**Shēn Tōng Zhú Yū Tāng**  
(Drive Out Blood Stasis from a Painful Body Decoction)

身痛逐瘀湯  
身痛逐瘀汤

Pinyin Name: Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang  
Literal Name: Drive Out Blood Stasis from a Painful Body Decoction  
Alternate Name: Cnidium and Notopterygium Combination  
Original Source: Yi Lin Gai Cuo (Corrections of Errors Among Physicians) by Wang Qing-Ren in 1830

**COMPOSITION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tao Ren (Semen Persicae)</td>
<td>9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Hua (Flos Carthami)</td>
<td>9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dang Gui (Radix Angelicae Sinensis)</td>
<td>9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuan Xiong (Rhizoma Chuanxiong)</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo Yao (Myrrha)</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Ling Zhi (Faeces Trogopteri), chao (dry-fried)</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Di Long (Pheretima)</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qin Jiao (Radix Gentianae Macrophyllae)</td>
<td>3g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qiang Hua (Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii)</td>
<td>3g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiang Fu (Rhizoma Cyperi)</td>
<td>3g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niu Xi (Radix Achyranthis Bidentatae)</td>
<td>9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gan Cao (Radix et Rhizoma Glycyrrhizae)</td>
<td>6g</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**DOSAGE / PREPARATION / ADMINISTRATION**

Prepare as a decoction.

**CHINESE THERAPEUTIC ACTIONS**

1. Activates qi and blood circulation  
2. Dispels blood stagnation and opens the channels and collaterals  
3. Unblocks bi zheng (painful obstruction syndrome) and relieves pain

**CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS**

Pain due to qi and blood stagnation blocking the channels and collaterals: pain in the shoulder, elbow, waist and/or leg; and persistent, generalized pain throughout the whole body that does not respond to treatment.

**CLINICAL APPLICATIONS**

Arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, sciatica, pain in the lower back and legs, lumbago, neuralgia, hyperostoeogeny, and allergic purpura.

**EXPLANATION**

Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang (Drive Out Blood Stasis from a Painful Body Decoction) activates qi and blood circulation, dispels blood stagnation, opens the channels and collaterals, and relieves pain. Clinically, it is often used for pain due to stagnation of qi and blood. Pain may be located in the shoulder, elbow, waist, leg, or throughout the whole body.

In this formula, Tao Ren (Semen Persicae) and Hong Hua (Flos Carthami) activate blood circulation and eliminate blood stasis. Dang Gui (Radix Angelicae Sinensis) and Chuan Xiong (Rhizoma Chuanxiong) nourish the blood and promote blood circulation. Mo Yao (Myrrha) relieves pain by invigorating blood circulation. Wu Ling Zhi (Faeces Trogopteri) and Di Long (Pheretima) dispel blood stasis and open the channels and collaterals. Qin Jiao (Radix Gentianae Macrophyllae) and Qiang Hua (Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii) dispel wind-dampness to relieve pain. Xiang Fu (Rhizoma Cyperi) activates qi to relieve pain. Niu Xi (Radix Achyranthis Bidentatae) strengthens bones, tendons, and soft tissues. Gan Cao (Radix et Rhizoma Glycyrrhizae) harmonizes the herbs in the formula.

**MODIFICATIONS**

- With pain in the upper body, add Ge Gen (Radix Puerariae Lobatae).
- With pain the lower body, add Du Huo (Radix Angelicae Pubescensitis).
- With pain in the extremities, add Sang Zhi (Ramulus Mori) and Gui Zhi (Ramulus Cinnamomii).
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnosis</th>
<th>Signs and Symptoms</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Herbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Pain due to qi and blood stagnation | Pain in the shoulder, elbow, waist, leg and/or the whole body: qi and blood stagnation blocking the channels and collaterals | • Activates qi and blood circulation<br>• Dispels blood stagnation and opens the channels and collaterals<br>• Unblocks bi zheng (painful obstruction syndrome) and relieves pain | • Tao Ren (Semen Persicae) and Hong Hua (Flos Carthami) activate blood circulation and eliminate blood stasis.<br>• Dang Gui (Radix Angelicae Sinensis) and Chuan Xiong (Rhizoma Chuanxiong) nourish the blood and promote blood circulation.<br>• Mo Yao (Myrrha) invigorates blood circulation and relieves pain.<br>• Wu Ling Zhi (Faeces Trogopteri) and Di Long (Pheretima) dispel blood stasis and open the channels and collaterals.<br>• Qin Jiao (Radix Gentianae Macrophyllae) and Qiang Huo (Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii) dispel wind-dampness to relieve pain.<br>• Xiang Fu (Rhizoma Cyperi) activates qi circulation to relieve pain.<br>• Niu Xi (Radix Achyranthis Bidentatae) strengthens bones, tendons, and soft tissues.<br>• Gan Cao (Radix et Rhizoma Glycyrrhizae) harmonizes the herbs.

