

Transition to Menopause

Comfortably with Traditional Chinese Medicine



PLUM FLOWER®

Perimenopause

Hot flashes • night sweats • malar flush • 5-palm fever • dizziness • tinnitus • poor memory/concentration • weakness/soreness in low back/knees • dry mouth, hair and skin, itching • constipation • increased (with deficiency Fire) or decreased sex drive, vaginal dryness • history of short cycles, large (with deficiency Fire) or small amount of bright scarlet blood, possibly thick, sticky, sudden onset of excessive bleeding or prolonged spotting

Tonify Kidney Yin • Clear Deficient Heat • Calm the Shen

Tongue red, tender or dry & cracked, scanty coat/no coat **Pulse** thin & rapid or floating & empty
Herbal Treatment - from Least to Greatest Heat

A Zuo Gui Wan for Yin deficiency and deficient Heat that is not too pronounced, plus either a small amount of **C Da Bu Yin Wan** or 1-3g/day of *Gui ban/Mauremys reevesii shell* is recommended for the deep Yin-nourishing quality. It is the classic Liver & Kidney Yin deficiency formula that eliminates the herbs that drain and balance from *Liu Wei Di Huang Wan*, in favor of three herbs (Gou qi zi, Tu si zi, Huai niu xi) that more deeply nourish and tonify the Kidney, including the Jing-Essence, as well as Liver Blood.

B Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan is indicated if the Yin deficiency Heat is more pronounced heading towards upflaring fire with more frequent or longer lasting hot flashes and a significantly red tongue with a scanty coat or no coat. It is the classic Liver & Kidney Yin deficiency formula *Liu Wei Di Huang Wan* with two herbs (Huang bai & Zhi mu) added to clear deficiency Heat. If the night sweats are pronounced, add 1-3g of *Mu li/Ostrea gigas shell* extract powder.

C Da Bu Yin Wan if upflaring fire is stronger with increased Heat signs such as worse and more frequent hot flashes and night sweats, restlessness and irritability, chronic throat pain due to deficiency Heat that is worse in the afternoon, evening, or when fatigued, a red, dry tongue, little or no coat, and a small, thready and rapid pulse that may be forceful in the chi position due to the Fire. **C Da Bu Yin Wan** is a very strong compact formula split between *Shu di huang* & *Gui Ban* to very strongly tonify Yin and *Zhi mu* & *Huang bai* to strongly clear upflaring deficiency Fire.

D Qing Gu Wan, a formula that does very little to nourish Yin deficiency and focuses almost exclusively on clearing deficiency Fire, use if patient presents with Steaming Bone Syndrome - a sensation of heat in the bones while the skin is a normal temperature on palpation, afternoon tidal fever or unremitting chronic low-grade fever, severe night sweats and dark red cheeks. Once the deficiency Fire has been cleared sufficiently, switch to **C Da Bu Yin Wan**.

Kidney Yang & Jing Deficiency

Hot flashes but cold hands/feet • cold night sweats in the early morning • pale face • depression • poor memory & concentration • poor digestion, loose stools or Cock's Crow Diarrhea • weakness and soreness in low back/knees • cold limbs & aversion to cold, edema at ankles • decreased sex drive • history of long menstrual cycles • scanty, light red, watery blood, few or no clots • intermittent dull lower abdominal pain • profuse white and dilute vaginal discharge

Warm & Tonify Kidney Yang • Warm the Center • Strengthen the Spleen • Calm the Shen

Tongue pale/possibly tender tongue, thin white/possibly wet coat **Pulse** deep & weak

E You Gui Wan with a small amount of **F Fu Zi Li Zhong Wan** to be adjusted up if the digestive symptoms and cold are worse or down if the hot flashes increase. Although rare in clinic, women can present with a relatively pure Kidney Yang deficiency and can respond well to treatment aimed at warming and building the Kidney Yang, regardless of the seemingly "hot" symptom of hot flashes. If low back pain is more pronounced, add a half dose of **G Yao Tong Pian** to tonify the Kidneys, strengthen the lower back, and benefit the Tendons & Bones.

Kidney Yin & Yang Dual Deficiency

Hot flashes but cold hands/feet • night sweats • tendency to feel cold in between hot flashes- particularly in early morning • cold limbs/aversion to cold • flushed around the neck when talking • slightly agitated, dry throat • dizziness • tinnitus • frequent pale urination • weakness/soreness in low back/knees • decreased sex drive, vaginal dryness • irregular cycles, scanty and/or thin light red menstrual blood • excessive bleeding or prolonged spotting

Tonify Kidneys • Nourish Yin • Gently Warm Yang • Calm the Shen

Tongue normal to red, scanty coat **Pulse** thin & rapid or floating & empty

H Zuo Gui San extract powder formula modified with **Lu jiao jiao** & **Gui ban jiao** to strongly nourish and consolidate Yin, Yang & Jing-Essence. A combination of Yin tonic **A Zuo Gui Wan** teapills and Yang tonic **E You Gui Wan** teapills can be used instead and adjusted according to the patient's needs for stronger Yin or Yang tonification. If the symptoms of upflaring fire and hot flashes are stronger, add or switch to **I Er Xian Wan**, a small potent formula that warms and tonifies Kidney Yang, tonifies Yin, nourishes Jing, nourishes Liver Blood, drains Kidney Fire, & regulates the Chong and Ren Channels.

