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Chinese Medicine: The Most Significant Substances and Their Indications

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With the incredible popularity of Chinese herbs and traditional Chinese medicine formulae over the last few years in North America, Australia and Europe, it behooves practitioners to become familiar, or at least aware, of the individual herbs and substances which comprise the majority of formulas, along with their indications.

Ninety-nine percent of all contemporary practitioners will undoubtedly opt to use in their practice ancient formulae which have been tableted and created for today's practitioner instead of spending thousands of hours learning how to formulate these ancient remedies themselves. In our busy practices and lives, we cannot expect to practice the same way it was done during the Ming dynasty and before. Utilizing Chinese herbology today has never been easier. Even with this in mind, knowledge of each individual substance, along with the English translation and indications, could prove to be a very valuable reference tool.

The following list should be saved for future reference. Notice the list is in alphabetical order by Chinese name, followed by the English common name and indications. Should the need for a specific formula arise in which you are stymied not knowing where to look, fax the details to me at 602-488-5008; we will do the best we can to advise you and assist you in locating a patent formula or to create one specifically for your needs.

Chinese name	English name	Indications
a-chiao	gelatin	Treats yin weakness
ai-yeh	artemisia	Quiets the fetus, dispels gas
ch'ai-hu	bupleurum	Regulates menstruation, antipyretic
ch'an-shui	cicada	Disperses heat, stops convulsions
che-chien-tzu	plantago	Diuretic, clears fevers, detoxifies

ch'en-pi	tangerine	Expectorant, energy tonic
chen-hsiang	aquilaria	Alleviates pain, reinforces the kidney
chi-li-tzu	tribulus	Promotes milk production in nursing mothers
chi-lien	coptis	Digestive, antidysenteric
chiang	ginger	Food poisoning, cold extremities
chiang-huang	tumeric	Stimulates the gallbladder
ch'iang-huo	chianghuo	Diaphoretic, analgesic
chieh-keng	platycodon	Reduces swelling, promotes pus drainage
chien-chih	gardenia	Antipyretic, snake bite
chuien-chin-tzu	euphorbia	Poisonous, purgative, used externally for skin and sores
chien-niu-tzu	morning glory	Promotes menstruation, induces abortion
chih-ko	bitter orange	Antidiarrhetic, abdominal swelling, indigestion
chih-mu	anemarrhena	Antipyretic, urinary and bowel disorders
chih-shao	peony	Lessens perspiration, purifies yin, night sweats, fever
chih-tzu	gardenia	See "chien-chih"
chin-chieh	schizonepeta	Cerebral hemorrhage with aphasia, any bleeding
chin-chiu	gentian	Relieves pain, promotes diuresis and sweating
chin-yin-hua	lonicera	Clears fevers and detoxifies
chin-ying tzu	rosa	Detoxifies, menstrual regularity
ching-san-leng	scirpus	Stimulates menstrual flow, promotes milk production
chiu-chieh-chang-pu	anemone	Vermifugal, antitoxic
chu-hua	chrysanthemum	Antipyretic, headache with fever, vertigo
chu-ju	bamboo	Expectorant, antipyretic
chu-li	bamboo sap	Removes internal heat
chu-ling	grifolia	Diuretic
chu-sha	cinnabar	Settles nerves, convulsions, fear palpitations
chuan-chiao	zanthoxylum	Dispels chills and cold, counteracts moisture
ch'uan-hsiung	conidium	Stops childbirth bleeding, induces uterine contraction
ch'uan-hou-po	magnolia bark	Antispasmodic, abdominal distention, gastritis
chuan-ku	nuphar	Gynecological conditions, irregular menstruation
chuan-wu	aconite	Analgesic, antiarthritic
erh-cha	catechu	Hemostatic, expectorant
fan-hsieh-yeh	cassia	Smooths bowel movement
fan-hung-hua	saffron	Difficult labor, dead fetus, prolonged menstruation

