formula for deficiency of both Kidney Yin and Yang, with Empty Fire ascending. It eases menopausal complaints such as night sweats, fatigue, irritability, vaginal dryness, and frequent urination.

Wise Woman's Well is a favorite menopausal formula for deficiency of Kidney Yin and Yang, Essence and Blood, alleviating peri- and post-menopausal hot flashes and sweating, mood swings, disturbed sleep, and decreased libido, as well as dysmenorrhea, prolonged or shortened menses, postpartum anemia, and non-resumption of menses.

Kidney Yang and Essence Deficiency

Conditions due to Kidney Yang deficiency include Yang failing to warm the Uterus, allowing Cold obstruction and presaging low libido, infertility, dysmenorrhea, late, irregular, and scanty periods. When Spleen Yang is also deficient, bleeding between periods is likely. Polycystic ovary disease is also often related to Kidney Yang deficiency with Dampness/Phlegm stasis.

Dynamic Warrior (*Jin gui shen qi wan*) tonifies and warms Kidney Yang and supplements Essence, indicated for lack of sexual desire and fatigue after sexual activity in a background of a cold conformation, reproductive problems, chilliness, sore lumbar, and frequent urination.

Nourish Jade Yang (*Yu lin zhu jia ba ji tian dan shen xiang fu hua jiao*) is a classic fertility tonic which warms Kidney Yang and nourishes Essence, Qi and Blood. It strengthens the *Du*, *Ren* and *Chong mai*, aiding long-term infertility or low libido, with a history of miscarriage, and absent, scanty or heavy, delayed or irregular menses.

Replenish the Right (*You gui wan*) warms and tonifies Kidney Yang, replenishes Essence and Blood, treating infertility, with exhaustion, watery leukorrhea, failure to thrive, and cool extremities.

Ten Treasures (*Shi quan da bu tang*) is referred to as the "All Inclusive Great Tonifying Decoction". It warms and supplements the potent trio of Qi, Yang and Blood, helping a scanty or long flow, amenorrhea, irregular cycles, spotting, infertility, miscarriage, and insufficient lactation, as long as there is a Cold conformation.

Cold in the Uterus

Cold is often at the root of late and painful periods, as well as infertility, and abnormal bleeding.

Women's Journey (*Wen jing tang*) is designed for Cold blocking the *Chong* and *Ren mai*, and Blood stasis in the Lower Burner with Blood deficiency. It is primarily for women with menopausal symptoms who exhibit both Cold and Hot signs, such as cold abdomen, flushing, and sweating, as well as those with menstrual irregularities, chronic infertility, abnormal uterine bleeding, amenorrhea and heavy bleeding.

Harmonize the Vessels (*Jiao ai tang*), listed under Blood Deficiency, treats a tendency towards Cold affecting the menses.

Dampness and Damp Heat

Abnormal vaginal discharge is a sign of Dampness or Damp Heat in the Lower Burner, yellow and darker colored discharge is a sign of Damp Heat in the Lower Burner, and copious, thin leukorrhea represents Dampness. Toxic Damp Heat is a pattern seen in mastitis, an inflammation of the breast that can occur postpartum or from infection, such as from piercing.

Antiphlogistic Formula (*Chuan xin lian kang yan pian*) reduces inflamed hot swellings by purging Toxic Damp Heat and cooling the Blood. It is useful for mastitis, as well as vaginal yeast infections, and herpes.

Clear the Lower Palace (*Wen dai tang* and *Bei xie fen qing yin*) drains Dampness in the Lower Burner with Spleen Qi deficiency, and weakness of the Girdle Vessel (*Dai mai*). It is excellent for leukorrhea with a thin, profuse white or yellowish discharge, occasional urinary incontinence, and a heavy sensation in the lower pelvis.

Disperse Moisture decongests accumulated Dampness, toning the Spleen, Kidney and Lung, helpful for premenstrual bloating with a heavy sensation or water retention, as well as a tendency toward indigestion or loose stool.

20% off these formulas:

Augmented Four Substances

Clear the Lower Palace

Disperse Moisture

Female Comfort

Ginseng and Astragalus
Combination

Got Rhythm

Graceful Transition

Harmonize the Vessels

Women's Chamber

Luminescence

Nourish Jade Yang

Nourish Jade Yin

Reishi

Replenish the Left

Replenish the Right

Tonify Blood

Tonify Moisture

Two Immortals

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Four Wonders (*Si miao wan*) clears Damp Heat lodged in the Lower Burner causing a heavy sensation in the body, and vaginitis or leukorrhea with thick, yellowish discharge with a poor odor.

Quell Fire (*Long dan xie gan tang*) quells Liver Fire and drains Damp Heat in the Liver, Gallbladder and Triple Burner channels, to treat vaginitis and leukorrhea with colored discharge, genital herpes, breast abscesses, dysfunctional uterine bleeding, and Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID).

Women's health issues often comprise a high percentage of the modern clinician's practice, so becoming proficient at differentiating patterns and suitable formulas is the key to successful treatment. Although a woman may seek care far into a progressed condition, just as likely she may come in for milder symptoms, or a condition that seems far from a gynecological issue, yet with indicative signs of a problem developing. As the wisest use of TCM is to initiate treatment in the early stage of symptoms or, ideally, preventatively, discerning subtle indications of a pattern which may likely lead to more complex conditions, such as treating mild Blood stasis causing menstrual cramps long before endometriosis or a fibroid has time to develop, will avert much difficulty. In this way, the practitioner provides the time-honored approach the ancient *Tao te ching* counseled, "Trouble is easily overcome before it starts".

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