Kidney & Liver Yin Deficiency with Liver Yang Rising

Hot flashes, facial and neck flushing • sensation of heat rushing to the head • night sweats • irritability, insomnia, poor memory/concentration • dizziness • tinnitus • blurred vision, dry eyes/skin • aching joints, weakness/soreness in low back/knees, calf cramps • headaches/migraines at temples or behind eyes • mild trembling • decreased sex drive, vaginal dryness • mild menstrual cramping at end or after period • scanty amount of thin blood • empty and weak sensation in lower back/abdomen

Strengthen Liver and Kidney Yin • Subdue Liver Yang • Calm the Shen and Hun

Tongue red, scanty coat or thin yellow coat **Pulse** thin, rapid & wiry

Herbal Treatment - from Mild to Severe Symptoms

J Qi Ju Di Huang San is indicated when the Liver & Kidney Yin deficiency is not too pronounced, particularly when eye symptoms are prominent such as blurred vision, floaters, visual weakness, dry, irritated or painful eyes, and no signs or minimal signs of Liver Yang rising, possibly just recurrent headaches.

K Tian Ma Wan treats a mixed pattern of Liver & Kidney deficiency (Yin, Blood, possibly slight Yang deficiency) and some combination of Wind-Damp Bi Zheng, episodes of Liver Yang rising, and the stirring of internal Wind to the head.

L Tian Ma Gou Teng Yin focuses primarily on the branch treatment of sedating Liver Yang rising & Liver Fire, quelling internal Wind and invigorating the Blood, while secondarily tonifying the root cause- Liver & Kidney Yin and Blood. If insomnia is pronounced or not sufficiently addressed by the primary formulas, add **M An Mien Pian** from 3-8 tablets before bed, and 3-6 tablets on the bedside table to take if she wakes during the night.

Heart & Kidney Not Communicating

Hot flashes • insomnia, restless sleep, frequent waking excessive/vivid dreaming, waking w/anxiety • palpitations night sweats • blurred vision • dizziness • tinnitus • malar flush • sensation of heat in afternoon or evening • low grade fever • dry mouth/throat, mouth or tongue sores, chronic throat pain that worsens in afternoon, evening or when fatigued • dry stool • general anxiety and mental restlessness, poor memory, forgetfulness, poor concentration with inability to concentrate • fatigue, weak/sore lower back and knees • history of short/irregular cycles with scanty menstrual blood.

Strengthen Heart and Kidney Yin • Nourish the Blood • Calm the Shen

Tongue red or very red tip with dry, scanty coat or no coat **Pulse** combination of thin, rapid & wiry

N Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan is the classic formula to treat Kidney and Heart Not Communicating. It works on both the root deficiency of Kidney and Heart Yin and Blood and the branch Shen disturbance. If anxiety and insomnia are not sufficiently addressed by the main formula, add a half dose of **O An Shen Bu Xin Wan**- a formula designed to rapidly calm and anchor the severely disturbed Shen & Hun and strengthen the Heart, Liver Yin & Blood and subdue the hyperactivity of Heart Fire, which in turn helps reestablish the communication between the Kidney & Heart. If palpitations and night sweats are more pronounced, add more **Bai zi ren/Platycladus orientalis seed**, and 1-3g each of **Ye jiao teng** & **Mu li** extract powders. Or, add a half dose of **P Bai Zi Yang Xin** teapills and 1-3g of **Mu li** extract powder. For a very dry mouth and throat, add 1-3g each of **Shi hu** & **Yu zhu**.

Phlegm & Qi Stagnation

Hot flashes • tendency to be overweight • sensation of oppression in the chest, sputum in the chest, breast distention or pain • sensation of fullness in epigastrium, belching, heartburn, acid regurgitation, bitter taste in mouth, poor appetite, indigestion, nausea • irritability, moodiness, depression, frequent sighing • feeling of heaviness • history of fibroids, cysts, adhesions • mid-cycle pain, yeast infections, lots of sticky or thick vaginal mucus, irregular menstrual cycles with uneven blood flow, amenorrhea due to blockage, moderate cramping, sticky/thick blood or blood mixed with mucus

Resolve Phlegm • Invigorate the flow of Liver Qi • Pacify the Liver • Eliminate Stagnation

Tongue pale or dusky, possibly slightly red sides, and/or a greasy or sticky coat **Pulse** wiry and possibly slippery

Q Yue Ju San is a potent formula to unblock stagnation of all sorts. Add 1-3g each of **Tian nan xing** & **Gua lou** extract powders to increase the ability to treat Phlegm. It is also an excellent formula to treat depression which can be either a cause of or result from Qi & Phlegm stagnation.

