

PACIFIC SYMPOSIUM 2005

中醫婦科常見疾病病機學

PATHOMECHANISMS OF COMMON  
GYNECOLOGICAL DISEASES IN  
CHINESE MEDICINE



BY ERIC BRAND, M.S., L.AC.

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# KEY PATHOMECHANISMS OF THE BOWELS AND VISCERA IN GYNECOLOGY

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## *Kidney Pathomechanisms*

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The kidney stores essence and governs reproduction, and the uterine network vessels are connected to the kidney. Additionally, the kidney is the root of yīn and yáng for all of the bowels and viscera. Kidney vacuity may come from insufficiency of earlier heaven kidney qì, sexual taxation and multiparity, and enduring illness or major illness; these factors cause irregularities in kidney function and may lead to damage to the *chōng mài* (thoroughfare vessel) and *rèn mài* (controlling vessel).

*Kidney qì vacuity:* Here, we are specifically referring to vacuity detriment of the kidney that causes a decrease in the kidney's securing, storing, containing, and absorbing functions. The exuberance or debility of kidney qì is linked to the arrival and exhaustion of tiān-guǐ (the principle of reproductive viability), and is directly related to menstruation and pregnancy. Thus, the *chōng* and *rèn* channels are said to be rooted in the kidney.

If kidney qì is vacuous and leads to an insecurity of the *chōng* and *rèn* channels that affects the sea of blood, the following disorders may arise: advanced menstruation, profuse menstruation, flooding and spotting, and postpartum retention of the lochia. If insecurity of the *chōng* and *rèn* channels affects the fetus, there may be fetal spotting, stirring fetus, or habitual miscarriage. If the *chōng* and *rèn* insecurity affects the uterus, there may be uterine prolapse. Finally, if the *chōng* and *rèn* channels fail to support each other, there may be an inability to contain essence to achieve pregnancy, leading to infertility.

*Kidney yīn vacuity:* Kidney yīn vacuity refers to pathological changes resulting from insufficient storage of yīn-essence by the kidney. It may arise from many factors, such as earlier heaven insufficiency or constitutional vacuity, and is often seen in either young women at the initial arrival of tiān-guǐ or in older women at the exhaustion of tiān-guǐ. It may also arise from sexual taxation and multiparity damaging kidney yīn, or from enduring illness, heat disease, or major illness damaging the kidney yīn.

When kidney yīn is vacuous, blood and essence are insufficient. This causes blood vacuity in the *chōng* and *rèn* channels and a lack of fullness in the sea of blood, leading to delayed menstruation, scanty menstruation, or menstrual block. If the blood vacuity in the *chōng* and *rèn* channels manifests in a lack of nourishment to the uterus and the uterine vessels, it may lead to menstrual pain, abdominal pain during pregnancy, or infertility.

If kidney yīn vacuity produces internal heat, there may be deep-lying heat in the *chōng* and *rèn* channels that causes the blood to move frenetically, manifesting in flooding, bleeding between periods, fetal spotting, stirring fetus, or strangury of pregnancy (painful, dribbling urination in pregnancy). If yīn vacuity is already present, it may become more severe when yīn-blood is discharged from the *chōng* and *rèn* channels. This occurs during menstruation or when yīn-blood accumulates in the lower body and *chōng*

and *rèn* channels so that it may nourish the fetal origin. This exacerbation causes hyperactivity of liver *yáng*, which may produce headache during menstruation or dizziness during pregnancy.

*Kidney yáng vacuity:* When the kidney *yáng* is vacuous, the functions of all five viscera are reduced, leading to diseases of menstruation, vaginal discharge, pregnancy, and childbirth, as well as miscellaneous gynecological diseases. When kidney *yáng* vacuity deprives the *chōng* and *rèn* channels of warmth, vacuity cold of the uterus arises. This manifests in abdominal pain during pregnancy or after delivery, as well as infertility.

In kidney *yáng* vacuity, the life gate fire is insufficient to warm earth. Earth fails to control water when *qì* and blood pour downward into the *chōng* and *rèn* channels, which occurs before menstruation, during menstruation, or during pregnancy. This causes puffy swelling during menstruation, diarrhea during menstruation, pregnancy swelling, or fullness of pregnancy (swelling, distention, panting and fullness in pregnancy).

Additionally, when kidney *yáng* is vacuous, *qì* transformation is disordered and water metabolism is impaired. This process causes dampness to accumulate and form phlegm; phlegm-turbidity then obstructs the *chōng* and *rèn* channels and the uterus, leading to menstrual block, infertility, and concretions and conglomerations. When *qì* transformation is impaired, water-damp may also pour downward to affect the *rèn* and *dài* (girdling) vessels. This causes insecurity of the *rèn mài* and failure of the *dài mài* to ensure retention, manifesting as abnormal vaginal discharge. Finally, kidney *yáng* vacuity can deprive the blood of warmth and movement, leading to blood stasis. Because blood stasis impedes the formation of new blood, the kidney vacuity may become exacerbated. Thus, kidney vacuity and blood stasis may combine in pathomechanisms of gynecological diseases, making treatment more complicated.

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### ***Liver Pathomechanisms***

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The liver stores the blood and governs free coursing. By nature, it likes orderly reaching and is averse to depression. Blood is said to be at the root of women's health because menstruation, fertility, childbirth, and breastfeeding all make use of blood. If there is a constitutional tendency towards depression, damage from the seven affects, or pathological changes in visceral function, liver-wood becomes damaged and the liver's functions become impaired. This results in damage to the *chōng* and *rèn* channels, manifesting in a variety of gynecological diseases.

*Liver depression and qì stagnation:* Binding depression of liver *qì* refers to impaired free coursing. When the liver is depressed, *qì* stagnates and amasses to spill into the *chōng* and *rèn* channels and the sea of blood; this leads to menstruation at irregular intervals. Similarly, if the liver is depressed and *qì* stagnation inhibits the *chōng* and *rèn* channels, it may result in painful menstruation, breast pain during menstruation, blocked menstruation, prolonged menstruation, abdominal pain during pregnancy, or infertility.

*Depressed heat in the liver channel:* Liver *qì* depression is a state of superabundance of *qì*. In Chinese medicine, it is said that "superabundant *qì* is fire." Because enduring depression forms heat and fire, heat evil can descend to harass the *chōng* and *rèn* channels and the sea of blood. This causes the blood to move frenetically, manifesting in advanced menstruation, profuse menstruation, flooding and spotting, blood ejection or spontaneous external bleeding during menstruation, fetal spotting, or postpartum retention of the lochia. During menstruation, the *qì* in the *chōng* and *rèn* channels is exuberant;

if there is also liver depression forming fire, the fire and qì ascend together to produce headache or moodiness during menstruation.

*Damp-heat in the liver channel:* If liver depression overwhelms the spleen, the spleen fails to move and transform; thus, dampness is produced. When damp depresses to form heat, the damp-heat evil may pour down into the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel) and *dài mài* (girdling vessel). This leads to insecurity of the *rèn mài* and an inability of the *dài mài* to ensure retention, manifesting as abnormal vaginal discharge or genital itching. If damp-heat brews in the uterus, the qì and blood are obstructed and contend with each other, inhibiting the movement of blood in the uterine vessels. There is lack of free flow, so there is pain; this pattern can be seen in conditions such as pelvic inflammatory disease. Additionally, stasis accumulating over time can form concretions and conglomerations.

*Ascendant hyperactivity of liver yáng:* The liver is yīn in substance and yáng in function. If there is constitutional liver-kidney yīn vacuity, yīn damage from loss of blood, or heat disease that damages yīn, the liver blood becomes insufficient. Water fails to moisten wood, manifesting as ascendant hyperactivity of liver yáng; this produces headache or dizziness during menstruation, climacteric syndrome, dizziness in pregnancy, or epilepsy in pregnancy. Before menstruation and during menstruation and pregnancy, yīn-blood pours down into the *chōng* and *rèn* channels and the sea of blood. This exacerbates the vacuity of yīn-blood, and the blood vacuity can engender wind and produce dryness. This pathomechanism manifests in wind wheals during menstruation and generalized itching in pregnancy.

*Liver wind stirring internally:* During pregnancy, blood accumulates in the lower body to nourish the fetus. When yīn is vacuous and yáng is hyperactive, yáng stirs to form wind, causing internal stirring of liver wind. This leads to threatened pregnancy epilepsy and epilepsy in pregnancy.

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### ***Spleen Pathomechanisms***

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The spleen is the root of later heaven and the source of qì and blood formation. The spleen governs movement and transformation as well as the containment of blood. Pathomechanisms of the spleen are primarily related to insufficient production and transformation, and a breakdown in upbearing the clear and downbearing the turbid. Spleen pathomechanisms often manifest in irregularities of supply and distribution and a loss of the spleen's containing function.

*Spleen vacuity with scant blood:* Weakness of the spleen may arise from constitutional vacuity, dietary irregularities, an imbalance of activity and rest, or disorders of the other viscera affecting the spleen and stomach. When spleen qì is weak, intake and movement are impaired. Poor blood formation causes the blood to be scant, which causes the *chōng* and *rèn* channels to be deprived of nourishment and the sea of blood to lack fullness. This manifests as delayed menstruation, scant menstruation, menstrual block, atrophied fetus, or scant breast milk.

*Spleen vacuity failing to control the blood:* When the spleen's containing and controlling function is impaired, the *chōng* and *rèn* channels become insecure, manifesting in profuse menstruation, prolonged menstruation, flooding and spotting, or fetal spotting. If there is center qì fall, the patient may present with abnormal vaginal discharge or uterine prolapse.

*Spleen vacuity with exuberant dampness:* If dampness pours down into the lower burner, it may damage the *dài mài* and cause a loss of its ability to ensure retention. This manifests in abnormal vaginal discharge. If damp gathers to form phlegm, phlegm-damp congests the *chōng* and *rèn* channels and the uterus, manifesting in scant menstruation, menstrual block, infertility, and concretions and conglomerations.

*Spleen-stomach weakness:* During pregnancy, the *chōng* qì is relatively exuberant because the menstrual blood is not discharged. Thus, the *chōng* qì may ascend counterflow to invade the stomach. This inhibits the stomach's normal downbearing and produces vomiting during pregnancy (called "malign obstruction" in Chinese). Additionally, spleen-stomach weakness affects the formation and transformation of qì and blood, and is thus involved in many diseases of menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding.

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### ***Heart Pathomechanisms***

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The heart governs the spirit as well as the blood and vessels. The uterine vessels are ascribed to the heart and net the womb. If the heart is harassed by anxiety, thought, and preoccupation, heart qì is unable to descend. This causes the uterine vessels to be blocked, leading to menstrual block, menstrual irregularities, or infertility. When heart fire is hyperactive, kidney water fails to ascend. Water and fire not helping each other may lead to heart vexation in pregnancy, visceral agitation, or postpartum emotional depression.

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### ***Lung Pathomechanisms***

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The lung governs qì and governs depurative downbearing. It faces the hundred vessels and regulates the waterways (the *Nèi Jīng* statement that the "lung faces the hundred vessels" means that the blood of the whole body must pass through the lung channel and the lung proper). In cases of yīn vacuity with effulgent fire, when yīn-blood pours downward to the *chōng* and *rèn* vessels during menstruation, the lung yīn becomes even more vacuous. Vacuity fire then scorches the network vessels of the lung, which causes blood ejection and spontaneous external bleeding during menstruation. If the lung fails to diffuse downward and regulate the waterways, it may cause pregnancy swelling, pregnancy cough, or inhibited urination during pregnancy or after childbirth.

# UTERINE FIBROIDS

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## *Definition*

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Uterine fibroids, like many other palpable masses in the lower abdomen or pelvic cavity, fit into the traditional Chinese medical disease of concretions and conglomerations (癥瘕 *zhēng jiǎ*). Many patients with uterine fibroids also experience heavy menstrual bleeding, which falls under the TCM disease of “profuse menstruation.” If bleeding occurs outside of the normal menstrual cycle, the disease may be categorized as “flooding and spotting.”

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## *Pathomechanisms*

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The TCM disease causes relevant to uterine fibroids may be broken up as follows: 1) external invasion of evil, 2) extremes of the seven affects, 3) visceral vacuity, and 4) damage to the qì, blood, and channels from surgical damage, sexual intemperance, or an imbalance of activity and rest.

This condition is located in the uterus, and its primary pathomechanisms revolve around the development of blood stasis. At its inception, it is primarily a repletion pattern. However, when static blood binds internally, blood cannot return to the channels. Incessant flooding or spotting often occur in patients with uterine fibroids; over time, this leads to qì vacuity or blood vacuity (if severe, the patient will present with dual vacuity of qì and blood). Furthermore, because enduring stasis forms heat, heat may scorch the yīn-essence, causing an insufficiency of yīn and a superabundance of yáng. This process manifests as vacuity heat. Thus, a complex mixture of vacuity and repletion often develops over time.

The pathomechanisms of this disease may be divided according to five general mechanisms through which static blood accumulates and develops into concretions or conglomerations (*zhēng jiǎ*). These mechanisms are: 1) collection of static blood (collection of blood that has left the channels), 2) qì stagnation leading to blood stasis, 3) congealing cold causing blood stasis, 4) phlegm and static blood binding together, and 5) qì vacuity leading to blood stasis.

*Collection of static blood:* “Blood that has left the channels” is static blood. A surplus of blood lodged outside of the channels may arise from residual blood left over from menstruation or childbirth, or may also result from surgical damage or damage from sex. During menstruation and after childbirth, the blood chamber is open and the uterine vessels are vacuous; thus, it is easy for evil to exploit vacuity to invade the body at this time. The surplus of blood outside the channels may contend with evil qì to bind within the uterus. When old static blood fails to leave, new blood is unable to return to the channels and congeals to form stasis. Over time, this forms concretions (癥 *zhēng*).

*Qì stagnation with blood stasis:* Qì is the commander of the blood, so qì stagnation can produce blood stasis. A primary cause of this pathomechanism is internal damage

from the seven affects (joy, anger, anxiety, thought, sorrow, fear, and fright) that results in binding depression of liver qi. When the liver's free coursing function is impaired, the *chōng mài* (thoroughfare vessel) and *rèn mài* (controlling vessel) become inhibited. Thus, qi and blood stagnate in the uterus and gradually form concretions.

*Congealing cold blood stasis:* Cold by nature causes contraction and tautness. According to Chinese medical theory, “when blood contracts cold, it congeals and binds to form lumps.” Either externally-contracted cold evil or cold resulting from yáng vacuity can lead to hypertonicity of the channels and slow stagnant movement of blood. This forms stasis, which lodges and gradually forms concretions or conglomerations over time.

*Phlegm and static blood binding together:* Constitutional spleen-kidney yáng vacuity results in weakened movement and transformation of water-damp; accumulating dampness then forms phlegm. This results in phlegm-turbidity obstructing the uterus and the uterine vessels. Phlegm is sticky and difficult to eliminate; it binds and congests the channels, obstructing the movement of blood. When phlegm and blood contend with each other over time, concretions may be formed.

*Qi vacuity leading to blood stasis:* When qi is weak, it lacks the strength to move blood, resulting in slow and stagnant movement in the channels and vessels. Inhibited movement of blood forms stasis over time, and can eventually result in concretions.

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### *Treatment*

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The *Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng* (“The Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon”) outlined the basic treatment methods for concretions and conglomerations, and the methods that it mentioned are still the basis of therapy today. According to the *Nèi Jīng*: “Hardness is whittled away, what intrudes is eliminated, lodging is treated by attacking, [and] binding is treated by dissipation.”

1800 years later, the original concepts laid down in the *Nèi Jīng* remained the foundation of medicinal therapy in the Qing Dynasty, China’s final dynastic period. The Qing emperors commissioned the compilation of the *Yī Zōng Jīn Jiàn* (“The Golden Mirror of Orthodox Medicine”), which summed up much of the useful clinical information that had accumulated throughout Chinese history. The *Yī Zōng Jīn Jiàn* was an influential text in the development of modern gynecology. It states: “In treating any kind of concretion or accumulation, first ascertain whether the physical body is strong or weak and whether the condition of the disease is mild or urgent, and then treat accordingly. If the patient is vacuous, then her qi-blood is debilitated, and she cannot undergo attacking and quelling therapies; even if the disease is in exuberance, first support the right qi and later treat the disorder. If there is repletion of both physical form and symptoms, attacking the disorder is appropriate. The *Nèi Jīng* says to reduce great accumulations and great gatherings by half, and then cease applying attacking therapy. This is because of fears that excessive attacking will damage the qi and blood. Luó Tiān-Yì said: ‘Nourishing the right naturally eliminates accumulations.’ He can be praised as one who understands the essence of the *Nèi Jīng*.”

Clinically, treatment of uterine fibroids is primarily based upon treating presenting symptoms. The main objectives of treatment are to control the volume of menstrual blood, attend to presenting symptoms, and reduce the size of the fibroid. This condition develops over a long time, and pathological changes are usually rather slow. It requires prolonged treatment with medicinal therapy. Because proper treatment with Chinese

medicine produces few side-effects, integrative Chinese medical texts suggest using medicinal therapy for cases where surgery is not practical or desirable. Small fibroids (approximately the size of an eight-week fetus or smaller) are more suitable to Chinese medical treatment than large fibroids.

The major methods of treatment are: quickening blood, rectifying qì, breaking stasis, dispersing concretions, softening hardness, and dissipating binds. However, it is essential to consider the patient's constitutional strength or weakness, the duration of the condition, and the disease pattern; a balance between supporting right qì and dispelling evil is necessary for a good treatment effect. Although the fibroids themselves are primarily due to repletion, they frequently cause profuse bleeding which wears on yīn-blood. If large quantities of harsh blood-quickening, stasis-transforming medicinals are used, they may exacerbate the symptoms of vacuity.

Chinese medical texts indicate that symptom control is relatively easy to accomplish with Chinese medicine, but eliminating concretions and conglomerations is more difficult. Chinese texts typically recommend surgery in cases where the size of the fibroid is equal to or larger than a twelve-week fetus and profuse menstruation cannot be reduced. Surgery is also recommended for cases where the fibroid is growing very rapidly, as well as cases where the fibroids protrude into the vagina.

