

Free Flow

Supports urinary system health. ∞

Traditionally used to ease discomfort associated with acute urinary tract infection or blockage ∞

According to Chinese Medicine, Yang Ming is the layer of the body that governs the large intestine and lung. One of lungs' jobs is to temper the heat of the heart (yang) and push it down into the organs of the lower body. There, yang is anchored and acts as a catalyst to the vital processes that keep us alive. In order to keep this functional heat in check, the lungs require a delicate balance of moisture (yin) so they don't become scorched. When this moisture is damaged, the body's heat can easily overcome the Yang Ming layer, creating specific heat-like symptoms in the body.

The source text describes Zhu Ling Tang for use when the body has had such an extreme sweat that the body's yin (functional moisture) is exhausted and inadequate. We know that there are other ways in the modern world that yin might become exhausted as well. This could be caused by chronic dehydration, side effects from medication, or an otherwise imbalanced lifestyle. This exhaustion of yin fluid can leave the body with unrestrained, trapped heat.

The text goes on to describe this formula for use when the yin fluids are exhausted, and heat is exuberant but the body also has an underlying tendency to retain water. This indicates some kind of constitutional fluid metabolism problem or weakness in the kidney/bladder organ system. The result is heat becoming trapped within this retained water.

It's important to recognize that there is a difference between healthy, *functional moisture/body fluid (yin)* that circulates, cools and moistens the body and *pathological body fluid (dampness)* that is out of circulation and simply accumulates and gets in the way.

When heat is trapped in pathological fluid, Chinese medicine calls this damp heat. In this situation, we see damp heat trapped in lower abdomen. This is a common place for dampness to accumulate because it is the domain of the bladder and kidneys, and because fluid is heavy and tends to sink. It is the kidney's job to process and eliminate old fluid. When this organ system is chronically weak, fluid will come in faster than it can go out, leaving an accumulation of turbid fluid. Over time, the liquid component of body fluid partially reabsorbs into the tissue and leaves the tiny particles of old cell debris and mineral deposits the body can't use behind. This creates a thicker, more turbid fluid that is increasingly difficult for the bladder and kidneys to eliminate. This *dampness* becomes the perfect environment for infection and a host of other issues.

Traditionally, in Chinese Medicine, this formula has been widely used for people with infections or stones in the kidney/bladder system. In a healthy kidney/bladder system, small amounts of bacteria might be introduced on a regular basis and the body flushes them out with no real harm done. The problem starts when the body doesn't have the ability to fully flush right away due to the presence of too much dampness.

To illustrate this, imagine two bodies of water. One is a small pond sitting in the sun in the middle of summer. It is alive with mosquitos, fish, algae and bacteria all thriving in this little hot, cloudy, closed ecosystem. Now imagine, this same area has a rushing creek that flows and twists and turns. This creek is fed by other channels of water and is in constant motion. There is life here, but the water is cool, clear and is a very poor incubator for bacteria or mosquitos. The same is true in the body: if that little sun baked pond is likened damp heat in the kidney/bladder system, it's easy to understand how bacteria can gain a foothold to reproduce quickly.

This internal environment is a huge factor in recurrent urinary tract, bladder or kidney infections. Western medicine's solution is to use antibiotics to kill the bacteria that have taken over the pond. This can have unwanted side effects and ultimately the infection can return because the antibiotics will wear off, eventually new bacteria will show up and the environment will stay the same. Alternatively, staying with the pond analogy, Chinese medicine approaches this problem by draining the water and putting in a pump so that as it fills up with more water it can be flushed out before it becomes

trapped and turbid. Luckily, leaving the analogy behind, our bodies already have a pump (go kidneys!) and all we need to do is support it.

Chinese medicine views stones as an extension of that imbalance. Stones are formed when this dampness stays trapped for long enough and the clear fluid continues to reabsorb. The dense particles within the fluid have nowhere to go. The fluid here becomes denser until ultimately these accumulations become hard stones. Depending on the individual body's chemistry these stones can be made of different types of particles, but ultimately all need to be broken up and eliminated. Traditionally, Chinese medicine has a long history of using herbs intended not only to break up the accumulations and flush them out, but also to recharge the kidney/bladder organ system and restore the damaged yin in order to break the cycle and change the internal environment.

In addition to the Classical base formula, Zhu Ling Tang, we've included two herbs that are traditionally indicated to help unblock painful urinary obstruction or dribbling, clear damp heat, soothe the urinary tract, and help facilitate the passing of stones. After this pattern has cleared, one might consider further supporting kidney yang with *Recharge*.

Imbalance addressed: Yang Ming heat, fluid damage with accumulated damp heat in the lower burner

Formula Action: disinhibit urine, clear heat, moisten dryness

Base formula: Zhu ling tang (Polyporus Decoction)

Ingredients*: *Zhu ling, Fu ling, Ze xie, Hua shi (polyporus mushroom, poria mushroom, alisma rhizome, talcum mineral)*

Additional, symptomatic herbs: *Jin Qian Cao (Guang), Hai Jin Sha (desmodium aerial parts, lygodium spore)*

Source Text(s): Shang Han Lun (Treatise on Cold Damage), Jin Gui Yao Lue (Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Cabinet)

Additional ingredients: Filtered water, Non-GMO cane sugar alcohol

*Organic, Non-GMO herbs are used whenever available, all herbs used undergo laboratory testing to ensure they are free from possible impurities or contaminants.

∞ *These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. The information in this article is for educational purposes only. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.*