For irregular menses or amenorrhea, add 1-3g of a few single herb extract powders to invigorate the Blood, such as **Dang gui**, **Yi mu cao**, **Dan shen**, **Hong shen**, **Hong hua** & **Ze lan**. If there is strong breast distention or pain, add 1-3g of **Qing pi** extract powder. If there is a lot of belching, sighing and general indigestion, add 1-3g each of **Mu xiang** & **Zhi ke** extract powder, or a half dose of **R Shu Gan Wan** teapills.

If there is a lot of mucus, add 1-3g each of **Fu ling** & **Ze xie** extract powder or a half dose of **S Er Chen Wan** teapills.

If there are stronger Heat signs, add 1-3g each of **Chuan lian zi** & **Huang lian** extract powder.

Blood Stagnation

Hot flashes • mental restlessness, insomnia • distending/stabbing localized lower abdominal/lower back pain • history of fibroids, cysts, adhesions • irregular menstrual cycles • amenorrhea due to blockage or months before menses restarts with uneven blood flow, start/stop bleeding, sharp/piercing menstrual cramps fixed in location, worse with pressure/tends to worsen at night, dark/purplish blood w many/large clots and cramping pain improves after clot expulsion

Invigorate the Blood • Dispel Blood Stasis • Invigorate the flow of Liver Qi • Calm the Shen

Tongue purple tongue body, and/or dark or purple spots on the tongue, distended, thick purple sublingual veins **Pulse** choppy or wiry, possibly deep

T Ge Xia Zhu Yu San is a modification of the classical Blood stagnation formula **U Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang** designed for chronic Blood stasis and Liver Qi stagnation below the diaphragm presenting with abdominal pain or severe menstrual cramps. If there are more pronounced signs of Qi stagnation with breast distention/pain, and/or chest oppression, add 1-3g of **Qing pi** extract powder or a half dose of **R Shu Gan Wan** teapills. If the Blood stagnation is creating Heat, add 1-3g each of **Zhi zi**, **Xia ku cao** & **Yi mu cao** extract powders. If mental restlessness and insomnia are pronounced or not sufficiently addressed by the primary formula, add **M An Mien Pian** at 3-8 tablets before bed and 3-6 tablets on the bedside table to take if she wakes during the night. Or, add **V Chai Hu Long Gu Mu Li Wan** at 8-12 teapills before bed and 4-8 teapills on the bedside table to take if she wakes during the night.

Single Herbs Frequently Added to Perimenopausal Formulas

- Qing hao & Gui ban for unremitting hot flashes
- Mu li & Nuo dao gen for night sweats
- She chuang zi & Tu fu ling for sore, dry vagina
- Dang gui in larger doses for hot flashes, dry skin, dry vagina, vaginal atrophy
- Shu di huang to nourish Yin & Jing-Essence for night sweats, irregular menses, dizziness, premature graying of the hair
- Bai shao yao, He shou wu & Sang shen zi for thinning hair
- Chi shao yao & Di fu zi for dry, itchy skin (crawling or tingling skin sensations)
- He shou wu as an endocrine system tonic, to rejuvenate, strengthen, energize and nourish Yin & Jing-Essence. Used to treat premature aging, weakness and vaginal discharge.
- Ren shen as an adaptogen to improve resistance to mental-emotional stress resulting in fatigue, poor memory and concentration, depression and anxiety, provided that Qi & Yang tonification is needed.

Chinese Medicine Food Therapy to Nourish the Yin Fluids

Chinese medicine food therapy recommendations include increasing foods that nourish the Yin cooling fluids of the body, such as oysters and clams, duck, pork, eggs (especially the yolk), cow or goat's milk (especially yogurt), millet, barley, wheat germ, wheat, pears, mango, watermelon (and all melons), blackberries, raspberries, bananas, apples, tomatoes, avocados, asparagus, artichokes, yams, adzuki and kidney beans (and most other beans), seaweeds, kelp, & micro-algae (especially spirulina, chlorella and blue-green algae), honey, coconut milk. Soups, stews and steamed or lightly sauteed foods are considered the best way to prepare foods to benefit the Yin.

It is also recommended to limit foods that create excess Heat in the body, such as alcohol, red meats, white sugar, spicy foods, fried and greasy foods, and bottom feeders such as crab, shrimp and lobster.



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