Integrative textbooks provide a number of basic treatments that can be administered regardless of pattern. However, most texts emphasize the importance of using pattern diagnosis as the basis for determining treatment. One of the basic protocols based on modern disease diagnosis is outlined below.

During the time of menstruation, use the following formula to boost qì, nourish the blood, and stanch bleeding while rectifying qì and transforming stasis:

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*dǎng shēn* (党参 codonopsis, *Codonopsis Radix*) 30 g  
*hé shǒu wū* (何首乌 flowery knotweed, *Polygoni Multiflori Radix*) (processed) 30 g  
*mǔ lì* (牡蛎 oyster shell, *Ostreae Concha*) 30 g  
*yì mǔ cǎo* (益母草 leonurus, *Leonuri Herba*) 30 g  
*lì zhī hé* (荔枝核 litchee pit, *Litchi Semen*) 30 g  
*bái zhú* (白朮 white atractylodes, *Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma*) 15 g  
*xuè yú tàn* (血余炭 charred hair, *Crinis Carbonisatus*) 15 g  
*guàn zhòng* (贯众 aspidium, *Aspidii Rhizoma*) (dry-fried) 20 g  
*chǎo pú huáng* (炒蒲黄 stir-fried typha pollen, *Typhae Pollen Frictus*) 10 g  
*shēng má* (升麻 cimicifuga, *Cimicifugae Rhizoma*) 6 g

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If there is severe abdominal pain during menstruation, add 10 g each of *yán hú suǒ* (*Corydalis Rhizoma*) and *wǔ líng zhī* (*Trogopteri Faeces*).

For patients tending to kidney vacuity, with severe aching lumbus, add 20 g of *tù sī zǐ* (*Cuscutae Semen*) and 15 g of *xù duàn* (*Dipsaci Radix*).

The basic treatment is modified for the rest of the menstrual cycle. The following set formula rectifies qì, quickens blood, breaks stasis, disperses concretions, softens hardness, dissipates binds, transforms phlegm, and eliminates dampness.

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*lì zhī hé* (荔枝核 litchee pit, *Litchi Semen*) 30 g  
*shēng mǔ lì* (生牡蛎 raw oyster shell, *Ostreae Concha Cruda*) 30 g  
*shēng biē jiǎ* (生鳖甲 raw turtle shell, *Amydae Carapax Crudus*) 30 g

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*jú hé* (橘核 tangerine pip, Citri Reticulatae Semen) 15 g  
*zhè bèi mǔ* (浙贝母 Zhejiang fritillaria, Fritillariae Thunbergii Bulbus) 15 g  
*hǎi zǎo* (海藻 sargassum, Sargassum) 15 g  
*wū yào* (乌药 lindera, Linderae Radix) 15 g  
*é zhú* (莪朮 curcuma rhizome, Curcumae Rhizoma) 10 g  
*wǔ líng zhī* (五灵脂 squirrel's droppings, Trogopteri Faeces) 10 g  
*sān léng* (三棱 sparganium, Sparganii Rhizoma) 10 g  
*qīng pí* (青皮 unripe tangerine peel, Citri Reticulatae Pericarpium Viride) 10 g  
*yì yǐ rén* (薏苡仁 coix, Coicis Semen) 20 g  
*xià kū cǎo* (夏枯草 prunella, Prunellae Spica) 20 g

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For pronounced qì and blood vacuity, add 30 g of *dǎng shēn* (Codonopsis Radix) and *hé shǒu wū* (Polygoni Multiflori Radix), and 20 g of *bái zhú* (Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma).

For kidney vacuity, add 30 g of *tù sī zǐ* (Cuscutae Semen) and 15 g each of *dù zhòng* (Eucommiae Cortex) and *xù duàn* (Dipsaci Radix).

For patients with severe cold signs including pain of the smaller abdomen that responds to hot packs and copious thin clear vaginal discharge, remove *xià kū cǎo* (Prunellae Spica) and add 10 g of *xiǎo huí xiāng* (Foeniculi Fructus), 8 g of *wú zhū yú* (Evodiae Fructus), 20 g of *jīn yīng zǐ* (Rosae Laevigatae Fructus), and 30 g of *qiàn shí* (Euryales Semen).

For cases with damp-heat, manifesting in profuse yellow sticky foul vaginal discharge, short voidings of yellow urine, and a red tongue with slimy yellow fur, add 10 g of *cāng zhú* (Atractylodis Rhizoma), 15 g of *huáng bǎi* (Phellodendri Cortex), and 20 g of *dà xuè téng* (Sargentodoxae Caulis).

**Acupuncture:** Acupuncture is recommended as an adjuvant therapy for uterine fibroids. The points recommended in texts are not varied according to pattern, but rather are presented as a group for general use. The main points are the extra point for the uterus (*zǐ gōng xué*) and CV-2 (*qū gǔ*). The supplementary points are BL-23 (*shèn shū*), BL-25 (*dà cháng shū*), and SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*).

**Enema Therapy:** The use of enemas is not a traditional component of Chinese medical treatment. However, enema therapy has seen more widespread use in China in recent years, and is thought to be particularly useful for certain gynecological diseases. Rapid rectal assimilation of medicinal constituents, as well as the proximity of the rectum to the site of the disorder, makes enema therapy appropriate for conditions such as uterine fibroids. The following formula is made into 100 ml of concentrated liquid, which is inserted into the rectum following a general enema to empty the contents of the bowel. The formula is retained for two hours, once per day. Thirty days constitutes one course of treatment. This formula should not be used in the midst of profuse menstruation.

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*táo rén* (桃仁 peach kernel, Persicae Semen) 13 g  
*chuān xiōng* (川芎 chuanxiong, Chuanxiong Rhizoma) 13 g  
*sān léng* (三棱 sparganium, Sparganii Rhizoma) 13 g  
*é zhú* (莪朮 curcuma rhizome, Curcumae Rhizoma) 13 g  
*chuān shān jiǎ* (穿山甲 pangolin scales, Manis Squama) 13 g  
*mù tōng* (木通 trifoliate akebia, Akebiae Trifoliatae Caulis) 13 g

*lù lù tōng* (路路通 liquidambar fruit, Liquidambaris Fructus) 13 g  
*chén pí* (陈皮 tangerine peel, Citri Reticulatae Pericarpium) 13 g  
*zhǐ shí* (枳实 unripe bitter orange, Aurantii Fructus Immaturus) 13 g  
*kūn bù* (昆布 kelp, Laminariae/Eckloniae Thallus) 13 g  
*mǔ lì* (牡蛎 oyster shell, Ostreae Concha) 13 g  
*zhè chóng* (螭虫 ground beetle, Eupolyphaga seu Steleophaga) 12 g

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For obese patients with severe phlegm-damp, add 15 g each of *xià kǔ cǎo* (Prunellae Spica) and *bàn xià* (Pinelliae Rhizoma).

A variety of pathomechanisms contribute to the development of uterine fibroids. However, most clinical presentations can be divided into three patterns: 1) blood stasis, 2) congealing of cold-damp, and 3) phlegm and blood stasis binding together. Treatment should always be modified to match the presentation of each patient, and the degree of repletion and vacuity must be carefully assessed.

### Blood Stasis

**Treatment Method:** Quicken the blood and expel stasis, disperse concretions and dissipate binds.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula Rhubarb and Ground Beetle Pill (*dà huáng zhè chóng wán*) from the *Jīn Guì Yào Lǜe* (“Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Coffe”).

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#### *Dà Huáng Zhè Chóng Wán* (大黄螭虫丸 Rhubarb and Ground Beetle Pill)

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*dà huáng* (大黄 rhubarb, Rhei Radix et Rhizoma)  
*huáng qín* (黄芩 scutellaria, Scutellariae Radix)  
*táo rén* (桃仁 peach kernel, Persicae Semen)  
*xìng rén* (杏仁 apricot kernel, Armeniacae Semen)  
*gān dì huáng* (干地黄 dried rehmannia, Rehmanniae Radix)  
*sháo yào* (芍药 peony, Paeoniae Radix)  
*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, Glycyrrhizae Radix)  
*gān qī* (干漆 lacquer, Toxicodendri Resina)  
*méng chóng* (虻虫 tabanus, Tabanus)  
*shuǐ zhì* (水蛭 leech, Hirudo)  
*qí cáo* (蛴螬 June beetle grub, Holotrichiae Vermiculus)  
*zhè chóng* (螭虫 ground beetle, Eupolyphaga seu Steleophaga)

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This formula has many insect ingredients and is thus too harsh for cases with significant vacuity. In such cases, *méng chóng* (Tabanus) and *qí cáo* (June beetle grub) may be removed. If there is profuse menstruation, add *chǎo pú huáng* (Typhae Pollen Frictus), *chǎo wǔ líng zhī* (Trogopteri Faeces Frictum), and *sān qī fěn* (Notoginseng Radix Pulverata). If prolonged bleeding has damaged qì and yīn, you should add *shēng mài sǎn* (Pulse-Engendering Powder) to this formula.

### Congeaing of Cold-Damp

**Treatment Method:** Warm the channels and quicken the blood, transform stasis and disperse concretions.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *guì zhī fú líng wán* (Cinnamon Twig and Poria Pill) from the *Jīn Guì Yào Lǜe* (“Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Coffe”).

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*Guì Zhī Fú Líng Wán* (桂枝茯苓丸 Cinnamon Twig and Poria Pill)

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*guì zhī* (桂枝 cinnamon twig, *Cinnamomi Ramulus*)

*fú líng* (茯苓 poria, *Poria*)

*chì sháo yào* (赤芍药 red peony, *Paeoniae Radix Rubra*)

*mǔ dān pí* (牡丹皮 moutan, *Moutan Cortex*)

*táo rén* (桃仁 peach kernel, *Persicae Semen*)

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**Phlegm and Blood Stasis Binding Together**

**Treatment Method:** Rectify qì and transform phlegm, transform stasis and disperse concretions.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *kāi yù èr chén tāng* (Depression-Opening Two Matured Ingredients Decoction) together with the formula *xiāo luǒ wán* (Scrofula-Dispersing Pill).

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*Kāi Yù Èr Chén Tāng* (开郁二陈汤 Depression-Opening Two Matured Ingredients Decoction) plus *Xiāo Luǒ Wán* (消瘰丸 Scrofula-Dispersing Pill)

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*chén pí* (陈皮 tangerine peel, *Citri Reticulatae Pericarpium*)

*fú líng* (茯苓 poria, *Poria*)

*cāng zhú* (苍朮 atractylodes, *Atractylodis Rhizoma*)

*xiāng fù* (香附 cyperus, *Cyperis Rhizoma*)

*chuān xiōng* (川芎 chuanxiong, *Chuanxiong Rhizoma*)

*bàn xià* (半夏 pinellia, *Pinelliae Rhizoma*)

*qīng pí* (青皮 unripe tangerine peel, *Citri Reticulatae Pericarpium Viride*)

*é zhú* (莪朮 curcuma rhizome, *Curcumae Rhizoma*)

*bīng láng* (槟榔 areca, *Arecae Semen*)

*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, *Glycyrrhizae Radix*)

*mù xiāng* (木香 costusroot, *Aucklandiae Radix*)

*xuán shēn* (玄参 scrophularia, *Scrophulariae Radix*) (steamed)

*duàn mǔ lì* (煅牡蛎 calcined oyster shell, *Ostreae Concha Calcinata*)

*zhè bèi mǔ* (浙贝母 Zhejiang fritillaria, *Fritillariae Thunbergii Bulbus*) (steamed with the skin removed)

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## CONCRETIONS AND CONGLOMERATIONS

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### *Definition*

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Chinese medicine has traditionally classified four types of abdominal masses, which are known as concretions, conglomerations, accumulations, and gatherings (癥瘕积聚 *zhēng, jiǎ, jī, jù*, respectively). These conditions are often associated with pain and distention. Concretions and accumulations are masses of definite form and fixed location, and are associated with pain of fixed location. They stem from disease in the viscera and blood aspect. Conglomerations and gatherings are masses of indefinite form, which gather and dissipate at irregular intervals and are attended by pain of unfixed location. They are attributed to disease in the bowels and qi aspect.

Accumulations and gatherings chiefly occur in the center burner. Concretions and conglomerations chiefly occur in the lower burner and in many cases result from gynecological diseases. In general, concretions, conglomerations, accumulations, and gatherings arise when emotional depression or dietary intemperance causes damage to the liver and spleen. The resultant organ disharmony leads to obstruction and stagnation of qi, which in turn causes static blood to collect gradually. Most often the root cause is insufficiency of right qi.

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### *Pathomechanisms*

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The pathomechanisms of concretions and conglomerations are rooted in disharmony of the bowels and viscera and irregularities of qi and blood. When the qi dynamic is obstructed and stagnant, static blood collects internally. The most commonly seen patterns are qi stagnation, blood stasis, and phlegm-damp.

*Qi stagnation:* Qi stagnation may result when internal damage from the seven affects causes binding depression of liver qi (the “seven affects” are joy, anger, anxiety, thought, sorrow, fear, and fright). This pattern may also arise from evil qi obstructing the channels. Regardless of the original cause, when the qi dynamic is depressed and stagnant, the movement of blood is inhibited. Qi and blood stagnation then affects the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel), *chōng mài* (thoroughfare vessel), and uterus to accumulate in the smaller abdomen and bind to form concretions and conglomerations.

*Blood stasis:* Blood stasis may develop from a variety of pathomechanisms. For example, anger damages the liver and results in counterflow qi and lodging of blood, and anxiety and preoccupation damage the spleen, causing binding of qi and stagnation of blood.

During menstruation and after childbirth, the uterine vessels are vacuous and the blood chamber is open. If wind-cold invades at this time, qi and blood become congealed and stagnant. Another traditional cause of blood stasis is sexual intemperance when surplus blood has not been eliminated. Surplus blood contending with evil may form stasis. Whatever the cause, static blood in the uterus may accumulate to form concretions.

*Phlegm-damp*: Phlegm-damp develops for a variety of reasons. It may arise from constitutional spleen vacuity or when dietary irregularities and overconsumption of cold foods and drinks damage the spleen. Additionally, if liver qi is depressed and invades the spleen, it may cause impaired splenic movement and transformation. When movement and transformation is impaired, damp-turbidity collects internally and gathers to form phlegm. Phlegm-damp congealing with qi and blood can accumulate in the uterus to form concretions.

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### **Treatment**

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Treatment of concretions and conglomerations is based on pattern identification. Generally speaking, when the disease is in the qi, treatment is primarily centered on rectifying qi and moving stagnation, and moving blood is secondary. When the disease is in the blood, breaking stasis is the foundation of treatment and moving qi is secondary. For phlegm-damp, appropriate treatment includes dispelling phlegm, dispersing accumulations, moving qi, and quickening the blood.

New conditions in strong patients may be treated by attacking and breaking, but old illnesses in weaker patients require concurrent supplementation. In general, when the size of the mass is reduced by half, harsh methods should no longer be used to prevent damage to the original qi.

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### **Qi Stagnation**

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**Treatment Method:** Move qi and abduct stagnation, quicken the blood and dissipate binds.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *xiāng léng wán* (Cyperus and Sparganium Pill) from the text *Ji Shēng Fāng* (full name *Yán Shì Ji Shēng Fāng* (“Yan’s Formulas for Saving Lives”).

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#### *Xiāng Léng Wán* (香棱丸 Cyperus and Sparganium Pill)

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*mù xiāng* (木香 costusroot, Aucklandiae Radix)

*dīng xiāng* (丁香 clove, Caryophylli Flos)

*sān léng* (三棱 sparganium, Sparganii Rhizoma)

*é zhú* (莪朮 curcuma rhizome, Curcumae Rhizoma)

*qīng pí* (青皮 unripe tangerine peel, Citri Reticulatae Pericarpium Viride)

*zhǐ qiào (ké)* (枳壳 bitter orange, Aurantii Fructus)

*chuān liàn zǐ* (川楝子 toosendan, Toosendan Fructus)

*xiǎo huí xiāng* (小茴香 fennel, Foeniculi Fructus)

*zhū shā* (朱砂 cinnabar, Cinnabaris) (often omitted)

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For severe lower abdominal pain, add *yán hú suǒ* (Corydalis Rhizoma) and *sān qī* (Notoginseng Radix) to rectify qi and relieve pain. For irregular menstruation, delayed menstruation, or scanty menstruation, add *xiāng fū* (Cyperus Rhizoma) and *dān shēn* (Salvia Miltiorrhizae Radix) to move qi and quicken the blood. For profuse vaginal discharge, add *fú líng* (Poria) and *yì yǐ rén* (Coicis Semen).

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### **Blood Stasis**

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**Treatment Method:** Quicken the blood and transform stasis, break accumulations and disperse concretions.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *guì zhī fú líng wán* (Cinnamon Twig and Poria Pill) from the *Jīn Guì Yào Lǜe* (“Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Coffe”).

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*Guì Zhī Fú Líng Wán* (桂枝茯苓丸 Cinnamon Twig and Poria Pill)

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*guì zhī* (桂枝 cinnamon twig, *Cinnamomi Ramulus*)

*fú líng* (茯苓 poria, *Poria*)

*chì sháo yào* (赤芍药 red peony, *Paeoniae Radix Rubra*)

*mǔ dān pí* (牡丹皮 moutan, *Moutan Cortex*)

*táo rén* (桃仁 peach kernel, *Persicae Semen*)

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This formula may be modified to treat menstrual block or delayed menstruation by adding *niú xī* (*Achyranthis Bidentatae Radix*) and *zé lán* (*Lycopi Herba*) to conduct the downward movement of blood. For profuse menstruation, prolonged menstruation, or incessant flooding and spotting, add *chǎo pú huáng* (*Typhae Pollen Frictus*), *sān qī fěn* (*Notoginseng Radix Pulverata*), and *xuè yú tàn* (*Crisis Carbonisatus*). For severe pain, add *yán hú suǒ* (*Corydalis Rhizoma*), *rǔ xiāng* (*Olibanum*), and *mò yào* (*Myrrha*). If there is lower abdominal cold pain, add *ròu guì* (*Cinnamomi Cortex*), *wú zhū yú* (*Evodiae Fructus*), *xiǎo huí xiāng* (*Foeniculi Fructus*), and *pào jiāng* (*Zingiberis Rhizoma Praeparatum*).

