

The Basics of Chinese Herbs

by Shoshanna Katzman

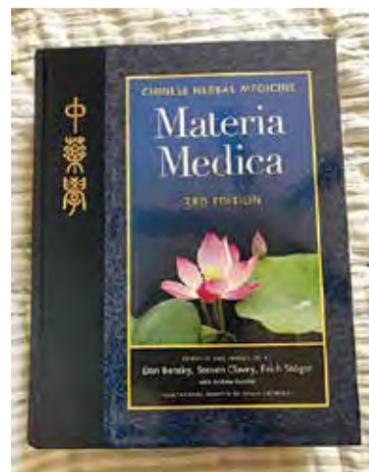


Just like acupuncture, Chinese herbs are effective for alleviating a myriad of symptoms and conditions through re-establishing proper flow of qi (vital energy) as well as balancing the energetics of the body. A major objective of this ancient medicine is to balance the opposing yet complementary forces of yin and yang. Many believe that the best approach to treatment is gained through a combination of acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine. Acupuncture is thought to be more effective for treating the body externally (yang) and Chinese herbal medicine as a more internal (yin) method. This is also enhanced by modifying dietary and lifestyle habits as well as through the practice of a Chinese Chinese herbs can be taken internally in the more convenient pill, capsule, granular, liquid extract or syrup form.

They can also be prepared as a decoction and taken as a tea or added to a soup recipe. In addition, Chinese herbs can be used externally as a salve, liniment, balm, fomentation or as a soak. They are typically taken internally or applied externally two to three times per day. The length of time

Chinese herbal medicine has been an integral aspect of Classical Chinese Medicine for centuries and the most highly developed system of herbology throughout the world. Individual herbs are combined into what is known as a Chinese herb formulation. There are hundreds of traditional formulas to choose from which have been time-proven through clinical application. A Chinese medicine practitioner either finds a suitable one from the list of classical formulas or makes modifications to better address a patient's needs. This involves a lengthy process searching herbal references for the perfect fit as there is no "one formula that fits all".

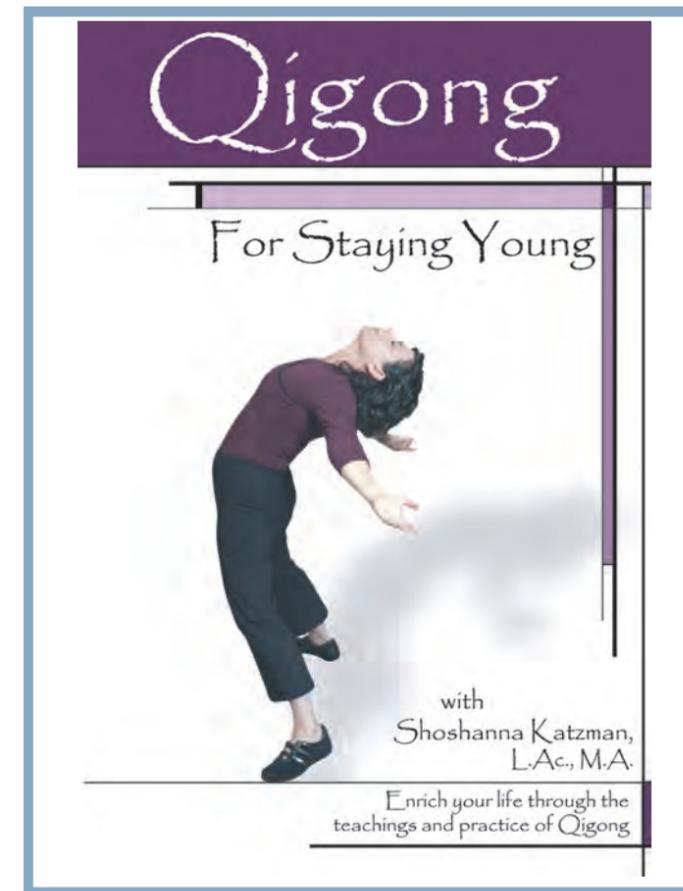
One of the main reference books used is the Chinese Herbal Medicine Materia Medica containing information about herb usage, dosage, contraindications, drug interactions and additional research such as a Chinese herb's chemical make-up and physiological effect on the body. There is also the Shang Han Lun (Treatise on Cold Damage Disorders) one of the oldest complete clinical textbooks in the world written by Zhang Zhongjing sometime before 220 CE. It is based on six main syndromes associated with externally contracted febrile disease. According to tradition, many practitioners recite this text over and over until it is memorized and then use it to inform themselves about which of the six syndromes is involved as a patient describes their symptoms.



on a formula varies from a few days to several months or even as long as a year depending on each person and the purpose of the formula. For example, treatment of an acute condition may take one to four weeks, whereas a chronic condition may take closer to a year.

Incorporating Chinese herbs into your holistic approach to healing may be appropriate at this time. This might include the need to boost energy, release excessive heat or cold, balance hormones, increase circulation, help with sleep or relieve stress to name a few. Make sure to consult a practitioner that is highly trained and qualified and remember that the best results are obtained through the highest quality herbals. It is always a good idea to inform your allopathic physician when planning to engage in Chinese medicine. The goal is for people to have a wide spectrum of options available for bringing themselves into a place of ultimate health and wellness. Working together with approaches from both the East and the West is an excellent way to go.

Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. is an acupuncturist, Chinese herbalist and director of Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center (www.healing4u.com) in Shrewsbury, NJ for over thirty years. She is author of *Qigong for Staying Young: A Simple 20-Minute Workout to Cultivate Your Vital Energy* and co-author of *Feeling Light: The Holistic Solution to Permanent Weight Loss and Wellness*. Shoshanna has taught Taiji for 47 years and is a 6th generation lineage holder of the Guang Ping Yang Style Taiji Form. She will soon be releasing a Taiji curriculum entitled *Center of Power: Life Mastery through Taiji*. Shoshanna offers weekly Taiji and Qigong classes. For more information call or text 732.758.1800 or send an email to info@healing4u.com.



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