fan-mu-pieh	strychnine	Debility, convalescence from severe illness
fang-chi	stephania	Antispasmodic, antipyretic
fang-feng	siler	Analgesic, antipyretic
feng-jou	siler	Analgesic, antipyretic
feng-la	beeswax	Coating of pills, base for ointments
fu-pen-tzu	woodberry	Prevents graying, vigor, respiration
fu-ling	poria	Treats spleen and stomach
fu-shen	poria	Treats spleen and stomach
fu-tzu	aconite	Analgesic, antiarthritic
ho-shou-wu	polygonum	Promotes fertility, builds vitality, strengthens ligaments
ho-tzu	terminalia	Stimulates intestines, strengthens lungs
hsi-hsin	asarum	Analgesic, sedative
hsi-yang-shen	ginseng	Mental stability, dispels fire, produces body fluids
hsia-ku-tsao	prunella	Antirheumatic, red, swelling, itching eyes
hsiang-fu-tzu	cyperus	Corrects "chi" circulation, alleviates pain, melancholia
hsiao-hui-hsiang	fennel	Abdominal distention, promotes digestion
hsiao-mai	wheat	Reduces fever
hsiao-tou-kou	cardamon	Digestion
hsieh-chieh	calamus	Blood circulation, stops bleeding, knife wounds
hsien-mi	rice	Stabilizes pulmonary and intestinal function
hsin-i	magnolia flower	Alleviates pain, see "mu-pi"
hsing-jen	apricot	Antispasmodic, sedative
hsu-tuan	dipsacus	Blood circulation, premature labor, trauma injuries
hsuan-fu-hua	inula	Intestinal fullness, pulmonary disorders
hsuan-hu	corydalis	Trauma injuries, relieves pain, stimulates energy
hsuan-shen ⁺	scrophularia	Anti-inflammatory, thirst from stress, fever, lowers heat
hu-chiao	black pepper	Warms and aids elimination, ch'i stagnancy in chest
hu-ma-you	sesame oil	Anti-inflammatory, ringworm, itching, insect bites
hu-po	amber	Convulsive disorders in children, epilepsy
hua-chiao	pepper	Expels worms and parasites
hua-shih	talc	Anti-inflammatory, quenches thirst, sunstroke
huai-hua	sophora	Strengthens blood vessels, hemoptysis, nosebleed
huang-chi	astragalus	Stops perspiration, strengthens spleen, night sweats
huang-ch'in	scute (skullcap)	Reduces fever, quiets the fetus, removes moist heat

huang-ching	polygonatum	Nourishes liver and kidney, promotes fertility, vitality
huang-la	beeswax	Used for coating pills, base for ointments
huang-lien	coptis	Antipyretic, antidiarrhetic, heart distress
huang-po	philodendron	Abdominal distention, digestion, constipation
hung-hua	carthamus	Clears meridian channels, hemorrhage after childbirth
hung-tsao	jujube	Calms nerves, insomnia, forgetfulness, cardiac function
huo-hsiang	agastache	Strengthens stomach and stops vomiting, clears fever
i-chih-jen	ichihjen	Stimulant, tonic, a stomachic
i-i-jen	coix	Pulmonary disorders, rheumatoid arthritis
i-mi-jen	coix	Pulmonary disorders, rheumatoid arthritis
i-yi-jen	coix	Pulmonary disorders, rheumatoid arthritis
jen-shen	ginseng	See "hsi-yang-shen"
jou-tou-kou	nutmeg	Vomiting, food stagnancy, pain in the stomach
jou-tsung-jung	cistanche	General tonic, aphrodisiac, impotence, infertility
ju-hsiang	olibanum (mastic)	Analgesic, sedative, resolves bruises and clots
kan-ts'ao	licorice	Relaxant, supplements energy, see "tiao-tiao"
kao-liang-chiang	lesser galangal	Abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, nausea
kao pen	ligusticum	Antispasmodic, antiarthritic, dispels "wind", benefits skin
keng-mi	rice (oryza)	Intestinal function, poor appetite, indigestion
ko-ken	pueraria	Alcoholic intoxication, antipyretic
kou-chi	chain fern	Excellent tonic for older men, strengthens spine
kou-chi-tzu	lychee	Strengthens kidneys, restores semen, nourishes liver
kou-teng	gambir	Infantile fever, hypertension with headache, convulsions
ku-mu	picrasma	Stomach symptoms
k'u-shen	sophora	Relieves fever, kills insects, scabies, hives
kua-lou	trichosanthes	Aids pus drainage, reduces swelling, detoxifies
kua-lou-ken	trichosanthes	Aids pus drainage, reduces swelling, detoxifies
kuan-mu-tung	aristolochia	See "ma-tou-ling"
kuan-mu-hsiang	saussurea	Promotes energy circulation, abdominal symptoms
kuei-chih	cinnamon	Relaxes muscles, stimulates appetite
kuei-p'i	cinnamon	Relaxes muscles, stimulates appetite
la-chiao	capsicum	Promotes sweating, stimulant
liang-chiang	lesser galangal	See "kao-liang-chiang"
lien-ch'iao	forsythia	Relieves heat, swelling, and suppuration, erysipelas