Alternatively, for severe stasis accumulation, with hard concretion lumps, intense pain, menstrual block, dark eyes, fullness and distention in the chest and rib-sides, and dry bound stool, use *dà huáng zhè chóng wán* (*Rhubarb and Ground Beetle Pill*) from the *Jīn Guì Yào Lǜe* (“Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Coffe”).

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*Dà Huáng Zhè Chóng Wán* (大黄蟪虫丸 Rhubarb and Ground Beetle Pill)

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*dà huáng* (大黄 rhubarb, *Rhei Radix et Rhizoma*)

*huáng qín* (黄芩 scutellaria, *Scutellariae Radix*)

*táo rén* (桃仁 peach kernel, *Persicae Semen*)

*xìng rén* (杏仁 apricot kernel, *Armeniacae Semen*)

*gān dì huáng* (干地黄 dried rehmannia, *Rehmanniae Radix*)

*sháo yào* (芍药 peony, *Paeoniae Radix*)

*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, *Glycyrrhizae Radix*)

*gān qī* (干漆 lacquer, *Toxicodendri Resina*)

*méng chóng* (虻虫 tabanus, *Tabanus*)

*shuǐ zhì* (水蛭 leech, *Hirudo*)

*qí cáo* (蛴螬 June beetle grub, *Holotrichiae Vermiculus*)

*zhè chóng* (蟪虫 ground beetle, *Eupolyphaga seu Steleophaga*)

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**Phlegm-Damp**

**Treatment Method:** Transform phlegm and eliminate dampness, dissipate binds and disperse concretions.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *kāi yù èr chén tāng* (*Depression-Opening Two Matured Ingredients Decoction*).

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*Kāi Yù Èr Chén Tāng* (开郁二陈汤 Depression-Opening Two Matured Ingredients Decoction) plus *Xiǎo Luǒ Wán* (消瘰丸 Scrofula-Dispersing Pill)

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*chén pí* (陈皮 tangerine peel, Citri Reticulatae Pericarpium)

*fú líng* (茯苓 poria, Poria)

*cāng zhú* (苍朮 atractylodes, Atractylodis Rhizoma)

*xiāng fù* (香附 cyperus, Cyperi Rhizoma)

*chuān xiōng* (川芎 chuanxiong, Chuanxiong Rhizoma)

*bàn xià* (半夏 pinellia, Pinelliae Rhizoma)

*qīng pí* (青皮 unripe tangerine peel, Citri Reticulatae Pericarpium Viride)

*é zhú* (莪朮 curcuma rhizome, Curcumae Rhizoma)

*bīng láng* (槟榔 areca, Arecae Semen)

*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, Glycyrrhizae Radix)

*mù xiāng* (木香 costusroot, Aucklandiae Radix)

*shēng jiāng* (生姜 fresh ginger, Zingiberis Rhizoma Recens)

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For spleen-stomach weakness, remove *bīng láng* (Arecae Semen) and add *dǎng shēn* (Codonopsis Radix) and *bái zhú* (Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma) to fortify the spleen and boost qì. For strong patients with repletion conditions, *tíng lì zǐ* (lepidium/descurainiae) and *jīn méng shí* (Micae Lapis Aureus) may be added.

# PROFUSE MENSTRUATION

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## *Definition*

Profuse menstruation refers to greater menstrual flow or a longer menstrual period than normal. Some texts divide these two conditions and deal with them independently. Profuse menstruation was not historically quantified, although some modern texts suggest that over 100 ml of blood loss in a single menstrual cycle qualifies as profuse menstruation. Prolonged menstruation is typically defined as a menstrual period lasting longer than seven days. Profuse menstruation was recorded very early in Chinese medical history, and is found in the Han Dynasty text *Jīn Guì Yào Lùe* (“Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Coffin”).

Profuse menstruation should be clinically differentiated from flooding and spotting. Profuse menstruation refers to profuse bleeding within a normal menstrual cycle, whereas flooding and spotting occur outside of the normal menstrual cycle. Profuse menstruation and prolonged menstruation are largely similar in terms of their pathomechanisms, pattern identification, and treatment.

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## *Pathomechanisms*

The core pathomechanisms in profuse menstruation relate to pathological changes affecting the *chōng mài* (thoroughfare vessel) and *rèn mài* (controlling vessel). Qi vacuity, blood heat, and blood stasis are the primary disease causes involved.

*Qi vacuity:* Qi vacuity can lead to profuse menstruation if the spleen fails to control the blood. This may occur as a result of constitutional weakness, dietary irregularities, excessive taxation, or damage to the spleen from major illness. Spleen vacuity causes loss of the spleen’s containing function. This causes insecurity in the *chōng mài* and *rèn mài*, which fail to contain the menstrual blood, producing profuse menstruation.

*Blood heat:* Blood heat damages the *chōng mài* and *rèn mài* and causes frenetic movement of hot blood. Deep-lying heat in the *chōng mài* and *rèn mài* may result from a variety of factors, including constitutional *yáng* exuberance, excessive consumption of acrid, dry, or *yáng*-assisting substances, as well as externally contracted heat evils or fire formation from the seven affects.

*Blood stasis:* When static blood collects and accumulates in the *chōng mài* and *rèn mài*, new blood cannot return to the channels. The blood thus moves frenetically, producing profuse menstruation.

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## *Treatment*

Treatment of profuse menstruation is generally based upon pattern identification. While many practitioners believe that pattern identification yields superior clinical results, modern textbooks also list empirical formulas that may be used regardless of pattern with

slight modifications. Such formulas are sometimes used in integrative medicine by practitioners who are either skeptical of the validity of pattern diagnosis or are not sufficiently trained to apply it; these practitioners typically use disease identification as the basis for determining treatment, and use standard formulas with slight variations.

For example, the following empirical formula is recommended for patients with uterine fibroids and concurrent profuse menstruation or prolonged menstruation. Three packs of this formula are taken for the first two days of the menstrual cycle to reduce bleeding and shorten the menstrual period.

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*yì mǔ cǎo* (益母草 leonurus, Leonuri Herba) 30 g  
*guàn zhòng* (贯众 aspidium, Aspidii Rhizoma) (charred) 15 g  
*qiàn cǎo* (茜草 madder, Rubiae Radix) 12 g  
*shān zhā* (山楂 crataegus, Crataegi Fructus) (unprocessed) 15 g  
*hóng huā* (红花 carthamus, Carthami Flos) (dry-fried) 10 g  
*mò hàn lián* (墨旱莲 eclipta, Ecliptae Herba) 30 g  
*shēng dì yú* (生地榆 raw sanguisorba, Sanguisorbae Radix Cruda) 30 g  
*ōu jié* (藕节 lotus root node, Nelumbinis Rhizomatis Nodus) 30 g  
*sān qī fěn* (三七粉 powdered notoginseng, Notoginseng Radix Pulverata) 3 g

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For qì vacuity, add *huáng qí* (Astragali Radix), charred *bái zhú* (Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma), *dǎng shēn* (Codonopsis Radix), and *shēng má* (Cimicifugae Rhizoma). For pronounced heat signs, add charred *tiáo qín* (Scutellariae Radix Nova), charred *zhī zǐ* (Gardeniae Fructus), and charred *huáng bǎi* (Phellodendri Cortex). For cold presentations, add *pào jiāng* (Zingiberis Rhizoma Praeparatum) and *ài yè* (Artemisiae Argyi Folium). For abdominal pain, add *yán hú suǒ* (Corydalis Rhizoma) and *wǔ líng zhī* (Trogopteri Faeces). Finally, for blood vacuity, add charred *bái sháo* (Paeoniae Radix Alba), charred *shú dì huáng* (Rehmanniae Radix Praeparata), and *ē jiāo* (Asini Corii Colla).

### Qì Vacuity

**Treatment Method:** Supplement qì and contain the blood, nourish the blood and regulate the menses.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *jǔ yuán jiān* (Origin-Lifting Brew) from the *Jīng Yuè Quán Shū* (“Jing-Yuè’s Complete Compendium”).

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#### *Jǔ Yuán Jiān* (举元煎 Origin-Lifting Brew)

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*rén shēn* (人参 ginseng, Ginseng Radix)  
*huáng qí* (黄芪 astragalus, Astragali Radix)  
*shēng má* (升麻 cimicifuga, Cimicifugae Rhizoma)  
*bái zhú* (白朮 white atractylodes, Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma)  
*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, Glycyrrhizae Radix)

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This formula may be modified to further reduce the length of menstruation and the quantity of bleeding by adding *ē jiāo* (Asini Corii Colla), *hǎi piāo xiāo* (Sepiae Endoconcha), *qiàn cǎo* (Rubiae Radix), and *yì mǔ cǎo* (Leonuri Herba). For sagging and cold in the smaller abdomen, *pào jiāng* (Zingiberis Rhizoma Praeparatum) and *ài yè* (Artemisiae Argyi Folium) may be added.

Other formulas applicable for this pattern include *bǔ zhōng yì qì tāng* (Center-Supplementing Qi-Boosting Decoction) and *guī pí tāng* (Spleen-Returning Decoction). In addition, the following empirical formula may be used:

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*shēng huáng qí* (生黄芪 raw astragalus, Astragali Radix Cruda) 50 g  
*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, Angelicae Sinensis Radix) 10 g  
*hǎi piāo xiāo* (海螵蛸 cuttlefish bone, Sepiae Endoconcha) 40 g  
*qiàn cǎo* (茜草 madder, Rubiae Radix) 10 g  
*shēng dì yú* (生地榆 raw sanguisorba, Sanguisorbae Radix Cruda) 50 g  
*shān zhū yú* (山茱萸 cornus, Corni Fructus) 20 g

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This formula is decocted with 30 ml of vinegar, with one pack divided into three doses taken over the course of one day. Two to four packs generally stanch the bleeding.

**Acupuncture:** Base treatment mainly on the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel), spleen, and stomach channels. Select CV-6 (*qì hǎi*), CV-4 (*guān yuán*), SP-10 (*xuè hǎi*), ST-36 (*zú sǎn lǐ*), BL-20 (*pí shū*), SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), SP-2 (*dà dū*), and LR-8 (*qū quán*); needle with supplementation and add moxa.

### Blood Heat

**Treatment Method:** Clear heat and cool the blood, and stanch bleeding and regulate the menses.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *bǎo yīn jiān* (Yīn-Safeguarding Brew) from the *Jīng Yuè Quán Shū* (“Jing-Yue’s Complete Compendium”), with the addition of *huái huā* (Sophorae Flos) and *dì yú* (Sanguisorbae Radix).

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#### *Bǎo Yīn Jiān* (保阴煎 Yīn-Safeguarding Brew) (modified)

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*shēng dì huáng* (生地黄 dried rehmannia, Rehmanniae Radix Exsiccata)  
*shú dì huáng* (熟地黄 cooked rehmannia, Rehmanniae Radix Praeparata)  
*huáng qín* (黄芩 scutellaria, Scutellariae Radix)  
*huáng bǎi* (黄柏 phellodendron, Phellodendri Cortex)  
*bái sháo* (白芍 white peony, Paeoniae Radix Alba)  
*shān yào* (山药 dioscorea, Dioscoreae Rhizoma)  
*xù duàn* (续断 dipsacus, Dipsaci Radix)  
*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, Glycyrrhizae Radix)  
*dì yú* (地榆 sanguisorba, Sanguisorbae Radix)  
*huái huā* (槐花 sophora flower, Sophorae Flos)

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If there is dry bound stool, add *zhī mǔ* (Anemarrhenae Rhizoma) and *dà huáng* (Rhei Radix et Rhizoma); this frees the stool and drains fire while also strengthening the blood-stanching effect. For dry mouth and throat, add *shā shēn* (Adenophorae seu Glehniae Radix) and *mài dōng* (Ophiopogonis Radix). Finally, for externally contracted heat evils, add *jīn yín huā* (Lonicerae Flos), *sāng yè* (Mori Folium), and *yú xīng cǎo* (Houttuyniae Herba).

Some texts suggest that cases of repletion patterns of blood heat profuse menstruation should be treated with *qīng jīng tāng* (Menses-Clearing Decoction), while vacuity patterns should be treated with *dì gǔ pí yīn* (Lycium Root Bark Beverage) or *liǎng dì tāng* (Rehmannia and Lycium Root Bark Decoction).

**Acupuncture:** For repletion patterns, base treatment on the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel), spleen, liver, stomach, and large intestine channels. Select the following points and needle with draining technique: CV-4 (*guān yuán*), SP-10 (*xuè hǎi*), LR-3 (*tài chōng*), LI-11 (*qū chí*), LI-2 (*èr jiān*), ST-44 (*nèi tíng*), and LR-2 (*xíng jiān*). For vacuity patterns, base treatment on the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel) and three *yīn* channels of the foot. Select CV-4 (*guān yuán*), SP-10 (*xuè hǎi*), KI-6 (*zhào hǎi*), KI-2 (*rán gǔ*), SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), and HT-7 (*shén mén*). Needling should be done with even supplementation and drainage.

### Blood Stasis

**Treatment Method:** Quicken the blood and transform stasis, stanch bleeding and regulate the menses.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *shī xiào sǎn* (Sudden Smile Powder) from the *Tài Píng Huì Mǐn Hé Jì Jú Fāng* (“Tài-Píng Imperial Grace Pharmacy Formulas”), with the addition of *yì mǔ cǎo* (Leonuri Herba), *xuè yú tàn* (Crisis Carbonisatus), and *qiàn cǎo* (Rubiae Radix).

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#### *Shī Xiào Sǎn* (失笑散 Sudden Smile Powder) (modified)

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*pú huáng* (蒲黄 typha pollen, Typhae Pollen)  
*wǔ líng zhī* (五灵脂 squirrel’s droppings, Troglodyteri Faeces)  
*yì mǔ cǎo* (益母草 leonurus, Leonuri Herba)  
*xuè yú tàn* (血余炭 charred hair, Crisis Carbonisatus)  
*qiàn cǎo* (茜草 madder, Rubiae Radix)

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Alternatively, the following empirical formula may be used for patients with a blood stasis presentation of uterine fibroids and concurrent profuse menstruation:

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*huáng qí* (黄芪 astragalus, Astragali Radix) 9 g  
*guì zhī* (桂枝 cinnamon twig, Cinnamomi Ramulus) 9 g  
*fú líng* (茯苓 poria, Poria) 9 g  
*mǔ dān pí* (牡丹皮 moutan, Moutan Cortex) 9 g  
*táo rén* (桃仁 peach kernel, Persicae Semen) 9 g  
*chì sháo* (赤芍 red peony, Paeoniae Radix Rubra) 9 g  
*sān léng* (三棱 sparganium, Sparganii Rhizoma) 9 g  
*é zhú* (莪朮 curcuma rhizome, Curcumae Rhizoma) 9 g

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**Acupuncture:** Base treatment mainly on the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel) and spleen channels. Select CV-6 (*qì hǎi*), SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), SP-1 (*yīn bái*), SP-8 (*dì jī*), ST-30 (*qì chōng*), and SP-12 (*chōng mén*); needle with drainage.

# FLOODING AND SPOTTING

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## *Definition*

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Flooding and spotting refers to any abnormal discharge of blood via the vagina. Flooding (*bēng*) is heavy menstrual flow or abnormal bleeding via the vagina (uterine bleeding); spotting (*lòu*), literally “leaking” in Chinese, is a slight, often continual discharge of blood via the vagina. Since each may give way to the other, they are commonly referred to together. Flooding and spotting usually occur in puberty or at menopause. It is attributed to insecurity of the *chōng* (thoroughfare) and *rèn* (controlling) vessels, which may stem from a variety of causes.

Generally speaking, flooding and spotting refer to bleeding outside of the normal menstrual cycle. Abnormally heavy bleeding during menstruation is typically classified as profuse menstruation rather than flooding, although this distinction is not absolute. Likewise, abnormally light menstrual flow occurring at a regular menstrual interval is typically labeled as scant menstruation rather than spotting.

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## *Pathomechanisms*

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Flooding and spotting is primarily caused by kidney vacuity, spleen vacuity, blood heat, and blood stasis. As in many menstrual diseases, TCM theory uses the *chōng mài* (thoroughfare vessel) and *rèn mài* (controlling vessel) to explain the disease process. While flooding and spotting is primarily due to insecurity of the *chōng* and *rèn* channels leading to failure to contain the menstrual blood, this insecurity is, in turn, rooted in basic disharmonies of *qì* and blood or the bowels and viscera.

*Kidney vacuity:* The importance of the kidney in menstrual pathologies inspired the text *Fù Qīng Zhǔ Nǚ Kē* (“Fù Qīng-Zhǔ’s Gynecology”) to state: “All menstrual bleeding [involves] the kidney.” Flooding and spotting are commonly seen in young women with earlier-heaven insufficiency. Such patients have weak kidney *qì*; thus, when *tiān-guǐ* arrives, their *chōng* and *rèn* channels lack exuberance. Serious vacuity may also be seen in older women, who gradually develop kidney *qì* vacuity during menopause. In addition, early marriage, multiparity, and sexual intemperance can damage the kidney *qì*.

If the essence-blood is damaged and kidney *yīn* is depleted, vacuity fire may stir the blood, leading to flooding and spotting. Alternatively, if there is vacuity detriment of the kidney *yáng*, the kidney loses its storing function. This causes insecurity of the *chōng* and *rèn* channels, which then fail to control the blood, producing flooding and spotting.

