

XIAO YAO SAN

Bupleurum & Dang-gui Formula 逍遙丸

TCM ACTIONS

Soothes the Liver, tonifies the Spleen Qi and nourishes the Liver Blood.

TCM SYNDROMES

Liver Qi constraint.
Spleen Qi deficiency.

BIOMEDICAL ACTIONS

Anxiolytic, tonic, erythrogenic, antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory, stomachic.

INDICATIONS

Stress, depressed mood, stress-related disorders, bruxism, premenstrual tension, hepatitis, hepatic cirrhosis, gastritis, duodenitis, cholecystitis, peptic ulcer disease, mastitis, mammary dysplasia (fibrocystic breast disease), irregular menstruation, chronic hepatitis B.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS (key clinical features in bold)

Sense of frustration, stress, emotional strain, depressed mood

Sense of tightness or oppressive sensation in the chest, the need to make an effort to take a deep breath, sighing

Symptoms brought on or worsened by emotional strain

Tightness of the shoulders and lower thoracic paraspinal muscles

Fatigue

Poor appetite, epigastric or abdominal bloating

Loose stools

Hypochondrial distending pain

Premenstrual tension with mastalgia

Tongue may be normal possibly with a thick tongue coat

Wiry pulse that may also be weak-thready

INGREDIENTS *Each pill contains extract equiv. to dry:*

Bupleurum falcatum, root (<i>chai hu</i>)	60.7 mg
Paeonia lactiflora, root (<i>bai shao</i>)	60.7 mg
Angelica polymorpha, root (<i>dang gui</i>)	60.7 mg
Atractylodes macrocephala, rhiz. (<i>bai zhu</i>)	60.7 mg
Poria cocos, fruit. body (<i>fu ling</i>)	60.7 mg
Glycyrrhiza uralensis, root (<i>gan cao</i>)	50.2 mg
Mentha haplocalyx, herb (<i>bo he</i>)	10.5 mg
Zingiber officinale, rhiz. (<i>sheng jiang</i>)	10.5 mg

ACTIONS OF THE MAIN HERBS

- **Bupleurum root** is used orally in the treatment of stress, liver disorders, premenstrual syndrome, dysmenorrhoea, depression, anorexia, inflammation, mild pain, muscle cramps, indigestion, ulcers, hemorrhoids, diarrhoea, constipation, as an immune stimulant, and for reducing cholesterol and triglyceride levels. It is also used orally as a liver tonic, and a spleen and stomach toner. It has been shown to have the following actions: sedative, analgesic, antipyretic, anti-inflammatory, immune system stimulant, stomachic, carminative, antitussive, anti-cancer, antibacterial, antiviral and antiprotozoal.
- **Paeonia root** (white peony) is used orally in formulas to treat various women's disorders, liver conditions, muscle cramps and spasms, as well as for general debility due to chronic illness. It has been shown to have cardiogenic, cognition enhancing, antispasmodic and anti-inflammatory actions.

DOSAGE & COURSE OF TREATMENT

8 pills, 3 times daily (or 12 pills, 2 times daily), half to one hour away from food.

In severe cases and in the early stages of treatment (first 2 – 4 weeks) the dosage may be increased by 50%.

Course of treatment: 2 – 6 months.

Safe for long term use.

CAUTIONS & CONTRAINDICATIONS

Caution for those on anti-coagulant medications (i.e. Heparin, warfarin or aspirin).

Caution for those on any type of sedative drug.

If taking antibiotics, allow at least 90 minutes before taking this formula.

Contraindicated for patients taking interferon.

Caution during pregnancy.

COMBINATIONS

Chronic fatigue syndrome:

+ Sheng Mai San (Dangshen and Ophiopogon Formula)

Depressed mood:

+ Wen Dan Tang (Bamboo & Hoelen Formula)

+ Gan Mai Da Zao Wan (*Jia Wei*) (Wheat & Jujube Combination)

+ An Shen Ding Zhi Wan (Zizyphus & Polygala Formula)

Mammary dysplasia (fibrocystic breast disease):

+ Tao Hong Si Wu Wan (Persica, Carthamus & Dang-gui Combination)

+ Gui Zhi Fu Ling Wan (Cinnamon & Hoelen Combination)

With headache:

+ Chuan Xiong Cha Tiao San (Ligusticum and Tea Formula)

Insomnia or disturbed sleep due to stress:

+ An Shen Ding Zhi Wan (Zizyphus & Polygala Formula)

COMMENTS

This formula is from the 'Formulary of the Tai Ping Welfare Dispensary Bureau' (*tai ping hui min he ji ju fang*), 1151, a compilation of popular and effective formulas that were used in the public dispensaries of the Song dynastic period. It is a well designed formula that addresses Liver Qi constraint – together with the associated emotional disturbances – when it occurs in the context of a deficiency syndrome, specifically Spleen Qi and Liver Blood deficiency.

This condition is marked by failure of the Liver to maintain the smooth and even flow of the Qi throughout the body. It is commonly caused by emotional strain or stress, but may also come about through invasion by pathogens, which obstruct the Qi and Blood, placing a critical strain on the Liver's ability to adequately regulate the Qi. Thus, Liver function (i.e. the Liver Qi) becomes inhibited leading to what is essentially a deficiency type of syndrome.

It manifests in a diminution of emotional responses (i.e. inability to give vent to feelings, depressed mood, crying easily), together with disturbances along the course of the Liver channel (chest, breasts and hypochondrium). In addition, disruption of the middle Jiao (i.e. Stomach and Spleen function) is usually also present. This is because the Liver fails to regulate and promote the normal movements of Qi in the middle Jiao, leading to disturbances with digestion as described under 'Signs and Symptoms'.

Because the Qi and the Blood form a complementary pair, Liver Qi constraint is essentially a disharmony between the Liver Qi and the Liver Blood. Thus the later may readily become deficient. Liver Blood deficiency may impact on the Heart (the Liver nourishes the Heart) as well as the uterus: in the former, the Heart receives less Blood from the Liver, leading to disturbances in cognitive function and possibly also sleep; while in the latter, the Liver's ability to store and discharge Blood may adversely affect menstruation, e.g. irregular periods, bloating etc..

The synergistic actions of the herbs are as follows:

- Bupleurum root (*chai hu*), Zingiber rhizome (*sheng jiang*), Mentha haplocalyx, herb (*bo he*): disperse the stagnant Liver Qi.
- Paeonia root (*bai shao*), Angelica root (*dang gui*): nourish the Liver Blood, protect the Liver Yin from the dispersing action of the above mentioned herbs (Bupleurum, Zingiber and Mentha), calm the mind.
- Bupleurum root (*chai hu*), Paeonia root (*bai shao*), Angelica root (*dang gui*): tonify the Liver and promote the Liver's function of maintaining the normal smooth flow of the Qi.
- Poria cocos (*fu ling*), Atractylodes rhizome (*bai zhu*), Glycyrrhiza root (*gan cao*): tonify the Spleen Qi.