lu-chiao	deer horn	Antispasmodic, antipyretic, tonic, stimulant
lu-hui	aloe	In conjunction with licorice for eczema
lung-ku	dragon bone	Anxiety, nightmares, sedative
lung-tan	gentian	Intercostal pain, chills, fever, sore throat
lung-yen-jou	longan	Amnesia, palpitations caused by fear, insomnia
ma-huang	mahuang	Bronchial dilator, stimulates respiration, raises BP
ma-tou-ling	aristolochia	Relieves coughing, asthma and bronchitis, expectorant
mai-men-tung	ophiopogon	Regulates lungs and heart
man-chin-tzu	vitex	Antipyretic, tonic, headache, vertigo
mang-hsiao	magnesium sulphate	Laxative, reduces fever, expectorant
m-shih-tzu	oakgall	Chief source of tannic acid, bleeding from cuts
mo-yao	myrrh	Analgesic, externally applied to scabies, painful boils
mou-tan-p'i	moutan	Antipyretic
mu-kua	Chinese quince	Improves gastric function, relaxes muscles
mu-li	oyster shell	Clears fever, breaks up congestion, night sweats
mu-pi	magnolia flower	Alleviates pain
mu-t'ung	akebia	Promotes urination, counteracts inflammation and fever
nan-sha-shen	adenophora	Nourishes yin and purifies the lungs, excess phlegm
niui-hsi	achyranthes	Strengthens muscles and bone, heals bruises, pus drain
niu-pang-tzu	burdock	Antipyretic, diuretic, chills, fever, dermatitis
o-shu	zedoary	Stimulates menstrual flow, stagnancy of ch'i and blood
pa-chi-tien	morinda	Strengthens bones and ligaments, anti-arthritis
pa-chiao-hui-hsiang	anise	Abdominal pain, vomiting, anorexia
pa-tou	croton	Violent purgative
pai-chi	bletilla	Knife wounds, burns, nosebleeds
pai-chih	angelica	Promotes pus drainage, dispels gas
pai-chu	atractylodes	General tonic, see "tsang-chu"
pai-ho	tiger lily	Palpitations due to fear, antitussive, antipyretic, diuretic
pai-hsien-p'i	Chinese dittany	Loosens stiff joints, eliminates wet fevers
pai-pu	stemona	Calms the respiration, colds, coughs
pai-shao	peony	Spasms of the arms and legs, strengthens blood
pai-tou-kou	cardamon	Gastritis, belching, abdominal distention
pai-tou-weng	Chinese anemone	Eliminates fever
pai-tzu-su	perilla	See "tzu-su"

pai-wei	cynanchum	Yin weakness, fever due to wind
pan-hsia	pinellia	Reduces expectoration, cough, vomiting, asthma
pei-hsin	asarum	Analgesic, sedative, expectorant, diuretic
pei-mu	fritillary	Loosens congestion, resolves phlegm, fever
pei-wu-wei	schizandra	Strengthens lungs and kidneys
pi-hsieh	tokoro	Antirheumatic, diuretic
pi-ma-tzu	castor oil plant	Throat paralysis, drooping eyes/mouth
pi-pa	long pepper	Antipyretic, gastric fullness, watery diarrhea
pi-pa-yeh	eriobotrya (loquat)	Lowers excess energy, quiets cough
pi-tao-kan	persica	Injuries from falling, see "t'ao-jen"
pieh-chia	turtle shell	Cools fever, infantile epilepsy, debilitating fever
pien-tou	dolichos	Arrests diarrhea and vomiting, abdominal distention
pin-lang	betel nut	Intestinal parasites, chest pain, abdominal pain
po-ho	mint	Stomachic, sore throat
po-tzu-jen	arbor vita	Expectorant, nutritive tonic
pu-huang	cattail	Prolonged menstruation, aching arms after childbirth
pu-ku-chih	psoralea	Sexual dysfunction, threatened abortion, impotence
san-chi	pseudoginseng	Bleeding disorders, nosebleeds, hemoptysis
sang-chi-sheng	loranthus	Backache, stiff joints, arthritis
sang-pai-pi	mulberry	Relieves lung congestion, promotes diuresis
sha-jen	Chinese cardamon	Abdominal pain, distention, gastric disorders
sha-jen-k'o	Chinese cardamon	Abdominal pain, distention, gastric disorders
sha-k'o	Chinese cardamon	Abdominal pain, distention, gastric disorders
shan-cha	crataegus	Distention in the chest and abdomen, food stagnancy
shan-chu-yu	cornus	Liver and kidney dysfunction, tinnitus
shan-nai	galangal	Dandruff, scabies
shan-yao	dioscorea (yam)	Nutrient tonic, digestant
shang-lu	phytolacca	Externally used for foul sores, poisonous
she-hsiang	musk deer	Antispasmodic, analgesic, convulsions, apoplexy
sheng-chiang	ginger	Food poisoning, nausea, abdominal distention
sheng-ma	cimicifuga	Chronic diarrhea, uterine prolapse, antipyretic
sheng-ti	rehmannia	Premature graying, cardiogenic, hemostatic
shih-chang-pu	acorus	Analgesic, vermifugal, externally applied to carbuncles
shih-chun-tzu	quisqualis	Vermifugal, abdominal pain due to parasites