*Spleen vacuity:* The spleen may be damaged by excessive thought and preoccupation, dietary irregularities, or overexertion. Interestingly, Zhāng Jǐng-Yuè further developed the idea of thought damaging the spleen with his statement that “difficulty in releasing thought causes damage to the spleen.” When the spleen is damaged, there can be falling of *qì* and containment failure. The *chōng* and *rèn* channels become insecure and fail to control the menstrual blood, which results in flooding and spotting.

*Liver depression:* The liver governs free coursing and rectifies the sea of blood. Liver qì depressing over time forms fire and impaired free coursing causes irregular menstruation, alternating menstrual block and flooding, or incessant spotting. Liver qì depression may arise when affect-mind frustration leads to depression and anger that damage the liver and impair free coursing. It may also develop from invasion of external damp-heat and insufficiency of yin-blood depriving the liver of nourishment.

*Blood heat:* Blood heat may arise from either repletion or vacuity. Vacuity patterns are related to vacuous yīn producing intense vacuity fire internally. This may result from either constitutional yīn vacuity, damage to yīn by enduring illness or loss of blood, or the gradual depletion of yīn-essence in menopause. Repletion patterns generally arise from liver depression forming fire, constitutional yáng exuberance, externally contracted heat evils, or excessive consumption of acrid, spicy, and yáng-assisting substances. No matter what the original cause is, when fire is exuberant, heat harasses the *chōng* and *rèn* channels, manifesting in frenetic movement of hot blood.

*Blood stasis:* This pathomechanism may arise when damage from the seven affects causes qì and blood to stagnate in the *chōng* and *rèn* channels. It may also arise when surplus blood has not been eliminated during menstruation or after childbirth, and evils such as heat and cold bind with the blood to form stasis. When static blood obstructs the *chōng* and *rèn*, new blood cannot return to the channels. The blood thus moves frenetically, producing bleeding.

If flooding and spotting go unresolved and there is further contraction of evil qì, or if flooding and spotting are prolonged and form stasis, the presentation becomes a mixture of vacuity and repletion. In such cases, recurrences are difficult to treat. Although flooding and spotting is basically due to disharmony of qì and blood, it may have a complex presentation and involve many viscera; thus, it is described as a serious and difficult disease in the field of gynecology.

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## *Treatment*

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Practitioners should seek to identify the pathomechanisms at the root of the disease and should treat appropriately based on the nature and pattern of the presentation. In young patients, pay attention to whether or not there is insufficiency of kidney qì and a corresponding lack of fullness in the *chōng* and *rèn* channels. In women of childbearing age, be sure to assess whether or not there has been damage to the *chōng* and *rèn* channels. For menopausal women, assess whether there are signs of liver and kidney vacuity. Generally speaking, if the blood loss is severe then the branch should be attended to first; if the bleeding is moderate or has stopped, the root pattern should be emphasized. Because flooding and spotting can be a complex disorder, it is essential to thoroughly correlate the four examinations to maximize diagnostic accuracy.

Additionally, some texts recommend acupuncture treatment to complement the blood-stanching aspect of therapy. One recommended set of points is: GV-20 (*bǎi huì*), CV-8 (*shén què*), and SP-1 (*yīn bái*). If there is clouding reversal (sudden loss of consciousness and collapse, sometimes accompanied by reversal cold of the limbs), urgently needle GV-26 (*rén zhōng*), LI-4 (*hé gǔ*), ST-36 (*zú sān lǐ*), and GV-20 (*bǎi huì*).

Another text recommends the following acumoxa protocol: Needle the primary points CV-4 (*guān yuán*), SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), and SP-1 (*yīn bái*). This treatment is then modified by pattern: To treat repletion heat, also apply draining needle technique to

SP-10 (*xuè hái*) and KI-5 (*shuǐ quán*). For yīn vacuity, add PC-6 (*nèi guān*) and KI-3 (*tài xī*). If there is spleen vacuity, add BL-20 (*pí shū*) and ST-36 (*zú sān lǐ*). For vacuity desertion, moxa GV-20 (*bǎi huì*) and CV-6 (*qì hái*). For spleen and yīn vacuity, use supplementing needle technique. Some additional acupuncture treatments are outlined in the patterns below.

### Kidney Qì Vacuity

**Treatment Method:** Supplement kidney qì, secure the *chōng mài* (thoroughfare vessel), and stanch bleeding.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *tōng mài dà shēng piàn* (Vessel-Freeing Great Engendering Tablets) from the text *Zhōng Yī Fù Kē Zhì Liáo Xué* (“Treatments in Chinese Medical Gynecology”). This formula is mostly supplementing, so it is often used in the later stages of treatment; it is particularly suited to young women.

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#### *Tōng Mài Dà Shēng Piàn* (通脉大生片 Vessel-Freeing Great Engendering Tablets)

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*dù zhòng* (杜仲 eucommia, Eucommiae Cortex)  
*xù duàn* (续断 dipsacus, Dipsaci Radix)  
*tù sī zǐ* (菟丝子 cuscuta, Cuscutae Semen)  
*sāng jì shēng* (桑寄生 mistletoe, Loranthis seu Visci Ramus)  
*ài yè* (艾叶 mugwort, Artemisiae Argyi Folium)  
*shā rén* (砂仁 amomum, Amomi Fructus)  
*fú líng* (茯苓 poria, Poria)  
*shān yào* (山药 dioscorea, Dioscoreae Rhizoma)  
*lù jiǎo shuāng* (鹿角霜 degelatinated deer antler, Cervi Cornu Degelatinatum)  
*hé shǒu wū* (何首乌 flowery knotweed, Polygoni Multiflori Radix)  
*wū yào* (乌药 lindera, Linderae Radix)  
*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, Angelicae Sinensis Radix)  
*ròu cōng róng* (肉苁蓉 cistanche, Cistanches Herba)  
*chē qián zǐ* (车前子 plantago seed, Plantaginis Semen)  
*gǒu qǐ zǐ* (枸杞子 lycium, Lycii Fructus)  
*zǐ hé chē* (紫河车 placenta, Hominis Placenta)  
*lì zhī hé* (荔枝核 litchee pit, Litchi Semen)

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Another treatment option is to combine the formula *shòu tāi wán* (Fetal Longevity Pill) with the formula *gù běn zhǐ bēng tāng* (Root-Securing Flood-Stanching Decoction). The former contains *tù sī zǐ* (Cuscutae Semen), *xù duàn* (Dipsaci Radix), *sāng jì shēng* (Taxilli Herba), and *ē jiāo* (Asini Corii Colla); while the latter contains *rén shēn* (Ginseng Radix), *huáng qí* (Astragali Radix), *bái zhú* (Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma), *shú dì huáng* (Rehmanniae Radix Praeparata), *dāng guī* (Angelicae Sinensis Radix), and *pào jiāng* (Zingiberis Rhizoma Praeparatum).

If there is severe bleeding, remove *dāng guī* (Angelicae Sinensis Radix) and add *zōng lǚ tàn* (Trachycarpi Stipulae Fibra Carbonisata), *duàn mǔ lì* (Ostreae Concha Calcinata), and *duàn lóng gǔ* (Mastodi Ossidis Fossilis Calcinata). If the bleeding is already scant, simply add *pú huáng* (Typhae Pollen) and *wǔ líng zhī* (Trogopteri Faeces) in place of the formula *gù běn zhǐ bēng tāng* (Root-Securing Flood-Stanching Decoction). For young

women, it may be appropriate to add *lù jiǎo shuāng* (Cervi Cornu Degelatinatum) and *bǔ gǔ zhī* (Psoraleae Fructus).

**Acupuncture:** The general acupuncture treatments listed above may be applied here. In addition, basic treatments for kidney qì vacuity may be used. Such treatments are based mainly on the *dū mài* (governing vessel), *rèn mài* (controlling vessel), bladder, and kidney channels. Select the points BL-23 (*shèn shū*), GV-4 (*mìng mén*), CV-4 (*guān yuán*), CV-6 (*qì hǎi*), ST-36 (*zú sān lǐ*), and KI-3 (*tài xī*), and needle with supplementation.

### Kidney Yáng Vacuity

**Treatment Method:** Warm the kidney and assist yáng, and secure the *chōng mài* (thoroughfare vessel) and stanch bleeding.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *yòu guī wán* (Right-Restoring Pill) from the *Jīng Yuè Quán Shū* (“Jīng-Yuè’s Complete Compendium”), but remove *dāng guī* (Angelicae Sinensis Radix) and *ròu guì* (Cinnamomi Cortex) and add *huáng qí* (Astragali Radix), *fù péng zǐ* (Rubi Fructus), and *chì shí zhī* (Holloysitum Rubrum).

#### *Yòu Guī Wán* (右归丸 Right-Restoring Pill) (modified)

*fù zǐ* (附子 aconite, Aconiti Radix Lateralis Praeparata)  
*shú dì huáng* (熟地黄 cooked rehmannia, Rehmanniae Radix Praeparata)  
*shān yào* (山药 dioscorea, Dioscoreae Rhizoma)  
*shān zhū yú* (山茱萸 cornus, Corni Fructus)  
*gǒu qǐ zǐ* (枸杞子 lycium, Lycii Fructus)  
*tù sī zǐ* (菟丝子 cuscutea, Cuscutae Semen)  
*lù jiǎo jiāo* (鹿角胶 deerhorn glue, Cervi Cornu Gelatinum)  
*dù zhòng* (杜仲 eucommia, Eucommiae Cortex)  
*huáng qí* (黄芪 astragalus, Astragali Radix)  
*fù péng zǐ* (覆盆子 rubus, Rubi Fructus)  
*chì shí zhī* (赤石脂 halloysite, Halloysitum Rubrum)

For young patients with kidney vacuity, some practitioners add *zǐ hé chē* (Hominis Placenta), *yín yáng huò* (Epimedium Herba), and *xiān máo* (Curculiginis Rhizoma). If there is congealing cold leading to stasis, with pain in the smaller abdomen and profuse bleeding of dark blood with clots, add *rǔ xiāng* (Olibanum), *mò yào* (Myrrha), and *wǔ líng zhī* (Trogopteri Faeces).

**Acupuncture:** General points for kidney yáng vacuity, such as BL-23 (*shèn shū*), GV-4 (*mìng mén*), KI-7 (*fù lǚ*), and KI-3 (*tài xī*) may be used in addition to the basic points listed in the treatment section above.

### Kidney Yīn Vacuity

**Treatment Method:** Enrich the kidney and boost yīn; secure the *chōng mài* (thoroughfare vessel) and stanch bleeding.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *zuǒ guī wán* (Left-Restoring Pill) from the *Jīng Yuè Quán Shū* (“Jīng-Yuè’s Complete Compendium”), but remove *chuān niú xī* (Cyathulae Radix) and add *mò hàn lián* (Ecliptae Herba) and *dì yú* (Sanguisorbae Radix).

#### *Zuǒ Guī Wán* (Left-Restoring [Kidney Yīn] Pill) (modified)

*shú dì huáng* (熟地黄 cooked rehmannia, Rehmanniae Radix Praeparata)

*shān yào* (山药 *dioscorea*, *Dioscoreae Rhizoma*)  
*shān zhū yú* (山茱萸 *cornus*, *Corni Fructus*)  
*gǒu qǐ zǐ* (枸杞子 *lycium*, *Lycii Fructus*)  
*tù sī zǐ* (菟丝子 *cuscuta*, *Cuscutae Semen*)  
*lù jiǎo jiāo* (鹿角胶 *deerhorn glue*, *Cervi Cornus Gelatinum*)  
*guī bǎn jiāo* (龟版胶 *tortoise plastron glue*, *Testudinis Carapacis et Plastris Gelatinum*)  
*dì yú* (地榆 *sanguisorba*, *Sanguisorbae Radix*) (dry-fried)  
*mò hàn lián* (墨旱莲 *eclipta*, *Ecliptae Herba*)

**Acupuncture:** Here, the treatment is based mainly on the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel), spleen, kidney, and liver channels. Select CV-4 (*guān yuán*), SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), BL-23 (*shèn shū*), BL-18 (*gān shū*), KI-3 (*tài xī*), KI-2 (*rán gǔ*), KI-10 (*yīn gǔ*), and LR-3 (*tài chōng*), and needle with supplementation.

### Liver Depression

**Treatment Method:** Course the liver and rectify qì, and secure the *chōng mài* (thoroughfare vessel) and stanch bleeding.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *xiāo yáo sǎn* (Free Wanderer Powder) from the text *Tài Píng Huì Mǐn Hé Jì Jú Fāng* (“Tài-Píng Imperial Grace Pharmacy Formulas”). When bleeding, modify this formula by removing *dāng guī* (*Angelicae Sinensis Radix*) and *wēi jiāng* (*Zingiberis Rhizoma Ustum*) and adding *mǔ dān pí* (*Moutan Cortex*), *zhī zǐ* (*Gardeniae Fructus*), charred *wū méi* (*Mume Fructus*), and charred *shān zhā* (*Crataegi Fructus*).

#### *Xiāo Yáo Sǎn* (逍遥散 Free Wanderer Powder) (modified)

*chái hú* (柴胡 *bupleurum*, *Bupleuri Radix*)  
*bái sháo* (白芍 white peony, *Paeoniae Radix Alba*)  
*bái zhú* (白朮 white atractylodes, *Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma*)  
*fú líng* (茯苓 *poria*, *Poria*)  
*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, *Glycyrrhizae Radix*)  
*bò hé* (薄荷 mint, *Menthae Herba*)  
*mǔ dān pí* (牡丹皮 *moutan*, *Moutan Cortex*)  
*shān zhī zǐ* (山梔子 *gardenia*, *Gardeniae Fructus*)  
*wū méi* (乌梅 *mume*, *Mume Fructus*) (charred)  
*shān zhā* (山楂 *crataegus*, *Crataegi Fructus*) (charred)

**Acupuncture:** Here, treatment should be based mainly on the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel), spleen, liver, and pericardium channels. Select the points CV-6 (*qì hǎi*), SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), SP-1 (*yīn bái*), LR-3 (*tài chōng*), PC-6 (*nèi guān*), TB-6 (*zhī gōu*), and LR-1 (*dà dūn*). Needle with draining technique.

### Spleen Qi Vacuity

**Treatment Method:** Fortify the spleen and boost qì, secure the *chōng mài* (thoroughfare vessel) and stanch bleeding.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use a modified version of the formula *gù běn zhǐ bēng tāng* (Root-Securing Flood-Stanching Decoction) from the text *Fù Qīng Zhǔ Nǚ Kē* (“Fù Qīng-Zhǔ’s

Gynecology”), or select *bǔ zhōng yì qì tāng* (Center-Supplementing Qi-Boosting Decoction) from the *Pí Wèi Lùn* (“On the Spleen and Stomach”).

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*Gù Běn Zhǐ Bēng Tāng* (固本止崩汤 Root-Securing Flood-Stanching Decoction) (modified)

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*rén shēn* (人参 ginseng, Ginseng Radix)

*huáng qí* (黄芪 astragalus, Astragali Radix)

*bái zhú* (白朮 white atractylodes, Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma)

*shú dì huáng* (熟地黄 cooked rehmannia, Rehmanniae Radix Praeparata)

*dāng guī tàn* (当归炭 charred tangkuei, Angelicae Sinensis Radix Carbonisata)

*pào jiāng* (炮姜 blast-fried ginger, Zingiberis Rhizoma Praeparatum)

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If there is spotting that is difficult to terminate, add *zōng lǚ tàn* (Trachycarpi Stipulae Fibra Carbonisata) and powdered *sān qī* (Notoginseng Radix).

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*Bǔ Zhōng Yì Qì Tāng* (补中益气汤 Center-Supplementing Qi-Boosting Decoction)

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*rén shēn* (人参 ginseng, Ginseng Radix)

*huáng qí* (黄芪 astragalus, Astragali Radix)

*bái zhú* (白朮 white atractylodes, Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma)

*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, Glycyrrhizae Radix)

*shēng má* (升麻 cimicifuga, Cimicifugae Rhizoma)

*chái hú* (柴胡 bupleurum, Bupleuri Radix)

*chén pí* (陈皮 tangerine peel, Citri Reticulatae Pericarpium)

*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, Angelicae Sinensis Radix)

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When the patient is bleeding, remove *dāng guī* (Angelicae Sinensis Radix) or use it in a charred form. Blood-nourishing medicinals such as *hé shǒu wū* (Polygoni Multiflori Radix) and *ē jiāo* (Asini Corii Colla) may be used instead, and *duàn mǔ lì* (Ostreae Concha Calcinata) and *duàn lóng gǔ* (Mastodi Osis Fossilia Calcinata) are often added to astringe the bleeding. After the flooding and spotting is resolved, many practitioners use the formula *guī pí tāng* (Spleen-Returning Decoction) to treat the root.

**Acupuncture:** Base your treatment mainly on the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel) and spleen channels. Select GV-20 (*bǎi huì*), CV-12 (*zhōng wǎn*), CV-6 (*qì hǎi*), BL-20 (*pí shū*), CV-4 (*guān yuán*), ST-36 (*zú sān lǐ*), and SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*); needle with supplementation and add moxa.

### Blood Heat

**Treatment Method:** Clear heat and cool the blood, and secure the *chōng mài* (thoroughfare vessel) and stanch bleeding.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *qīng rè gù jīng tāng* (Heat-Clearing Menses-Securing Decoction) from the text *Jiǎn Míng Zhōng Yī Fù Kē Xué* (“Concise Chinese Medical Gynecology”).

