

Common Herbs Used in Chinese Medicine

Aloe, Lu Hui – cold, bitter, clears heat and helps with constipation, kills parasites and aids digestion.

Apricot Seed, Xing Ren – warm, bitter, stops coughing and wheezing, helps with constipation.

Barley Sprout, Ma Yai – neutral, warm, reduces food stagnation, inhibits lactation, relieves distension in epigastrium or ribs.

Black Pepper, Hu Jiao – hot, pungent, warms cold stomach with symptoms of vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea, aids in digestion.

Cardamom, Sha Ren – warm, pungent, aromatic, stops vomiting, treats morning sickness, aids digestion with symptoms of loss of appetite, abdominal distension.

Cinnamon, Gui Zhi – warm, pungent, sweet, used in treating “colds,” relieves painful arthritic joint pain, promotes blood circulation.

Chrysanthemum, Ju Hua – cool, sweet, bitter, used for “colds” with fever and headache, treats red sore eyes, calms and relaxes, relieves dizziness due to excess.

Citrus Peel, Chen Pi – warm, pungent, bitter, aromatic, aids in digestion with symptoms of abdominal distension, fullness, bloating, nausea, vomiting, transforms phlegm.

Cloves, Ding Xiang – warm, pungent, warms the abdomen, aids digestion, aids yang in treating impotence and vaginal discharge.

Corn Silk, Yu Mi Xu – neutral, warm, used for edema and urinary dysfunction, treats jaundice.

Dandelion, Pu Gong Ying – cold, bitter, sweet, clears heat, treats abscesses and sores such as mastitis, promotes lactation, used for jaundice and urinary dysfunction.

Fennel Seed, Xiao Hui Xiang – warm, pungent, aids in warming the abdomen and with indigestion with symptoms of abdominal pain, indigestion and even hernias.

Frankincense, Ru Xiang – warm, bitter, pungent, used to treat traumatic injury and pain, promotes healing of injury, reduces pain and swelling of gums and mouth.

Gardenia, Zhi Zi – cold, bitter, clears heat and irritability, treats painful urination, stops bleeding, reduces swelling.

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Ginger, Sheng Jiang – warm and pungent, used to treat “colds,” soothes the stomach and stops vomiting, reduces the toxicity of other herbs.

Honeysuckle, Jin Yin Hua – cold, sweet, clears heat for hot and painful throat, breasts and eyes, treats dysentery, painful urination.

Licorice, Gan Cao – neutral or warm, sweet, aids digestion, treats cough and wheezing, relieves sore throat, reduces leg spasms and pain, harmonizes other herbs in formulas.

Mint, Bo He – cool, pungent, aromatic, treats “colds” with fever, headache and cough, relieves sore throats, red eyes, relieves irritability.

Mung Bean, Lu Dou – cool, sweet, treats summertime “flu” with symptoms of fever and irritability.

Myrrh, Mo Yao – neutral, bitter, used to treat traumatic injury and pain, promotes healing of injury, reduces swelling.

Nutmeg, Rou Dou Kou – warm, pungent, treats daybreak diarrhea, warms the abdomen, alleviates pain, promotes digestion.

Peach Kernel, Tao Ren – neutral, sweet, bitter, used for menstrual pain, abdominal pain, traumatic injuries, masses, constipation.

Peony, Bai Shao – cool, bitter, sour, commonly used herb in treating women, stops painful cramps and spasms, moderates excessive sweating due to deficiency.

Radish Seed, Lai Fu Zi – reduces food stagnation, reduces phlegm.

Scallion, Cong Bai – warm, pungent, used for the early stage of “colds,” aids in relieving nasal congestion, applied externally for sores.

Turmeric, Yu Jin – cool, bitter, pungent, relieves pain due to traumatic injury, relieves menstrual pain, used for gallbladder disorders and jaundice.

Watermelon, Xi Gua – cold, sweet, treats summertime “flu,” used in treating jaundice.

Source: Bensky, D. & Gamble, A., (1993). Materia Medica. Seattle, WA: Eastland Press.