shih-hu	dendrobium	Nourishes yin and promotes salivation
shih-kao	gypsum	Speech disorders, extreme thirst, dry mouth, heat symptoms
shih-lien-tzu	lotus	Tonic
su-hsia	pinellia	Stops bleeding, reduces inflammation, strengthens SP
suan-tsao-jen	zizyphus	Insomnia due to stress, palpitations, sedative
suo-yang	cynomorium	Strengthens kidneys and gonads, impotence, tonic
ta-chi	knoxia	Diuretic
ta-fu-pi	betel nut	See "pin-lang"
ta-huang	rhubarb	Constipation, indigestion, stomachic
ta-ma-jen	cannabis	Constipation, substituted by linum usitatissimum
ta-tsao	jujube	Regulates cardiac and pulmonary function
tan-chu-yeh	lophatherum	Clears fever, irritability
tan-hsiang	sandal wood	breathing
tan-tou-shih	soja	Relaxes muscles, clears fever, apprehension, irritability
tang-kuei	tang-kuei	Headache, lower back, meridian blockage, circulation
t'ao-jen	persica	Injuries from falling, mental instability, sedative
teng-hsin-tsao	juncus	Sedative, diuretic
ti-huang	rehmannia	Cardiotonic, hemostatic
ti-ku-pi	lyceum bark	Antipyretic, cough, fever
ti-yu	sanguisorba	Postpartum difficulties, snake and insect bites
tiao-teng	gambir	Flatulence, vertigo, hypertension with headache
tiao-tsao	licorice	Supplements energy, loosens phlegm, intoxication
tien-ma	gastrodia	Anti-gas, quiets muscle spasms
tien-nan-hsing	arisaema	Relieves spasms and pain, reduces swelling
ting-hsiang	cloves	Warms the body, alleviates pain, increases circulation
tsang-chu	atractylodes	General tonic to increase appetite and promote health
tsao-chiao	gleditsia	Loosens congestion, resolves phlegm, constipation
tsao-wu	aconite	Very toxic, antiarthritic, analgesic
tse-hsieh	alisma	Urinary tract, kidney stones, aphrodisiac
tse-she	alisma	Urinary tract, kidney stones, aphrodisiac
tu-fu-ling	smilax	Antispasmodic, diuretic
tun-chih	lard	Base for ointments
tung-chung-hsia-tsao	cordycep	Restorative and tonic
tung-jua-tzu	benincasa	Anti-inflammatory

tzu-su	perilla	Chi imbalances, quiets fetus, asthma, detoxifies
tzu-ts'ao	lithospermum	Antifebrile, cools blood, lubricates intestines
tzu-wan	aster	To quiet restless crying children, quiets nervous system
wei-ling-hsien	Chinese clemati	Flatulence, pain at the waist, knees, arms and legs
wei-ling-ts'ai	potentilla	Eliminates fever, cools the blood
wu-chu-yu	evodia	Uterine muscle stimulant, increase blood pressure
wu-mei	dark plum	Antifebrile, antispasmodic, persistent cough, worms
wu-pei-tzu	Chinese sumac	Pulmonary weakness, hemostatic
wu-yao	lindera	Anti-inflammatory, analgesic
ya-men-jen	linseed	Laxative, constipation
yen-hu-suo	corydalis	Relieves pain, stimulates energy and circulation
yin-ch'en-hao	artemisia	Antipyretic, diuretic
yin-yang-huo	epimedium	Aphrodisiac, warms the kidneys, strengthens yang
ying-pi	cherry	Relieves cough
yu-chu	polygonatum	Slows and deepens respiration, antiarthritic, fever
yuan-chih	polygala	Reduces swelling, sedative

Click [here](#) for more information about John Amaro, LAc, Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM), FIAMA, DC.



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