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*Qīng Rè Gù Jīng Tāng* (清热固经汤 Heat-Clearing Menses-Securing Decoction)

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*shēng dì huáng* (生地黄 dried rehmannia, Rehmanniae Radix Exsiccata)

*dì gǔ pí* (地骨皮 lycium root bark, Lycii Cortex)

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*zhì guī bǎn* (炙龟板 processed tortoise shell, Testudinis Carapax et Plastrum cum Liquido Fricti)  
*mǔ lì fěn* (牡蛎粉 oyster shell powder, Ostreae Concha Pulverata)  
*ē jiāo* (阿胶 ass hide glue, Asini Corii Colla)  
*huáng qín* (黄芩 scutellaria, Scutellariae Radix)  
*ōu jié* (藕节 lotus root node, Nelumbinis Rhizomatis Nodus)  
*chén zōng tàn* (陈棕炭 charred old trachycarpus, Trachycarpi Stipulae Fibra Veta Carbonisata)  
*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, Glycyrrhizae Radix)  
*zhī zǐ tàn* (栀子炭 charred gardenia, Gardeniae Fructus Carbonisatus)  
*dì yú* (地榆 sanguisorba, Sanguisorbae Radix)

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If there is heart vexation, irascibility, and distention and pain in the smaller abdomen and rib-sides from heat in the liver channel, add *chái hú* (Bupleuri Radix), *xià kū cǎo* (Prunellae Spica), and *yì mǔ cǎo* (Leonuri Herba). If blood heat flooding and spotting causes severe damage to yīn, be sure to also assess the treatments outlined under kidney yīn vacuity above.

**Acupuncture:** For this pattern, base your treatment on the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel) and spleen channels. The main points are: CV-6 (*qì hǎi*), SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), and SP-1 (*yīn bái*). For repletion patterns of blood heat, add SP-10 (*xuè hǎi*) and KI-5 (*shuǐ quán*) and needle with draining technique. For qì depression transforming into fire, add LR-3 (*tài chōng*), TB-6 (*zhī gōu*), LR-1 (*dà dūn*), and LR-2 (*xíng jiān*), and needle with drainage. For yīn vacuity blood heat, add KI-6 (*zhào hǎi*), KI-2 (*rán gǔ*), KI-3 (*tài xī*), and HT-7 (*shén mén*), needling with even supplementation and drainage.

### Blood Stasis

**Treatment Method:** Quicken the blood and dispel stasis, and secure the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel) and stanch bleeding.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *zhú yū zhǐ bēng tāng* (Stasis-Expelling Flooding-Stanching Decoction) from the text *Ān Huī Zhōng Yī Yàn Fāng Xuǎn Jí* (“Selected Empirical Formulas in Chinese Medicine from Anhui Province”).

*Zhú Yū Zhǐ Bēng Tāng* (逐瘀止崩汤 Stasis-Expelling Flooding-Stanching Decoction)

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*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, Angelicae Sinensis Radix)  
*chuān xiōng* (川芎 chuanxiong, Chuanxiong Rhizoma)  
*sān qī* (三七 notoginseng, Notoginseng Radix)  
*mò yào* (没药 myrrh, Myrrha)  
*wǔ líng zhī* (五灵脂 squirrel’s droppings, Trogopteri Faeces)  
*mǔ dān pí* (牡丹皮 moutan, Moutan Cortex) (charred)  
*dān shēn* (丹参 salvia, Salviae Miltiorrhizae Radix) (dry-fried)  
*ài yè* (艾叶 mugwort, Artemisiae Argyi Folium) (dry-fried)  
*ē jiāo* (阿胶 ass hide glue, Asini Corii Colla) (stir-fried with *pú huáng* (Typhae Pollen))  
*lóng gǔ* (龙骨 dragon bone, Mastodi Osis Fossilis)  
*mǔ lì* (牡蛎 oyster shell, Ostreae Concha)  
*hǎi piāo xiāo* (海螵蛸 cuttlefish bone, Sepiae Endoconcha)

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For concurrent qì stagnation signs such as distention in the smaller abdomen, chest, and rib-sides, add *chái hú* (Bupleuri Radix), *xiāng fù* (Cyperi Rhizoma), and *chuān liàn zǐ* (Toosendan Fructus) to rectify qì and move stagnation. If there is concurrent cold evil manifesting in smaller abdominal cold pain, add *wū yào* (Linderae Radix) and *pào jiāng* (Zingiberis Rhizoma Praeparatum).

**Acupuncture:** Base your treatment on the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel) and spleen channels. Apply draining needle stimulus to CV-6 (*qì hǎi*), SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), SP-1 (*yīn bái*), SP-8 (*dì jī*), ST-30 (*qì chōng*), and SP-12 (*chōng mén*).

# MENSTRUAL PAIN

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## *Definition*

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Menstrual pain refers to pain in the smaller abdomen occurring before, during, or after menstruation. Frequently the phrases smaller abdominal pain and lesser abdominal pain are seen in Chinese medical literature. The part of the abdomen below the umbilicus is generally referred to as the smaller abdomen, while the lesser abdomen tends to refer to the lateral sides of the lower abdomen; however, this distinction is not absolute and the usage of the two terms overlaps to a certain degree.

In addition to menstrual pain, there is a separate disease in TCM gynecology for women's abdominal pain. This disease is similar to menstrual pain in that it only affects women and primarily produces pain in the lower abdomen. However, the two diseases differ because menstrual pain occurs around menstruation, whereas women's abdominal pain occurs at a different point in the menstrual cycle.

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## *Pathomechanisms*

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Menstrual pain was first recorded in the *Jīn Guì Yào Lùe* ("Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Coffin"), which was written during the Han Dynasty. In the *Zhū Bìng Yuán Hòu Lùn* ("The Origin and Indicators of Disease") of the Sui Dynasty, we find an early explanation of the pathomechanisms involved in menstrual pain. This text states that menstrual pain may be caused by taxation damaging qì and blood, leading to generalized vacuity and contraction of wind and cold. The wind and cold qì then penetrates to the uterine network vessels and damages the *chōng* and *rèn* channels.

By the Qing Dynasty, the famous physician Fù Qīng-Zhǔ wrote that the primary causes of menstrual pain were cold-damp, liver depression, and kidney vacuity; his observations are found in the text *Fù Qīng Zhǔ Nǚ Kē* ("Fù Qīng-Zhǔ's Gynecology").

The Qing Dynasty compilation known as the *Yī Zōng Jīn Jiàn* ("The Golden Mirror of Orthodox Medicine") contains a useful summary of the basic mechanisms involved in the various types of menstrual pain, and also outlines the importance of pattern identification and the need for varied treatment. It states: "When there is abdominal pain during menstruation, pain that occurs after menstruation is due to qì-blood vacuity; pain that occurs before menstruation is due to qì-blood congealing and stagnating. If the cause of the pain is qì stagnating blood, there is more distention and fullness. If the cause of the pain is blood stagnating qì, there is more pain. One must ascertain the reason for the congealing, stagnation, distention, and pain in order to properly differentiate and correctly treat this problem. The cause could be vacuity, repletion, cold, or heat."

According to modern textbooks, there are five principle pathomechanisms involved in menstrual pain: 1) qì stagnation and blood stasis, 2) cold congealing in the uterus, 3) qì and blood vacuity, 4) liver and kidney vacuity detriment, 5) damp-heat pouring downward.

*Qì stagnation and blood stasis:* Depressed liver qì results in qì stagnation; when qì stagnates, the blood stagnates as well. This process inhibits the qì dynamic within the sea of blood so that the movement of menstrual blood is inhibited, producing menstrual pain.

*Cold congealing in the uterus:* This pathomechanism can develop from either congealing cold-damp or internal cold from yáng vacuity. Congealing cold-damp may come from excessive consumption of cold and raw foods or living in a humid climate. It may also arise from getting soaked in the rain, wading through water, or swimming during menstruation. Menstrual pain is produced when cold-damp invades the uterus and inhibits the movement of blood.

By contrast, internal cold from yáng vacuity tends to come from enduring illness damaging yáng or from constitutional yáng vacuity. Internal exuberance of yīn-cold causes the uterus to be deprived of warmth and causes the *chōng* and *rèn* channels to be vacuous and cold. This makes the menstrual flow slow and stagnant, producing menstrual pain.

*Qì and blood vacuity:* Qì and blood vacuity may arise from constitutional weakness of the spleen and stomach or from major illness or enduring illness damaging qì and blood. The blood in the *chōng* and *rèn* channels becomes scant; thus, after menstruation when the sea of blood is empty, the uterine vessels are deprived of nourishment. This leads to menstrual pain.

*Liver and kidney vacuity detriment:* Vacuity detriment refers to a severe and chronic state of insufficiency. When the liver and kidney are depleted, the *chōng* and *rèn* channels are vacuous as well. After menstruation, essence-blood becomes even more vacuous, which deprives the uterine vessels of nourishment and causes menstrual pain.

*Damp-heat pouring downward:* This pathomechanism may arise from damp-heat brewing internally or from contracting damp-heat during menstruation or after childbirth. The damp-heat pours down into the *chōng* and *rèn* channels and binds with menstrual blood in the uterus, producing menstrual pain.

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### ***Treatment***

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Menstrual pain is best treated by using pattern identification as the basis for determining treatment. During acute episodes of menstrual pain, treatment of the branch by relieving pain is essential, while treatment of the root is emphasized the rest of the time. Practitioners frequently treat the root and branch simultaneously, but the degree of emphasis varies depending on the severity of the pain.

Although menstrual pain often presents with repletion, it is said that conditions “complicated by vacuity are prominent, while pure repletion is uncommon.” In general, treatment for repletion patterns begins 3–5 days prior to menstruation and is discontinued when menstruation arrives and the pain is alleviated. In vacuity cases, treatment during the remainder of the menstrual cycle is of greatest importance. For cases of mixed repletion and vacuity, treatment of the repletion is emphasized prior to menstruation and treatment of the vacuity is emphasized after menstruation. Whether the pattern is one of repletion or vacuity, texts state that at least three months must pass before the efficacy of treatment may be ascertained.

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### **Qì Stagnation and Blood Stasis**

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***Treatment Method:*** Rectify qì, transform stasis, and relieve pain.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *gé xià zhú yū tāng* (Infradiaphragmatic Stasis-Expelling Decoction) from the *Yī Lín Gǎi Cuò* (“Correction of Errors in Medical Classics”).

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*Gé Xià Zhú Yū Tāng* (膈下逐瘀汤 Infradiaphragmatic Stasis-Expelling Decoction)

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*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, *Angelicae Sinensis Radix*)  
*chuān xiōng* (川芎 *chuanxiong*, *Chuanxiong Rhizoma*)  
*chì sháo* (赤芍 red peony, *Paeoniae Radix Rubra*)  
*táo rén* (桃仁 peach kernel, *Persicae Semen*)  
*hóng huā* (红花 *carthamus*, *Carthami Flos*)  
*zhǐ qiào (ké)* (枳壳 bitter orange, *Aurantii Fructus*)  
*yán hú suǒ* (延胡索 *corydalis*, *Corydalis Rhizoma*)  
*wǔ líng zhī* (五灵脂 squirrel’s droppings, *Troglodyteri Faeces*)  
*wū yào* (乌药 *lindera*, *Linderae Radix*)  
*xiāng fù* (香附 *cyperus*, *Cyperi Rhizoma*)  
*mǔ dān pí* (牡丹皮 *moutan*, *Moutan Cortex*)  
*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, *Glycyrrhizae Radix*)

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For severe pain, add powdered *xuè jié* (*Daemonoropis Resina*) or powdered *sān qī* (*Notoginseng Radix*). For liver depression forming heat, add *xià kū cǎo* (*Prunellae Spica*), *zhī zǐ* (*Gardeniae Fructus*), and *yì mǔ cǎo* (*Leonuri Herba*).

**Acupuncture:** Base your treatment on the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel), spleen, and liver channels. Select the points CV-3 (*zhōng jǐ*), BL-32 (*cì liáo*), SP-8 (*dì jī*), SP-10 (*xuè hǎi*), ST-29 (*guī lái*), CV-6 (*qì hǎi*), LR-3 (*tài chōng*), and SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*); needle with drainage. If there are purple clots in the menstrual flow, add LR-2 (*xíng jiān*).

### Cold Congealing in the Uterus

**Treatment Method:** For cases stemming from *yáng* vacuity, warm the menses (channels) and warm the uterus while relieving pain. For cases due to congealing of cold-damp, warm the menses (channels) and dissipate cold while relieving pain.

**Medicinal Therapy:** For *yáng* vacuity, use the formula *wēn jīng tāng* (Channel-Warming (Menses-Warming) Decoction) from the text *Jīn Guì Yào Lǜ* (“Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Coffin”).

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*Wēn Jīng Tāng* (温经汤 Channel-Warming (Menses-Warming) Decoction)

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*wú zhū yú* (吴茱萸 *evodia*, *Evodiae Fructus*)  
*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, *Angelicae Sinensis Radix*)  
*chuān xiōng* (川芎 *chuanxiong*, *Chuanxiong Rhizoma*)  
*rén shēn* (人参 *ginseng*, *Ginseng Radix*)  
*shēng jiāng* (生姜 fresh ginger, *Zingiberis Rhizoma Recens*)  
*mài mén dōng* (麦门冬 *ophiopogon*, *Ophiopogonis Radix*)  
*bàn xià* (半夏 *pinellia*, *Pinelliae Rhizoma*)  
*ē jiāo* (阿胶 *ass hide glue*, *Asini Corii Colla*)  
*guì zhī* (桂枝 *cinnamon twig*, *Cinnamomi Ramulus*)  
*sháo yào* (芍药 peony, *Paeoniae Radix*)  
*mǔ dān pí* (牡丹皮 *moutan*, *Moutan Cortex*)

*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, Glycyrrhizae Radix)

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For congealing cold-damp, use the formula *shào fù zhú yū tāng* (Lesser Abdomen Stasis-Expelling Decoction) from the text *Yī Lín Gǎi Cuò* (“Correction of Errors in Medical Classics”).

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*Shào Fù Zhú Yū Tāng* (少腹逐瘀汤 Lesser Abdomen Stasis-Expelling Decoction)

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*xiǎo huí xiāng* (小茴香 fennel, Foeniculi Fructus)  
*gān jiāng* (干姜 dried ginger, Zingiberis Rhizoma)  
*yán hú suǒ* (延胡索 corydalis, Corydalis Rhizoma)  
*mò yào* (没药 myrrh, Myrrha)  
*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, Angelicae Sinensis Radix)  
*chuān xiōng* (川芎 chuanxiong, Chuanxiong Rhizoma)  
*ròu guì* (肉桂 cinnamon bark, Cinnamomi Cortex)  
*chì sháo yào* (赤芍药 red peony, Paeoniae Radix Rubra)  
*pú huáng* (蒲黄 typha pollen, Typhae Pollen)  
*wǔ líng zhī* (五灵脂 squirrel’s droppings, Troglodyteri Faeces)

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**Acupuncture:** Base the treatment mainly on the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel) and spleen channels. The basic points are CV-3 (*zhōng jī*), SP-8 (*dì jī*), and ST-28 (*shuǐ dào*); you should needle with drainage and add moxa. Vary the treatment based on the presenting signs: For abdominal distention stretching into the lumbus, add GV-4 (*mìng mén*), and BL-23 (*shèn shū*). For acute pain, add BL-32 (*cì liáo*) and ST-29 (*guī lái*). For vaginal discharge, add GB-26 (*dài mài*), BL-30 (*bái huán shū*), CV-6 (*qì hǎi*), and SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*). For yáng vacuity, add points such as KI-7 (*fù liū*), KI-3 (*tài xī*), and BL-23 (*shèn shū*).

### Qì and Blood Vacuity

**Treatment Method:** Boost qì, supplement the blood, and relieve pain.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *shèng yù tāng* (Sagacious Cure Decoction) from the text *Lán Shì Mì Cáng* (“Secret Treasure of the Orchid Chamber”).

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*Shèng Yù Tāng* (圣愈汤 Sagacious Cure Decoction)

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*rén shēn* (人参 ginseng, Ginseng Radix)  
*huáng qí* (黄芪 astragalus, Astragali Radix)  
*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, Angelicae Sinensis Radix)  
*chuān xiōng* (川芎 chuanxiong, Chuanxiong Rhizoma)  
*shú dì huáng* (熟地黄 cooked rehmannia, Rehmanniae Radix Praeparata)  
*shēng dì huáng* (生地黄 dried rehmannia, Rehmanniae Radix Exsiccata)

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**Acupuncture:** Base your treatment mainly on the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel), back transport points, and the spleen and stomach channels. Select the points CV-4 (*guān yuán*), CV-6 (*qì hǎi*), BL-23 (*shèn shū*), BL-20 (*pí shū*), ST-36 (*zú sān lǐ*), SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), and LR-3 (*tài chōng*); needle with supplementation and add moxa.

### Liver and Kidney Vacuity Detriment

**Treatment Method:** Boost the kidney and nourish the liver, regulate the menses and relieve pain.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *tiáo gān tāng* (Liver-Regulating Decoction) from the text *Fù Qīng Zhǔ Nǚ Kē* (“Fù Qīng-Zhǔ’s Gynecology”).

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*Tiáo Gān Tāng* (调肝汤 Liver-Regulating Decoction)

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*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, *Angelicae Sinensis Radix*)  
*bái sháo* (白芍 white peony, *Paeoniae Radix Alba*)  
*shān zhū yú* (山茱萸 cornus, *Corni Fructus*)  
*bā jǐ tiān* (巴戟天 morinda, *Morindae Officinalis Radix*)  
*ē jiāo* (阿胶 ass hide glue, *Asini Corii Colla*)  
*shān yào* (山药 dioscorea, *Dioscoreae Rhizoma*)  
*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, *Glycyrrhizae Radix*)

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**Acupuncture:** Base your treatment mainly on the *rèn mài* (controlling vessel), back transport points, and kidney channel. Select the points CV-4 (*guān yuán*), BL-18 (*gān shū*), BL-23 (*shèn shū*), KI-6 (*zhào hǎi*), and ST-36 (*zú sān lǐ*), and needle with supplementation. For dizziness and tinnitus, add KI-3 (*tài xī*). For limp aching lumbus and knees, add the extra point *yāo yǎn*.

**Damp-Heat Pouring Downward**

**Treatment Method:** Clear heat, eliminate dampness, transform stasis, and relieve pain.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *qīng rè tiáo xuè tāng* (Heat-Clearing Blood-Regulating Decoction).