CAUTIONS / CONTRAINDICATIONS
Use of Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang is contraindicated during pregnancy.¹

PHARMACOLOGICAL EFFECTS
Analgesic and anti-inflammatory: According to in vitro studies, administration of Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang in tincture form was effective in relieving pain and reducing inflammation.²

CLINICAL STUDIES AND RESEARCH
1. Bi zheng (painful obstruction syndrome): Administration of Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang in 32 patients with bi zheng (painful obstruction syndrome) was associated with complete recovery in 12 cases, significant improvement in 10 cases, moderate improvement in 7 cases, and no improvement in 3 cases. The overall effectiveness was 90.6%. The herbal formula used Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang as the base, with the addition of Huang Qi (Radix Astragali) and Dang Shen (Radix Codonopsis) for qi deficiency; Fang Feng (Radix Saposhnikoviae) and Wei Ling Xian (Radix et Rhizoma Clematidis) for wind; Zhi Chuan Wu (Radix Aconiti Praeparata) and Xi Xin (Radix et Rhizoma Asari) for cold; Fu Ling (Poria) and Yi Yi Ren (Semen Coicis) for damp; Gui Zhi (Ramulus Cinnamomi) and Sang Zhi (Ramulus Mori) for pain in the upper limbs; Sang Ji Sheng (Herba Taxilli), Xu Duan (Radix Dipsaci), and Gou Ji (Rhizoma Gibotii) for pain in the lower limbs; Ge Gen (Radix Puerariae Lobatae) for pain in the neck; and Feng Fang (Nidus Vespae), Wu Shao She (Zaocys), Quan Xie (Scorpio), and dry-fried Chuan Shan Jia (Squama Manis) for stiff joints with deformation. For re bi (heat painful obstruction), Jin Yin Hua (Flos Lonicerae Japonicae), Cang Zhu (Rhizoma Atractylodis), and Huang Bo (Cortex Phellodendri Chinensis) were added, and Qin Jiao (Radix Gentianae Macrophyllae), Qiang Huo (Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii), and Chuan Xiong (Rhizoma Chuanxiong) were removed.³

2. Arthritis: Use of modified Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang in 67 patients with arthritis was associated with complete recovery in 50 patients, significant improvement in 14 cases, and no effect in 3 cases. Modifications included the addition of Fu Zi (Radix Aconiti Lateralis Praeparata), Xi Xin (Radix et Rhizoma Asari), and Wei Ling Xian (Radix et Rhizoma Asari)).
(Radix et Rhizoma Clematidis) for arthritis due to cold; *Ren Dong Teng* (Caulis Lonicerae Japonicae), *Shi Gao* (Gypsum Fibrosum), *Huang Bo* (Cortex Phellodendri Chinensis), and *Yi Yi Ren* (Semen Coicis), and removal of *Qiang Huo* (Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii), for arthritis due to heat; *Bai Shao* (Radix Paeoniae Alba) for stiffness of the tendons and ligaments; and *Jin Qian Bai Hua She* (Bunguras Parvus) and *Wu Shao She* (Zaoeys) for “mobile” arthritis that affects multiple joints.

3. Rheumatoid arthritis: One study of 46 patients with rheumatoid arthritis reported marked success using modified *Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang* as the base formula, and added *Gui Zhi* (Ramulus Cinnamomi), *Fang Feng* (Radix Saposhnikoviae), and *Wei Ling Xian* (Radix et Rhizoma Clematidis) for wind-dampness; *Gui Zhi* (Ramulus Cinnamomi), *Gan Jiang* (Rhizoma Zingiberis), and *Fu Ling* (Poria) for damp-cold; addition of *Cang Zhu* (Rhizoma Atractylodis), *Huang Bo* (Cortex Phellodendri Chinensis), and *Fang Feng* (Radix Saposhnikoviae), and removal of *Qiang Huo* (Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii) for damp-heat; the addition of *Qiang Huo* (Radix Gentianae Macrophyllae), for Kidney yang deficiency; and removal of *Cinnamomi) for yin deficiency; and the addition of *Qiang Huo* (Radix Gentianae Macrophyllae) 9g, *Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii*, for damp-heat; the addition of *Qiang Huo* (Radix Saposhnikoviae), and removal of *Pheretima* 9g, *Fructus Corni*, and *Cortex* *Radix Gentianae Macrophyllae), for Kidney yang deficiency.3

4. Sciatica: Administration of *Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang* for 7-45 days (average of 17.4 days) in 36 patients with sciatica was associated with complete recovery in 29 cases, significant improvement in 6 cases, and no effect in 1 case. The overall effectiveness was 97.2%. Furthermore, of 24 patients who returned for follow-up one year later, only 1 had recurrence.6