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*Qīng Rè Tiáo Xuè Tāng* (清热调血汤 Heat-Clearing Blood-Regulating Decoction)

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*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, *Angelicae Sinensis Radix*)  
*bái sháo* (白芍 white peony, *Paeoniae Radix Alba*)  
*mǔ dān pí* (牡丹皮 moutan, *Moutan Cortex*)  
*huáng lián* (黄连 coptis, *Coptidis Rhizoma*)  
*shēng dì huáng* (生地黄 dried rehmannia, *Rehmanniae Radix Exsiccata*)  
*chuān xiōng* (川芎 chuanxiong, *Chuanxiong Rhizoma*)  
*hóng huā* (红花 carthamus, *Carthami Flos*)  
*táo rén* (桃仁 peach kernel, *Persicae Semen*)  
*yán hú suǒ* (延胡索 corydalis, *Corydalis Rhizoma*)  
*é zhú* (莪朮 curcuma rhizome, *Curcumae Rhizoma*)  
*xiāng fù* (香附 cyperus, *Cyperis Rhizoma*)

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If the heat-clearing and damp-dispelling effect of this formula is not strong enough, add *yì yǐ rén* (Coicis Semen), *bài jiàng cǎo* (*Patriniae Herba*), *chē qián zǐ* (*Plantaginis Semen*), and *dà xuè téng* (*Sargentodoxae Caulis*).

**Acupuncture:** Acupuncture treatments tend not to be explicitly listed in source texts for this pattern. However, you may wish to consider the use of points such as LI-11 (*qū chí*), LI-4 (*hé gǔ*), ST-36 (*zú sān lǐ*), and SP-9 (*yīn líng quán*). For this pattern, needle with drainage.

# ENDOMETRIOSIS

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## *Definition*

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Endometriosis refers to the presence and growth of functional endometrial tissue in places other than the uterus, and often produces severe pain or infertility.

Endometriosis was not traditionally recognized in Chinese medicine. Many patients with endometriosis present with painful menstruation, which falls under the TCM disease of “menstrual pain.” Some patients may present with irregular menstruation or infertility as well. In general, most modern practitioners believe that endometriosis is related to the TCM disease of concretions and conglomerations, although the mass of proliferating endometrial tissue is often not directly palpable. Less common presentations may present with bleeding in other parts of the body. For example, nosebleeds (often referred to under the heading of “spontaneous external bleeding” in TCM) may occur if the endometrial tissue is proliferating in the nasal mucosa.

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## *Pathomechanisms*

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Endometriosis has been extensively researched by the TCM community. Although it was not a traditional disease on its own, modern practitioners have generally established an understanding of its pathomechanisms according to TCM. Blood stasis is by far the most common explanation for endometriosis, although researchers in Taiwan have also explored the notion of heat in the liver channel based upon microscopic examination of inflamed endometrial tissue. Various pathomechanisms that may be involved in endometriosis are outlined below.

*Obstruction of the qì dynamic:* Internal damage from the seven affects causes liver depression and qì stagnation; when the qì dynamic is inhibited, the *chōng* and *rèn* channels lose harmony and the channels become obstructed.

*Static blood collecting internally:* This pathomechanism refers to blood that has left the channels to collect in the inner body. The static blood may have a variety of causative factors. If cold evil invades, it may congeal the blood to form stasis. Additionally, blood stasis due to qì stagnation or damage to the *chōng* and *rèn* channels are potential causes of this pathomechanism.

*Phlegm-damp brewing and binding:* Qì stagnation or static blood can cause the fluids to be poorly distributed and transformed. The fluids congeal and gather to form phlegm-damp, which then binds with static blood.

*Kidney yáng vacuity detriment:* When kidney yáng is insufficient, the body is deprived of warmth, the movement of qì and blood is inhibited, and the fluids fail to be distributed and transformed. The *chōng* and *rèn* channels lack free flow and fullness, which allows the basic progression of the disease to occur.

## *Treatment*

Clinically, treatment is generally based upon pattern identification, although disease identification is also commonly used as a basis for determining treatment in endometriosis. The presence of blood stasis is notable throughout the discussion.

**Treatment based on disease identification:** For an approach utilizing “disease identification as the basis for determining treatment,” a variety of empirical formulas may be used. Examples include *xuè jié sǎn* (Dragon’s Blood Powder) and *yì wèi qū yū fāng* (Stasis-Dispelling Formula for Endometriosis).

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### *Xuè Jié Sǎn* (血竭散 Dragon’s Blood Powder)

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*xuè jié* (血竭 dragon’s blood, Daemonoropis Resina) (powdered) 2 g  
*pú huáng* (蒲黄 typha pollen, Typhae Pollen) 15 g  
*sān léng* (三棱 sparganium, Sparganii Rhizoma) 9 g  
*é zhú* (莪朮 curcuma rhizome, Curcumae Rhizoma) 9 g  
*chuān liàn zǐ* (川楝子 toosendan, Toosendan Fructus) 9 g  
*chái hú* (柴胡 bupleurum, Bupleuri Radix) 6 g  
*qīng pí* (青皮 unripe tangerine peel, Citri Reticulatae Pericarpium Viride) 6 g  
*shān zhā* (山楂 crataegus, Crataegi Fructus) (raw) 10 g  
*yán hú suǒ* (延胡索 corydalis, Corydalis Rhizoma) 9 g

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If menstruation is scant, use raw *pú huáng* (Typhae Pollen) and add *dān shēn* (Salviae Miltiorrhizae Radix), *chì sháo* (Paeoniae Radix Rubra), *rǔ xiāng* (Olibanum), and *mò yào* (Myrrha). If there is profuse menstruation with clots, remove *é zhú* (Curcumae Rhizoma), *sān léng* (Sparganii Rhizoma), and *chuān liàn zǐ* (Toosendan Fructus), and use stir-fried *pú huáng* (Typhae Pollen); in addition, add *wǔ líng zhī* (Trogopteri Faeces), *xiān hè cǎo* (Agrimoniae Herba), *yì mǔ cǎo* (Leonuri Herba), and *sān qī* (Notoginseng Radix). For spleen vacuity, add *dǎng shēn* (Codonopsis Radix) and *bái zhú* (Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma).

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### *Yì Wèi Qū Yū Fāng* (异位祛瘀方 Stasis-Dispelling Formula for Endometriosis)

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*sān léng* (三棱 sparganium, Sparganii Rhizoma) 9 g  
*é zhú* (莪朮 curcuma rhizome, Curcumae Rhizoma) 9 g  
*chuān shān jiǎ* (穿山甲 pangolin scales, Manis Squama) 12 g  
*shuǐ zhì* (水蛭 leech, Hirudo) 9 g  
*sū mù* (苏木 sappan, Sappan Lignum) 12 g  
*zhè chóng* (螭虫 ground beetle, Eupolyphaga seu Steleophaga) 12 g  
*lù lù tōng* (路路通 liquidambar fruit, Liquidambaris Fructus) 9 g  
*xià kū cǎo* (夏枯草 prunella, Prunellae Spica) 12 g

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This base formula may be modified based on five major patterns:

1) *Stasis-obstruction from congealing cold-damp*: Add 9 g of *fū zǐ* (Aconiti Radix Lateralis Praeparata) and 4.5 g of *guì zhī* (Cinnamomi Ramulus). If menstruation is inhibited, add 9 g each of *dāng guī* (Angelicae Sinensis Radix) and *hóng huā* (carthamus). For intense abdominal pain, add 12 g of *yán hú suǒ* (Corydalis Rhizoma), 6 g each of *pú huáng* (Typhae Pollen) and *wǔ líng zhī* (Trogopteri Faeces), and 9 g each of *bái zhǐ* (Angelicae Dahuricae Radix) and *chuān wū* (Aconiti Radix).

2) *Qì stagnation and blood stasis*: Add 9 g each of *chuān liàn zǐ* (Toosendan Fructus), *yù jīn* (Curcumae Radix), and *wū yào* (Linderæ Radix). For abdominal distention, add 9 g of *zhǐ qiào (ké)* (Aurantii Fructus) and 12 g of *dà fū pí* (Arecae Pericarpium).

3) *Pronounced damp-heat*: Add 4.5–9 g of *dà huáng* (Rhei Radix et Rhizoma), 9 g of *huáng bǎi* (Phellodendri Cortex), 30 g each of *dà xuè téng* (Sargentodoxae Caulis) and *bài jiàng cǎo* (Patriniae Herba).

4) *Qì vacuity with blood stasis*: Add: 15 g of *dǎng shēn* (Codonopsis Radix), *huáng qí* (Astragali Radix), and *shān yào* (Dioscoreae Rhizoma). For cases with profuse menstruation, add 12 g of *xiān hè cǎo* (Agrimoniae Herba) and 9 g of *ē jiāo* (Asini Corii Colla).

5) *Kidney vacuity with stasis-obstruction*: For patients tending to kidney yáng vacuity, add 9 g each of *lù jiǎo* (Cervi Cornu) and *xiān máo* (Curculiginis Rhizoma), and 12 g each of *yín yáng huò* (Epimedii Herba) and *hú lú bā* (Trigonellae Semen). For kidney yīn vacuity cases, add 9 g of *shān zhū yú* (Corni Fructus) and 12 g each of *nǚ zhēn zǐ* (Ligustri Lucidi Fructus) and *shēng dì huáng* (Rehmanniae Radix Exsiccata seu Recens). For severe aching in the lumbus, add 15 g of *dù zhòng* (Eucommiae Cortex) and 12 g each of *sāng jì shēng* (Taxilli Herba) and processed *gōu jǐ* (Cibotii Rhizoma).

For patients with interior repletion and endometrial tissue proliferation in the pelvic region, the empirical formulas *Internal Endometriosis Pills I & II* may be used. These formulas use ground medicinals formed into pills with vinegar. The first uses a 2:2:1 ratio of *dà huáng* (Rhei Radix et Rhizoma), *biē jiǎ* (Trionycis Carapax), and *hǔ pò* (Succinum). This formula is taken twice a day at a dose of 2.5 g per time. It should be taken on an empty stomach and should not be taken during menstruation. Three months constitutes one course of treatment. The second formula is similar, but uses two parts of *táo rén* (Persicae Semen) in addition to the ingredients above. The medicinals are mixed with vinegar and then roasted and formed into pills; each dose is 3.5 g and the pills are taken twice a day. Again, three months constitutes one course of treatment.

Acupuncture therapy is not listed in the primary source texts that discuss endometriosis. However, enema therapy is sometimes used, particularly in cases with intense pain and tissue proliferation in the pelvic cavity.

**Enema therapy:** The following formulas may be prepared for use as retention enemas. Following a bowel movement, a 100–150 ml concentrated solution of one of the formulas below may be inserted rectally before bed. These enema therapies should be stopped during menstruation.

The formula ingredients are:

1) *Sān léng* (Sparganii Rhizoma) 9 g, *é zhú* (Curcumae Rhizoma) 9 g, *lù fēng fāng* (Vespae Nidus) 12 g, *chì sháo* (Paeoniae Radix Rubra) 12 g, and *zào jiǎo cì* (Gleditsiae Spina) 12 g. (Shanghai Journal of Chinese Medicine, 1995)

2) *Bái huā shé shé cǎo* (Oldenlandiae Diffusae Herba) 12 g, *bài jiàng cǎo* (Patriniae Herba) 12 g, *zǐ cǎo* (Arnebiae/Lithospermi Radix) 20 g, *dān shēn* (Salviae Miltiorrhizae Radix) 12 g, and *huáng bǎi* (Phellodendri Cortex) 12 g. (Chinese Journal of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine, 1993)

3) *Dà xuè téng* (Sargentodoxae Caulis) 15 g, *bài jiàng cǎo* (Patriniae Herba) 15 g, *sān léng* (Sparganii Rhizoma) 9 g, *é zhú* (Curcumae Rhizoma) 9 g, *yán hú suǒ* (Corydalis Rhizoma) 9 g, *mǔ dān pí* (Moutan Cortex) 9 g, *bái huā shé shé cǎo* (Oldenlandiae Dif-

fusae Herba) 15 g, *zǐ cǎo* (Arnebiae/Lithospermi Radix) 15 g, and *huáng bǎi* (Phellodendri Cortex) 9 g. (Shanghai Journal of Chinese Medicine, 1982).

**Basic principles of treatment:** In general, treatment should be modified depending on the presentation of each patient. Issues of pain, fertility, and underlying patterns must be attended to. In general, the period of time between cycles and before menstruation should be utilize quickening, transforming, attacking, or breaking methods of treatment. By contrast, treatment during menstruation often involves regulating the menses and stanching bleeding. After menstruation, the need to supplement must be assessed.

Clinically, the most common patterns of endometriosis are: 1) qì stagnation with blood stasis, 2) congealing cold with blood stasis, 3) phlegm-damp with blood stasis, 4) depressive heat with blood stasis, and 5) kidney vacuity with blood stasis.

### Qì Stagnation with Blood Stasis

**Treatment Method:** Rectify qì and quicken the blood, transform stasis and relieve pain.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *gé xià zhú yū tāng* (Infradiaphragmatic Stasis-Expelling Decoction) from the *Yī Lín Gǎi Cuò* (“Correction of Errors in Medical Classics”), with the addition of *xuè jié* (Daemonoropis Resina).

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#### *Gé Xià Zhú Yū Tāng* (膈下逐瘀汤 Infradiaphragmatic Stasis-Expelling Decoction)

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*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, Angelicae Sinensis Radix)

*chuān xiōng* (川芎 chuanxiong, Chuanxiong Rhizoma)

*chì sháo* (赤芍 red peony, Paeoniae Radix Rubra)

*táo rén* (桃仁 peach kernel, Persicae Semen)

*hóng huā* (红花 carthamus, Carthami Flos)

*zhǐ qiào (ké)* (枳壳 bitter orange, Aurantii Fructus)

*yán hú suǒ* (延胡索 corydalis, Corydalis Rhizoma)

*wǔ líng zhī* (五灵脂 squirrel’s droppings, Troglodyteri Faeces)

*wū yào* (乌药 lindera, Linderae Radix)

*xiāng fù* (香附 cyperus, Cyperi Rhizoma)

*mǔ dān pí* (牡丹皮 moutan, Moutan Cortex)

*xuè jié* (血竭 dragon’s blood, Daemonoropis Resina)

*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, Glycyrrhizae Radix)

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### Congeaing Cold with Blood Stasis

**Treatment Method:** Warm the channels and transform stasis, quicken the blood and relieve pain.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *shào fù zhú yū tāng* (Lesser Abdomen Stasis-Expelling Decoction) from the text *Yī Lín Gǎi Cuò* (“Correction of Errors in Medical Classics”).

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#### *Shào Fù Zhú Yū Tāng* (少腹逐瘀汤 Lesser Abdomen Stasis-Expelling Decoction)

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*xiǎo huí xiāng* (小茴香 fennel, Foeniculi Fructus)

*gān jiāng* (干姜 dried ginger, Zingiberis Rhizoma)

*yán hú suǒ* (延胡索 corydalis, Corydalis Rhizoma)

*mò yào* (没药 myrrh, Myrrha)

*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, Angelicae Sinensis Radix)

*chuān xiōng* (川芎 *chuanxiong*, *Chuanxiong Rhizoma*)  
*ròu guì* (肉桂 *cinnamon bark*, *Cinnamomi Cortex*)  
*chì sháo yào* (赤芍药 *red peony*, *Paeoniae Radix Rubra*)  
*pú huáng* (蒲黄 *typha pollen*, *Typhae Pollen*)  
*wǔ líng zhī* (五灵脂 *squirrel's droppings*, *Trogopteri Faeces*)

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For patients with *yáng* vacuity manifesting in sloppy stool and fear of cold, you should add *bǔ gǔ zhī* (*Psoraleae Fructus*), *yín yáng huò* (*Epimedii Herba*), and *ròu dòu kòu* (*Myristicae Semen*).

### Phlegm-Damp with Blood Stasis

**Treatment Method:** Transform stasis and disperse phlegm, soften hardness and dissipate binds.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *fù tòng níng* (Quiet Women's Pain) from the Tian-jin Journal of Chinese Medicine, 1995.

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#### *Fù Tòng Níng* (妇痛宁 Quiet Women's Pain)

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*xuè jié* (血竭 *dragon's blood*, *Daemonoropis Resina*) 3 g  
*sān léng* (三棱 *sparganium*, *Sparganii Rhizoma*) 9 g  
*é zhú* (莪朮 *curcuma rhizome*, *Curcumae Rhizoma*) 9 g  
*chuān shān jiǎ* (穿山甲 *pangolin scales*, *Manis Squama*) 10 g  
*biē jiǎ* (鳖甲 *turtle shell*, *Trionycis Carapax*) 15 g  
*zào jiǎo cì* (皂角刺 *gleditsia thorn*, *Gleditsiae Spina*) 15 g  
*hǎi zǎo* (海藻 *sargassum*, *Sargassum*) 10 g  
*kūn bù* (昆布 *kelp*, *Laminariae/Eckloniae Thallus*) 10 g  
*yì yī rén* (薏苡仁 *coix*, *Coicis Semen*) 15 g  
*bèi mǔ* (贝母 *fritillaria*, *Fritillariae Bulbus*) 10 g

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This formula is modified during different phases of the menstrual cycle. When the principle issue is painful menstruation, add *wū yào* (*Linderae Radix*), *niú xī* (*Achyranthis Bidentatae Radix*), and *lù lù tōng* (*Liquidambaris Fructus*) prior to menstruation. If the main problem is profuse menstruation, before and during menstruation add *pú huáng* (*Typhae Pollen*), *huā ruǐ shí* (*Ophicalciturum*), and *sān qī* (*Notoginseng Radix*). If the primary issue is menstrual irregularities and infertility, add appropriate Chinese medicinals to regulate the menstrual cycle. Three months constitutes one course of treatment.

### Depressive Heat with Blood Stasis

**Treatment Method:** Resolve heat, transform stasis, and relieve pain.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Combine the formulas *xiǎo chái hú tāng* (Minor Bupleurum Decoction) and *táo hé chéng qì tāng* (Peach Kernel Qi-Infusing Decoction) from the *Jīn Guì Yào Lùe* ("Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Coffin"), and add *bài jiàng cǎo* (*Patriniae Herba*), *dà xuè téng* (*Sargentodoxae Caulis*), and *mǔ dān pí* (*Moutan Cortex*).

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*Xiǎo Chái Hú Tāng* (小柴胡汤 *Minor Bupleurum Decoction*) plus *Táo Hé Chéng Qì Tāng* (桃核承气汤 *Peach Kernel Qi-Infusing Decoction*) (modified)

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*chái hú* (柴胡 *bupleurum*, *Bupleuri Radix*)  
*huáng qín* (黄芩 *scutellaria*, *Scutellariae Radix*)

*jiāng bàn xià* (姜半夏 ginger pinellia, Pinelliae Tuber cum Zingibere Praeparatum)  
*rén shēn* (人参 ginseng, Ginseng Radix)  
*zhì gān cǎo* (炙甘草 mix-fried licorice, Glycyrrhizae Radix cum Liquido Fricta)  
*shēng jiāng* (生姜 fresh ginger, Zingiberis Rhizoma Recens)  
*dà zǎo* (大枣 jujube, Jujubae Fructus)  
*táo rén* (桃仁 peach kernel, Persicae Semen)  
*dà huáng* (大黄 rhubarb, Rhei Radix et Rhizoma)  
*guì zhī* (桂枝 cinnamon twig, Cinnamomi Ramulus)  
*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, Glycyrrhizae Radix)  
*máng xiāo* (芒硝 mirabilite, Natrii Sulfas)  
*mǔ dān pí* (牡丹皮 moutan, Moutan Cortex)  
*dà xuè téng* (大血藤 sargentodoxa, Sargentodoxae Caulis)  
*bài jiàng cǎo* (败酱草 patrinia, Patriniae Herba)

In addition to the base formula above, *chuān liàn zǐ* (Toosendan Fructus) and *yán hú suǒ* (Corydalis Rhizoma) may be added to further discharge heat, rectify qì, quicken the blood, and relieve pain. For profuse menstruation or incessant dribbling of blood, add *pú huáng* (Typhae Pollen), *qiàn cǎo* (Rubiae Radix), and *xuè jié* (Daemonoropis Resina).

### Kidney Vacuity with Blood Stasis

**Treatment Method:** Supplement the kidney and boost qì, quicken the blood and transform stasis.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the empirical formula *xiān róng hé jì* (Epimedium and Cistanche Combination Formula).

#### *Xiān Róng Hé Jì* (仙蓉合剂 Epimedium and Cistanche Combination Formula)

*yín yáng huò* (淫羊藿 epimedium, Epimedii Herba)  
*ròu cōng róng* (肉苁蓉 cistanche, Cistanches Herba)  
*hé shǒu wū* (何首乌 flowery knotweed, Polygoni Multiflori Radix)  
*tù sī zǐ* (菟丝子 cuscutea, Cuscutae Semen)  
*niú xī* (牛膝 achyranthes, Achyranthis Bidentatae Radix)  
*dān shēn* (丹参 salvia, Salviae Miltiorrhizae Radix)  
*sháo yào* (芍药 peony, Paeoniae Radix)  
*é zhú* (莪朮 curcuma rhizome, Curcumae Rhizoma)  
*chuān liàn zǐ* (川楝子 toosendan, Toosendan Fructus)  
*yán hú suǒ* (延胡索 corydalis, Corydalis Rhizoma)  
*dǎng shēn* (党参 codonopsis, Codonopsis Radix)  
*huáng qí* (黄芪 astragalus, Astragali Radix)

For severe abdominal pain, add *shī xiào sǎn* (Sudden Smile Powder) and *xuè jié* (Daemonoropis Resina). For sloppy stool, add *bā jǐ tiān* (Morindae Officinalis Radix) and roasted *mù xiāng* (Aucklandiae Radix).

# GENITAL HERPES

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## *Definition*

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Chinese medicine did not have the specific disease definition that we now have for genital herpes until after the arrival of Western medicine. However, gynecology textbooks contain a basic TCM disease category for yīn sores (genital sores). This disease category is far broader than genital herpes, and includes many more serious conditions, such as sores that would now be diagnosed as chancres from syphilis or cancerous lesions. Sores similar to genital herpes were described under the disease headings of *huáng shuǐ chuāng* (“yellow-water sore”) and *nóng wō chuāng* (“purulent nest sore”), but neither of these disease descriptions precisely match our modern definition of genital herpes.

Genital herpes is usually caused by the HSV-II virus; genital lesions are also possible in patients with only the HSV-I virus, but such cases are less common. Approximately 22% of the US adult population is seropositive for HSV-II, and over 90% of US adults are positive for HSV-I. Most patients infected with the virus experience primarily mucocutaneous lesions; infections affecting the central nervous system, visceral organs, or neonates are rare, although such infections are also more severe. While most individuals suffer from relatively infrequent recurrences that are fairly mild, some patients have frequent recurrences that cause significant physical or psychological discomfort. Since herpes is incurable, many patients seek to reduce its impact upon their life through the use of complementary medicine. Thus, genital herpes is one of the most commonly seen illnesses in modern Chinese medical gynecology.

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## *Pathomechanisms*

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The *Chuāng Yáng Jīng Yàn Quán Shū* (“The Empirical Compendium on Sores”) described “yellow-water sores” in the Song Dynasty. Although the disease differed from genital herpes in several important ways, it contains an early glimpse into the pathomechanisms involved in the generation of similar sores. For example, yellow-water sores are sores exuding yellow fluid. Yellow-water sores start with a red macule within which a millet-shaped vesicle develops that is painful and itchy. When the vesicle ruptures because of scratching, a yellow watery discharge escapes, after which the sore forms a scab and heals. It most commonly affects infants and children and occurs on the head, ears, and neck, easily spreading to other parts of the body.

The *Chuāng Yáng Jīng Yàn Quán Shū* stated that the eruption of these sores arise when the “qì of harsh summerheat-heat toxin enters the flesh.” This disease was associated with the invasion of seasonal summerheat-heat evil and toxin during the summer and autumn. When the qì dynamic is inhibited and there is a lack of the liver’s free coursing, the evil steams into the skin, producing the sore. The disease arises more easily after contact if the skin is broken or the body’s resistance is low. The text also provided clear

evidence that the Chinese knew that this disease was contagious, as it states that: “During an eruption of this disease...[it may be transmitted to] the family.”

In addition, the traditional disease of “purulent nest sores” describes sores that have some similar features to herpetic lesions. However, like “yellow-water sores,” the location and surrounding characteristics of these sores are markedly different than the presentation of genital herpes.

It is hard to accurately assess how long ago sexual transmission was recognized as a vector of disease in Chinese medicine. Many diseases that are now known to be caused by particular organisms or other vectors of disease were traditionally believed to be caused by the invasion of evil qi contracted from environmental factors. For example, malaria was not known to be caused by mosquitoes; it was classically attributed to contraction of summerheat during the hot season, contact with mountain forest miasma, or contraction of cold-damp. Similarly, sexually transmitted diseases were long thought to be due to contraction of external environmental evils. Genital herpes would be particularly difficult to conclusively link with sex due to its latency, potential transmission from asymptomatic carriers, and recurrences unrelated to sexual intercourse.

Zhāng Zhòng-Jīng’s *Shāng Hán Zá Bìng Lùn* (On Cold Damage and Miscellaneous Diseases) is the first text to describe disease transmission by sexual means, but it is not referring to sexually transmitted disease per se. Rather, it documents the observation that one could contract disease of the six excesses without environmental exposure, if one is in close contact with an individual afflicted by disease from the six excesses.

We can see more clear evidence that the Chinese knew of sexual transmission by 1264 CE, in the Southern Song Dynasty text *Rèn Zhāi Zhī Zhī Fāng Lùn*. This text states: “[After] great licentiousness, sores are formed on the penis...women also have sores at the jade gate, which are called genital erosion sores.” Although this text goes on to describe a disease that is more severe than genital herpes, it nonetheless suggests knowledge of sexual transmission.

By the Ming Dynasty, sexual transmission was indisputably recognized as a causative factor in syphilis (梅毒 *méi dú*). In 1624 CE, Zhāng Jiè-Bīn (also known as Zhāng Jǐng-Yuè) described the pathomechanisms of syphilis in his text, the *Jǐng Yuè Quán Shū* (“Jǐng-Yuè’s Complete Compendium”). He states: “...most of these pathoconditions are engendered following the transmission of licentious (sexual) toxins. Following the discharge of essence, the qi of this foul licentious toxin follows the essence pathway, exploiting vacuity to penetrate directly into the life gate before pouring into the controlling (*rèn*) vessel. It goes to all the places that the controlling (*rèn*) vessel reaches, the skin and body hair in the outer body, and the bones and marrow in the inner body; there is no place that it does not reach.”

By definition, our understanding of genital herpes is inseparable from modern medical influence. Traditional disease categories fail to provide us with a time-tested understanding of its pathomechanisms. However, the prevalence of the disease has allowed many doctors to formulate theories based upon traditional pathomechanisms and pattern identification-based treatment.

Clinically, the first episodes of genital herpes generally present with damp-heat in the liver channel, and treatment consists of draining the liver, clearing heat, and disinhibiting dampness. Recurrences may occur repeatedly; over time, this wears on right qi. In such

cases, supplementing vacuity becomes the primary therapy, and dispelling evils becomes an auxiliary aspect of treatment.

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### *Treatment*

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Internal use of Chinese medicinals is the basis of treatment. The effect of treatment is best if both internal and external treatments are applied. In addition to the prescriptions below based on pattern identification, topical formulas may be used for all patterns. Examples of such formulas include *jiě dú xiāo pào dìng tòng xǐ jì* (Wash Prescription for Resolving Toxin, Dispersing Herpes, and Relieving Pain) and *pào zhěn wài xǐ fāng* (External Wash Formula for Herpes).

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#### *Jiě Dú Xiāo Pào Dìng Tòng Xǐ Jì (解毒消疱定痛洗剂 Wash Prescription for Resolving Toxin, Dispersing Herpes, and Relieving Pain)*

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*huáng qín* (黄芩 *scutellaria, Scutellariae Radix*)  
*guàn zhòng* (贯众 *aspidium, Aspidii Rhizoma*)  
*jīn yín huā* (金银花 *lonicera, Lonicerae Flos*)  
*lóng dǎn* (龙胆 *gentian, Gentianae Radix*)  
*huáng bǎi* (黄柏 *phellodendron, Phellodendri Cortex*)  
*bīng piàn* (冰片 *borneol, Borneolum*)

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When decocting this formula, direct the steam at the external genitals. After the decoction cools, it may be used as a sitz bath. Instruct the patient to sit in the decoction 1–2 times per day, for 10–15 minutes each time.

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#### *Pào Zhěn Wài Xǐ Fāng (疱疹外洗方 External Wash Formula for Herpes)*

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*hǔ zhàng* (虎杖 *bushy knotweed, Polygoni Cuspidati Rhizoma*) 30 g  
*dà qīng yè* (大青叶 *isatis leaf, Isatidis Folium*) 30 g  
*zǐ cǎo* (紫草 *arnebia/lithospermum, Arnebiae/Lithospermi Radix*) 30 g  
*dà huáng* (大黄 *rhubarb, Rhei Radix et Rhizoma*) 20 g  
*xuán shēn* (玄参 *scrophularia, Scrophulariae Radix*) 30 g  
*kū fán* (枯矾 *calcined alum, Alumen Dehydratum*) 15 g  
*yě jú huā* (野菊花 *wild chrysanthemum flower, Chrysanthemi Indici Flos*) 20 g

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Decoct the formula, then let it cool and use it as a sitz bath. Soak the affected area in the decoction once per day, for 20 minutes each time.

Additionally, some Chinese hospitals use an injection formula containing *jīn yín huā* (*Lonicerae Flos*), *lián qiáo* (*Forsythiae Fructus*), and *huáng qín* (*Scutellariae Radix*) that is administered regardless of pattern. This is an example of “disease identification as the basis for determining treatment” (辨证论治 *biàn bìng lùn zhì*), which is contrasted with “pattern identification as the basis for determining treatment” (辨证论治 *biàn zhèng lùn zhì*).

In a similar vein, some practitioners use modern formulas for internal use in the absence of pattern discrimination. Such formulas include *pào zhěn tāng* (Herpes Decoction), which is particularly suitable for presentations with heat and toxin.

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#### *Pào Zhěn Tāng (疱疹汤 Herpes Decoction)*

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*bǎn lán gēn* (板蓝根 *isatis root, Isatidis Radix*) 20 g

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dà qīng yè (大青叶 isatis leaf, Isatidis Folium) 15 g  
yì yǐ rén (薏苡仁 coix, Coicis Semen) 30 g  
tǔ fú líng (土茯苓 smooth greenbrier, Smilacis Glabrae Rhizoma) 20 g  
chái hú (柴胡 bupleurum, Bupleuri Radix) 10 g  
bái huā shé shé cǎo (白花蛇舌草 oldenlandia, Oldenlandiae Diffusae Herba) 20 g  
huáng bǎi (黄柏 phellodendron, Phellodendri Cortex) 12 g  
gān cǎo (甘草 licorice, Glycyrrhizae Radix) 9 g

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Finally, it should be noted that some patients exhibit a prodrome to genital herpes that manifests with symptoms typical of an external contraction of wind-heat. In these cases, appropriate pattern-based treatment includes the selection of formulas such as *yín qiào sǎn* (Lonicera and Forsythia Powder), possibly in combination with other formulas or medicinals tailored to the patient's presentation.

Gynecology textbooks do not list acupuncture or moxibustion as an auxiliary treatment for this disease. However, integrative medical textbooks for sexually transmitted diseases sometimes list acupuncture as an adjuvant therapy. Typically, only one set of points is provided, regardless of pattern. One prominent text provides the following point prescription: Main points: GV-1 (*cháng qiáng*), CV-1 (*huì yīn*), and CV-2 (*qū gǔ*). Auxiliary points: SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), ST-36 (*zú sān lǐ*), BL-23 (*shèn shū*), and BL-20 (*pí shū*). Use supplementing technique for vacuity cases, and draining technique for repletion cases.

### Liver Channel Damp-Heat

**Treatment Method:** Drain the liver, clear heat, and disinhibit dampness.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *lóng dǎn xiè gān tāng* (Gentian Liver-Draining Decoction) from the *Yī Zōng Jīn Jiàn* ("The Golden Mirror of Orthodox Medicine").

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#### *Lóng Dǎn Xiè Gān Tāng* (龙胆泻肝汤 Gentian Liver-Draining Decoction)

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*lóng dǎn* (龙胆 gentian, Gentianae Radix)  
*shān zhī zǐ* (山梔子 gardenia, Gardeniae Fructus)  
*huáng qín* (黄芩 scutellaria, Scutellariae Radix)  
*shēng dì huáng* (生地黄 dried rehmannia, Rehmanniae Radix Exsiccata)  
*chē qián zǐ* (车前子 plantago seed, Plantaginis Semen)  
*zé xiè* (泽泻 alisma, Alismatis Rhizoma)  
*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, Angelicae Sinensis Radix)  
*mù tōng* (木通 trifoliate akebia, Akebiae Trifoliatae Caulis)  
*chái hú* (柴胡 bupleurum, Bupleuri Radix)  
*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, Glycyrrhizae Radix)

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**Modifications:** Some texts focused on sexually transmitted diseases modify this formula with the addition of 20 g each of *bǎn lán gēn* (Isatidis Radix) and *yì yǐ rén* (Coicis Semen). For constipation, add 10 g of *dà huáng* (Rhei Radix et Rhizoma). If pain is pronounced, add 15 g of *pú gōng yīng* (Taraxaci Herba). For recurrences with less severe heat signs, add 15 g each of *huáng qí* (Astragali Radix) and *fú líng* (Poria).

**Acupuncture:** Acupuncture treatment is not listed in core TCM gynecology textbooks as a supplementary treatment method for this condition. However, acupuncture treatments

to clear damp-heat from the liver channel may be selected from diseases such as abnormal vaginal discharge. An exemplary protocol is the following: Base treatment mainly on *rèn mài* (controlling vessel), *dū mài* (governing vessel), spleen, and liver channels. Select the points GB-26 (*dài mài*), BL-30 (*bái huán shū*), CV-6 (*qì hǎi*), SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), CV-3 (*zhōng jī*), LR-2 (*xíng jiān*), SP-9 (*yīn líng quán*), and LR-3 (*tài chōng*). Needle with drainage.

Additionally, general acupuncture methods to clear damp-heat may be used. A typical protocol suggests the following: Base treatment mainly on stomach, large intestine, and spleen channels. Main points: ST-36 (*zú sān lǐ*), LI-4 (*hé gǔ*), SP-9 (*yīn líng quán*), and SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*); needle with drainage. Selection of points according to pattern: If dampness is predominant, add CV-12 (*zhōng wǎn*) and BL-20 (*pí shū*). If heat is predominant, add GV-14 (*dà zhuī*). For liver channel damp-heat, add LR-2 (*xíng jiān*), GB-43 (*xiá xī*), and GB-34 (*yáng líng quán*).

### Dual Vacuity of the Heart and Spleen

**Treatment Method:** Nourish the heart and fortify the spleen, boost qì and supplement blood.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *guī pí tāng* (Spleen-Returning Decoction) from the text *Ji Shēng Fāng* (full name *Yán Shì Jì Shēng Fāng* (“Yan’s Formulas for Saving Lives”), with modifications.