5. Pain in the lower back and legs: Administration of *Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang* has been shown in 2 studies to effectively treat pain in the lower back and legs. Of 67 patients, the first study reported complete recovery in 53 cases, improvement in 9 cases, and no effect in 5 cases.7 Of 52 patients in the second study, 12 had complete recovery, 26 had significant improvement, 9 had moderate improvement, and 5 had no effect.6

6. Lumbago: One study reported good results using modified *Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang* to treat acute low back pain. Modifications included the addition of *Dang Shen* (Radix Codonopsis) and *Huang Qi* (Radix Astragali) for qi deficiency; and *Yan Hu Suo* (Rhizoma Corydalis) and *Qi Ye Lian* (Radix Schellfierae) for severe pain. The herbal treatment also was applied topically to the affected area. Of 15 patients, the study reported complete recovery in 8 cases, significant improvement in 3 cases, moderate improvement in 3 cases, and no benefit in 1 case.9

7. Hyperosteogeny: Hyperosteogeny of the lumbar spine was treated with modified *Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang* with good results. Of 25 patients, the study reported complete relief in 18 cases, significant relief in 4 cases, and no effect in 3 cases.10

8. Allergic purpura: Use of modified *Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang* for treatment of allergic purpura was associated with marked success in 30 patients (between 11-59 years of age with 2 days to 3 years history of illness). The herbal treatment contained *Dang Gui* (Radix Angelicae Sinensis) 15g, *Hong Hua* (Flores Carthami) 12g, *Mo Yao* (Myrrha) 12g, *Wu Ling Zhi* (Faeces Tragopteri) 12g, *Xiang Fu* (Rhizoma Cypéri) 12g, *Chuan Xiong* (Rhizoma Chuanxiong) 10g, *Tao Ren* (Semen Persicae) 10g, *Niu Xi* (Radix Achyranthis Bidentatae) 9g, *Qin Jiao* (Radix Gentianae Macrophyllae) 9g, *Di Long* (Pheretima) 9g, *Qiang Huo* (Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii) 9g, and *Gan Cao* (Radix et Rhizoma Glycyrrhiza) 6g. Other modifications were made as needed based on the condition of the individual patients. The herbs were given in decoction daily for 5-32 days duration. Of 30 patients, the study reported complete recovery in 26 cases, significant improvement in 3 cases, and no benefit in one case.11

RELATED FORMULA

**Zhú Yū Tāng** (Drive Out Blood Stasis Decoction)

**Pinyin Name:** Zhú Yu Tang

**Literal Name:** Drive Out Blood Stasis Decoction

**Original Source:** *Jian Tai Zhen Suo Fang* (Herbal Prescriptions from Jian Tai Clinic) by Chang Wei-Yen in 1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Táo Ren (Semen Persicae)</th>
<th>Hong Hua (Flores Carthami)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Leng (Rhizoma Sparganii)</td>
<td>E Zhu (Rhizoma Curcumae)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuan Xiong (Rhizoma Chuanxiong)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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Dan Shen (Radix et Rhizoma Salviae Miltiorrhizae)
Dang Gui (Radix Angelicae Sinensis)
Bai Shao (Radix Paeoniae Alba)
Fu Ling (Poria)
Er Cha (Catechu)
Ji Xue Teng (Caulis Spatholobi)
Xue Jie (Sanguis Draconis)
Gai Zhi (Ramulus Cinnamomum)
Shang Zhi (Ramulus Mori)
Sheng Ma (Rhizoma Cimicifugae)
Ding Xiang (Flos Caryophylli)
Qiang Huo (Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii)
Qing Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae Viride)
Xiang Fu (Rhizoma Cyperi)
Gao Liang Jiang (Rhizoma Alpiniae Officinarum)
Lu Lu Tong (Fructus Liquidambaris)
Qin Jiao (Radix Gentianae Macrophyllae)
Yan Hu Suo (Rhizoma Cynii)
Mu Dan Pi (Cortex Moutan)
Chuan Niu Xi (Radix Cyathulae)
Da Huang (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei)
Lian Zi (Semen Nelumbinis)
Da Zao (Fructus Jujubae)
Gan Cao (Radix et Rhizoma Glycyrrhizae)

Zhu Yu Tang (Drive Out Blood Stasis Decoction) is designed to treat pain in the extremities due to blood stagnation. It is formulated based on the principles and ingredients of three classic formulas: Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang (Drive Out Blood Stasis from a Painful Body Decoction) to eliminate blood stasis from the extremities; Dang Gui Si Ni Tang (Tangkuei Decoction for Frigid Extremities) to warm the channels and disperse cold; and Zheng Gu Zi Jin Dan (Purple and Gold Pill for Righteous Bones) to activate blood circulation and dispel blood stasis. Clinical applications include peripheral neuropathy, polyneuropathy, diabetic neuropathy, distal polyneuropathy, and neuralgia.

References
1. Zhong Yao Ming Fang Yao Li Yu Yin Yong (Pharmacology and Applications of Famous Herbal Formulas) 1989;466-468.