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#### *Guī Pí Tāng* (归脾汤 Spleen-Returning Decoction) (modified)

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*dǎng shēn* (党参 codonopsis, Codonopsis Radix)

*bái zhú* (白朮 white atractylodes, Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma)

*huáng qí* (黄芪 astragalus, Astragali Radix)

*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, Angelicae Sinensis Radix)

*gān cǎo shāo* (甘草梢 fine licorice root, Glycyrrhizae Radix Tenuis)

*fú líng* (茯苓 poria, Poria)

*yuǎn zhì* (远志 polygala, Polygalae Radix)

*mù xiāng* (木香 costusroot, Aucklandiae Radix)

*yì yī rén* (薏苡仁 coix, Coicis Semen)

*lián zǐ xīn* (莲子心 lotus plumule, Nelumbinis Plumula)

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**Acupuncture:** Acupuncture treatment is not listed in core gynecology textbooks as a supplementary treatment method for this pattern. However, you may incorporate general acupuncture treatments that treat dual vacuity of the heart and spleen. Base your treatment mainly on back transport points, and the heart, spleen, and *rèn* (controlling vessel) channels. Select BL-15 (*xīn shū*), BL-20 (*pí shū*), BL-17 (*gé shū*), CV-6 (*qì hǎi*), HT-7 (*shén mén*), ST-36 (*zú sān lǐ*), SP-10 (*xuè hǎi*), and SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*); needle with supplementation.

### Effulgent Yin Vacuity Fire

**Treatment Method:** Nourish yīn, clear heat, and downbear fire.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *zhī bǎi dì huáng wán* (Anemarrhena, Phellodendron, and Rehmannia Pill) from the text *Zhèng Yīn Mài Zhì* (“Pathoconditions: Causes, Pulses, and Treatments”), with modifications.

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*Zhī Bǎi Dì Huáng Wán* (知柏地黄丸 Anemarrhena, Phellodendron, and Rehmannia Pill)  
(modified)

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*zhī mǔ* (知母 anemarrhena, Anemarrhenae Rhizoma)  
*huáng bǎi* (黄柏 phellodendron, Phellodendri Cortex)  
*gān dì huáng* (干地黄 dried rehmannia, Rehmanniae Radix)  
*shān yào* (山药 dioscorea, Dioscoreae Rhizoma)  
*shān zhū yú* (山茱萸 cornus, Corni Fructus)  
*fú líng* (茯苓 poria, Poria)  
*zé xiè* (泽泻 alisma, Alismatis Rhizoma)  
*mǔ dān pí* (牡丹皮 moutan, Moutan Cortex)  
*bǎn lán gēn* (板蓝根 isatis root, Isatidis Radix)  
*tǔ fú líng* (土茯苓 smooth greenbrier, Smilacis Glabrae Rhizoma)  
*zǐ cǎo* (紫草 arnebia/lithospermum, Arnebiae/Lithospermi Radix)

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**Acupuncture:** Acupuncture treatment is not listed in core gynecology textbooks as a supplementary treatment method for this pattern. A general treatment for effulgent yīn vacuity fire is to needle with supplementation at BL-23 (*shèn shū*), KI-3 (*tài xī*), and SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), and with drainage at KI-6 (*zhào hǎi*), KI-2 (*rán gǔ*), BL-17 (*gé shū*), ST-36 (*zú sān lǐ*), ST-44 (*nèi tíng*), and HT-7 (*shén mén*). For effulgent fire, you may also prick HT-8 (*shào fǔ*) to bleed.

# YĪN SORES

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## *Definition*

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Yīn sores, in the context of gynecology, refer to a general TCM disease category for genital sores. When severe, there may be ulceration, dripping pus, and the local area may become swollen and painful. This condition is also called genital erosion in some texts.

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## *Pathomechanisms*

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Yīn sores and/or genital erosion are mentioned in the earliest texts of Chinese medicine, including the *Shén Nóng Běn Cǎo Jīng* (“The Divine Husbandman’s Herbal Foundation Canon”) and the *Jīn Guì Yào Lǚ* (“Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Coffin”). The text *Zhū Bīng Yuán Hòu Lùn* (“The Origin and Indicators of Disease”), written in 610 CE during the Sui Dynasty, further developed discussions on the pathomechanisms of yīn sores. This text indicated that worms were an etiological factor in this disease, and also mentioned that right qì vacuity allowed the disease to develop.

By the time of the Song Dynasty text *Fù Rén Liáng Fāng* (“Good Remedies for Women”), it was understood that heart vexation and depression, in conjunction with spleen-stomach weakness, was a factor in the development of yīn sores, which were also referred to as “invisible worms.” In the Ming Dynasty, the *Jǐng Yuè Quán Shū* (“Jǐng-Yuè’s Complete Compendium”) stated that vaginal sores were mostly caused by damp-heat pouring downward. Additional causative factors indicated by this text include fire formation from the seven affects and heat-toxin strike resulting from overindulgence in medicinal applications.

It is interesting to note that invisible worms were believed to be an etiological factor in this disease as late as the Qing Dynasty. In the Qing Imperial classic on gynecology, the *Yī Zōng Jīn Jiàn* (“The Golden Mirror of Orthodox Medicine”), we find the following statement: “Sores of the yīn in women (i.e., genital sores) are known as ‘invisible worms.’ This malady is due to depression-fire from the seven affects damaging the liver and spleen, such that qì and blood congeal and stagnate, and damp-heat pours downward. After a long time, worms are engendered. Sores form as the worms feed, then pus drips; at times there is pain and at other times itching, and the patient senses crawling worms.” It is also worth noting that some descriptions of severe, incurable yīn sores that appear in pre-modern literature are likely descriptions of cancerous lesions.

In the modern clinic, the pathomechanisms involved in yīn sores may be broken up into three basic types: damp-heat pouring downward, liver and kidney yīn vacuity, and right vacuity with evil falling inward.

*Damp-heat pouring downward:* This pathomechanism may originate in external contraction of damp-heat evil in the lower burner. Alternately, it may arise when internal damage from the seven affects causes liver depression. Liver depression may form fire and restrain spleen-earth. This leads to spleen vacuity and damp-heat. Damp-heat then

pours downwards and brews to form toxin. This putrefies the flesh and forms pus, leading to yīn sores.

*Liver and kidney yīn vacuity:* This pathomechanism originates in an insufficiency of essence-blood, generally arising from constitutional weakness or aging. The kidney opens to the two yīn and the liver channel wraps around the genitals. In depletion of essence-blood of the liver and kidney, yīn vacuity forms internal heat. The heat steams and scorches to form putridity and pus, which leads to the development of yīn sores.

*Right vacuity and evil falling inward:* This can result from constitutional weakness or prolonged illness damaging qì and blood. When qì and blood are insufficient, there is an inability to express toxins outward and an inability to dispel putridity and engender flesh. This allows evil toxins to fall inward, producing enduring yīn sores that do not heal.

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### ***Treatment***

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Treatment is based on medicinal therapy. Generally speaking, pattern identification should be used as the basis for determining treatment. However, gynecology textbooks also offer a number of external treatments that may be used in conjunction with internal prescriptions. These are outlined below:

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#### *Wài Kē Huáng Lián Gāo (Coptis Ointment for External Medicine)*

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*dà huáng* (大黄 rhubarb, Rhei Radix et Rhizoma)

*huáng lián* (黄连 coptis, Coptidis Rhizoma)

*huáng qín* (黄芩 scutellaria, Scutellariae Radix)

*huáng bǎi* (黄柏 phellodendron, Phellodendri Cortex)

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Use 120 g of each medicinal. The above ingredients should be ground and mixed with 1500 g of sesame oil and 500 g of beeswax. After preparing the ointment, thinly cover the affected area 1–2 times per day. This ointment is used to clear heat and resolve toxin, to disperse swelling and relieve pain, and to close sores and engender flesh. It may be used for red swollen painful ulcerating sores or for non-healing sores with pus.

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#### *Zǐ Cǎo Yóu (Arnebia/Lithospermum Oil)*

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*zǐ cǎo* (紫草 arnebia/lithospermum, Arnebiae/Lithospermi Radix) 200 g

*má yóu* (麻油 sesame oil, Sesami Oleum) 750 g

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This product cools the blood, quickens the blood, and resolves toxin. It is appropriate for red swollen painful genital sores, particularly with ulceration. It is applied topically 1–2 times per day.

***Steam wash formulas:*** The following formulas are used to make a steam wash for the local area.

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*bǎi bù* (百部 stemona, Stemonae Radix) 30 g

*pú gōng yīng* (蒲公英 dandelion, Taraxaci Herba) 20 g

*zǐ huā dì dīng* (紫花地丁 violet, Violae Herba) 15 g

*yě jú huā* (野菊花 wild chrysanthemum flower, Chrysanthemi Indici Flos) 15 g

*huáng bǎi* (黄柏 phellodendron, Phellodendri Cortex) 10 g

*lóng dǎn* (龙胆 gentian, Gentianae Radix) 15 g

*kǔ shēn* (苦参 flavescient sophora, Sophorae Flavescientis Radix) 15 g

*shé chuáng zǐ* (蛇床子 cnidium seed, Cnidii Fructus) 20 g

*chuān jiāo* (川椒 *zanthoxylum*, *Zanthoxyli Pericarpium*) 6 g

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This steam wash clears heat and eliminates dampness, and resolves toxin and disperses swelling. It is used for local redness, swelling, and burning pain without ulceration or pus. The steam wash should be used 1–2 times per day. It is interesting to note the presence of medicinals in this formula that are traditionally said to kill worms, such as *bǎi bù* (*Stemonae Radix*) and *chuān jiāo* (*zanthoxylum*).

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*kǔ shēn* (苦参 *flavescent sophora*, *Sophorae Flavescentis Radix*) 15 g  
*huáng bǎi* (黄柏 *phellodendron*, *Phellodendri Cortex*) 15 g  
*shēng gān cǎo* (生甘草 *raw licorice*, *Glycyrrhizae Radix Cruda*) 15 g  
*guàn zhòng* (贯众 *aspidium*, *Aspidii Rhizoma*) 15 g  
*tǔ fú líng* (土茯苓 *smooth greenbrier*, *Smilacis Glabrae Rhizoma*) 15 g  
*fáng fēng* (防风 *saposhnikovia*, *Saposhnikoviae Radix*) 10 g  
*bò hé* (薄荷 *mint*, *Menthae Herba*) 3 g

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This steam wash clears heat, resolves toxin, and dries dampness. It is used for erosion, dripping yellow water (pus), and severe pain. For prolonged diseases or elderly patients with *qì* and blood depletion with enduring sores that fail to close, remove *guàn zhòng* and *tǔ fú líng* and add *huáng qí* (*Astragali Radix*), *dāng guī* (*Angelicae Sinensis Radix*), and *mǔ dān pí* (*Moutan Cortex*) to boost *qì*, nourish and quicken the blood, and engender flesh.

#### Damp-Heat Pouring Downward

**Treatment Method:** Clear the liver and discharge heat, and disinhibit dampness and resolve toxin.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *lóng dǎn xiè gān tāng* (*Gentian Liver-Draining Decoction*) from the *Yī Zōng Jīn Jiàn* (“The Golden Mirror of Orthodox Medicine”).

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*Lóng Dǎn Xiè Gān Tāng* (龙胆泻肝汤 *Gentian Liver-Draining Decoction*)

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*lóng dǎn* (龙胆 *gentian*, *Gentianae Radix*)  
*shān zhī zǐ* (山梔子 *gardenia*, *Gardeniae Fructus*)  
*huáng qín* (黄芩 *scutellaria*, *Scutellariae Radix*)  
*shēng dì huáng* (生地黄 *dried rehmannia*, *Rehmanniae Radix Exsiccata*)  
*chē qián zǐ* (车前子 *plantago seed*, *Plantaginis Semen*)  
*zé xiè* (泽泻 *alisma*, *Alismatis Rhizoma*)  
*dāng guī* (当归 *Chinese angelica*, *Angelicae Sinensis Radix*)  
*mù tōng* (木通 *trifoliate akebia*, *Akebiae Trifoliatae Caulis*)  
*chái hú* (柴胡 *bupleurum*, *Bupleuri Radix*)  
*gān cǎo* (甘草 *licorice*, *Glycyrrhizae Radix*)

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If the local area is red and burning, add *pú gōng yīng* (*Taraxaci Herba*), *zǐ huā dì dīng* (*Violae Herba*), *mǔ dān pí* (*Moutan Cortex*), and *chì sháo* (*Paeoniae Radix Rubra*). For vaginal ulcerations with flowing liquid, add *tǔ fú líng* (*Smilacis Glabrae Rhizoma*) and *kǔ shēn* (*Sophorae Flavescentis Radix*).

For brewing of exuberant heat toxin manifesting with local swelling, distention, and severe pain, along with pus formation, ulceration, and unbearable dripping of foul-smelling pus, use the formula *xiān fāng huó mìng yǐn* (*Immortal Formula Life-Giving*

Beverage) from the text *Jiào Zhù Fù Rén Liáng Fāng* (Revised Good Remedies for Women). This formula clears heat and resolves toxin while transforming stasis and expelling pus.

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*Xiān Fāng Huó Mìng Yǐn* (仙方活命饮 Immortal Formula Life-Giving Beverage)

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*jīn yín huā* (金银花 *lonicera*, *Lonicerae Flos*)  
*chuān shān jiǎ* (穿山甲 pangolin scales, *Manis Squama*)  
*zào jiǎo cì* (皂角刺 *gleditsia thorn*, *Gleditsiae Spina*)  
*dāng guī wěi* (当归尾 tangkuei tail, *Angelicae Sinensis Radicis Extremitas*)  
*chì sháo* (赤芍 red peony, *Paeoniae Radix Rubra*)  
*rǔ xiāng* (乳香 frankincense, *Olibanum*)  
*mò yào* (没药 myrrh, *Myrrha*)  
*tiān huā fěn* (天花粉 trichosanthes root, *Trichosanthis Radix*)  
*chén pí* (陈皮 tangerine peel, *Citri Reticulatae Pericarpium*)  
*fáng fēng* (防风 *saposhnikovia*, *Saposhnikoviae Radix*)  
*bèi mǔ* (贝母 fritillaria, *Fritillariae Bulbus*)  
*bái zhǐ* (白芷 Dahurian angelica, *Angelicae Dahuricae Radix*)  
*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, *Glycyrrhizae Radix*)

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**Acupuncture:** Acupuncture treatment is not mentioned for the treatment of this condition in mainstream gynecology texts. General treatments to clear liver channel damp-heat include the following methods: Base treatment mainly on *rèn mài* (controlling vessel), *dū mài* (governing vessel), spleen, and liver channels. Select the points GB-26 (*dài mài*), BL-30 (*bái huán shū*), CV-6 (*qì hǎi*), SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), CV-3 (*zhōng jī*), LR-2 (*xíng jiān*), SP-9 (*yīn líng quán*), and LR-3 (*tài chōng*). Needle with drainage. Also consider points such as LR-2 (*xíng jiān*), GB-43 (*xiá xī*), and GB-34 (*yáng líng quán*).

Additionally, other acupuncture methods include the following point prescription for clearing heat and resolving toxin: Prick BL-40 (*wěi zhōng*) and LU-5 (*chǐ zé*) to bleed, and needle with drainage at LI-11 (*qū chí*), and LI-4 (*hé gǔ*). Prick GV-14 (*dà zhuī*) to bleed and fire-cup.

### Liver and Kidney Yīn Vacuity

**Treatment Method:** Enrich the kidney and nourish the liver, clear heat and close sores.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *zhī bǎi dì huáng wán* (Anemarrhena, Phellodendron, and Rehmannia Pill) from the *Yī Zōng Jīn Jiàn* (“The Golden Mirror of Orthodox Medicine”).

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*Zhī Bǎi Dì Huáng Wán* (知柏地黄丸 Anemarrhena, Phellodendron, and Rehmannia Pill)

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*zhī mǔ* (知母 anemarrhena, *Anemarrhenae Rhizoma*)  
*huáng bǎi* (黄柏 phellodendron, *Phellodendri Cortex*)  
*shú dì huáng* (熟地黄 cooked rehmannia, *Rehmanniae Radix Praeparata*)  
*shān yào* (山药 dioscorea, *Dioscoreae Rhizoma*)  
*shān zhū yú* (山茱萸 cornus, *Corni Fructus*)  
*fú líng* (茯苓 poria, *Poria*)  
*zé xiè* (泽泻 alisma, *Alismatis Rhizoma*)  
*mǔ dān pí* (牡丹皮 moutan, *Moutan Cortex*)

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**Acupuncture:** Acupuncture treatment is not listed as a primary treatment for this condition, but the following general treatment approach is applicable: Base treatment mainly on *rèn mài* (controlling vessel), back transport points, and kidney and liver channels. Select CV-4 (*guān yuán*), BL-23 (*shèn shū*), BL-18 (*gān shū*), SP-6 (*sān yīn jiāo*), KI-3 (*tài xī*), KI-2 (*rán gǔ*), and LR-3 (*tài chōng*). Needle with supplementation.

### Right Vacuity and Evil Falling Inward

**Treatment Method:** Boost *qì* and nourish the blood, express toxins and engender flesh.

**Medicinal Therapy:** Use the formula *tuō lǐ xiāo dú sǎn* (Internal Expulsion Toxin-Dispersing Powder) from the *Wài Kē Zhèng Zōng* (“Orthodox Manual of External Medicine”).

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#### *Tuō Lǐ Xiāo Dú Sǎn* (托里消毒散 Internal Expulsion Toxin-Dispersing Powder)

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*rén shēn* (人參 ginseng, Ginseng Radix)

*chuān xiōng* (川芎 chuanxiong, Chuanxiong Rhizoma)

*dāng guī* (当归 Chinese angelica, Angelicae Sinensis Radix)

*bái zhú* (白朮 white atractylodes, Atractylodis Macrocephalae Rhizoma)

*bái sháo* (白芍 white peony, Paeoniae Radix Alba)

*huáng qí* (黄芪 astragalus, Astragali Radix)

*gān cǎo* (甘草 licorice, Glycyrrhizae Radix)

*fú líng* (茯苓 poria, Poria)

*jīn yín huā* (金银花 lonicera, Lonicerae Flos)

*bái zhǐ* (白芷 Dahurian angelica, Angelicae Dahuricae Radix)

*zào jiǎo cì* (皂角刺 gleditsia thorn, Gleditsiae Spina)

*jié gěng* (桔梗 platycodon, Platycodonis Radix)

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**Acupuncture:** Acupuncture treatment is not typically used for this condition.

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