

Wu Hua Formula has been used by the people of Guandong Province for an indeterminable number of generations. Manufacture of Wu Hua Formula as a patent medicine began in the 20th century, around which time discussions of the formula began to appear in print.

GENERAL SIGNS/SYMPTOMS

Patients will have obvious damp-heat or heat-toxin signs such as damp-heat diarrhea, gastroenteritis, intestinal parasites, blood in stools, intestinal abscess, and toxic swellings, such as carbuncles and furuncles anywhere in the body. This formula has a strong and fast action, yet is gentler on the body and more versatile than other formulas commonly used to treat damp-heat diarrhea or parasitic pathogens. Compared to other formulas that strongly resolve damp-heat and toxin, Wu Hua Formula is safer for children and the elderly. It is popular to take along when traveling to places where the water quality is substandard.

TRADITIONAL ACTIONS

1. Disperses heat and resolves dampness

2. Resolves toxin and disperses swellings

3. Stops diarrhea

4. Controls bleeding

INGREDIENTS

PINYIN	LATIN	ENGLISH	PERCENT OF FORMULA
Jin Yin Hua (chief)	Lonicerae (flos)	Japanese Honeysuckle Flower	40%
Mu Jin Hua (deputy)	Hibisci (flos)	Hibiscus Flower	20%
Ji Guan Hua (deputy)	Celosiae Cristatae (flos)	Cockscomb Flower	20%
Hou Po Hua (assistant)	Magnoliae Officinalis (flos)	Magnolia Flower	10%
Ge Hua (assistant)	Puerariae (flos)	Pueraria Flower	10%

GENERAL INDICATIONS / MODERN APPLICATIONS

- Appendicitis
- Bleeding from heat-toxin or damp-heat toxin
- Blood in the stool
- Boils and furuncles
- Diarrhea
- Dysentery
- Eczema
- Epistaxis / Nosebleeds
- Gastrointestinal inflammation
- Hematemesis / Vomiting blood
- Hemorrhoids
- Hives
- "Hot qi" syndrome in children
- Intestinal abscess
- Intestinal parasites
- Over-consumption of alcohol or fried / fatty foods
- Parasites
- Pinworms in children
- Rectal bleeding
- Skin rash, red and raised
- Viral flu prevention
- Wounds, from toxic qi or damp-heat, suppurative

SYNERGY OF INGREDIENTS

"Wu Hua Tang" means "Five Flower Decoction". One of the advantages of flowers is also a disadvantage in traditional decocting methods. On the one hand, flowers are light and have a lot of surface area compared to roots, barks, and twigs; they therefore give up a higher percentage of their healing power to the decoction. They also have a conveniently short cooking time, which was undoubtedly part of the traditional appeal of Wu Hua Tang. On the other hand, aromatics rapidly lose their qi to evaporation. The high surface-area-to-weight ratio and the loss during evaporation tended to cancel each other out, so that in many formula decoctions, the weight of the flowers was comparable to that of the roots and barks. State-of-the-art decocting methods today have a closed system, with zero percent of the qi lost to evaporation. There is also a modern method to trap the volatile oils as they steam upward and then re-introduce them at the end of the decoction process. Today, using modern technology, a formula that consists of all flowers is much more potent than the same formula made at home with the same amounts of ingredients.

The five flowers used in this formula combine to cool the blood and disperse damp-heat and toxin in the digestive tract and skin. Flowers by nature are light, ascending, and often aromatic. In this formula, the latter quality facilitates the dispersion of heat. Dispersion is the process of breaking up an accumulation of heat-toxin in order to rob the heat

FORMULA ACTIONS

- Disperses heat and resolves dampness
- Resolves toxin and disperses swellings
- Stops diarrhea
- Controls bleeding

TONGUE

Red or normal with red spots, with possible thick, yellow coat.

PULSE

Rapid, big, may be forceful.

CONTRAINDICATIONS/**CAUTIONS**

Do not take if symptoms are caused by deficiency or cold. Though safer than other formulas used to treat the same indications, long-term use may injure yin.

DOSAGE**For mild cases:**

Adults: 2-3 tablets four times per day.

Children: 1-2 tablets three times per day.

For moderate to severe cases:

Adults: 4-5 tablets four times per day.

Children 2-3 tablets three or four times per day, depending on age and weight.

clump of its combined strength. The smaller particles of toxin lose their ability to adhere to one another in the presence of the dispersing agent, and are thus more susceptible to the efforts of the *wei qi* to guide out the heat.

Four out of the five flowers in **Wu Hua Formula** (representing 90% of the whole formula) are at least mildly sweet. Sweetness is the sapor of supplementation, and it is by design that **Wu Hua Formula** protects while it disperses. The overall effect is one in which the formula breaks down the pathogen and facilitates the flow of *wei qi* to guide the subdued pathogen out of the body. This is a very different strategy from formulas that clear damp-heat using cold, bitter herbs, such as coptis (*huang lian*) or pulsatilla (*bai tou weng*), to drain downward. Cold and bitter herbs do the work of elimination for the body. Their harsh nature more easily taxes the spleen qi and injures the yin. They are appropriate for strong constitutions and acute/severe signs and symptoms. Either strategy can be effective for some cases, but by comparison, **Wu Hua Formula** is gentler and arguably more versatile than these harsher formulations.

Lonicera (*jin yin hua*) is the chief ingredient. It comprises 40% of the total formula. It has the ability to disperse heat and resolve toxin in any stage of development (suppurated or not yet formed) and can reach toxin from the deep to superficial levels or from the blood (*xue*) level to the protective (*wei*) level, but it cannot enter all of the channels. *Jin yin hua* enters the lung, stomach, and large intestine channels. It is commonly used to treat toxic swellings of the skin, intestines, or throat and has a special action to disperse toxin in the breast. *Jin yin hua* is also commonly used for its action to resolve damp-heat in the lower burner. This includes dysentery, diarrhea, and painful urinary dribbling. In *Encountering the Sources of the Classic of Materia Medica*, Zhang Lu-yu declared that “within its draining is tonification.” As a protective function, *jin yin hua* “enriches the blood” and alleviates thirst.

Mu jin hua, is the flower from the Rose of Sharon hibiscus. It serves as the deputy in **Wu Hua Formula**. Like *jin yin hua*, it enters the large intestine and lung channels, but it also enters the spleen channel. It aids the chief herb to resolve damp-heat, cool blood, and disperse abscesses. *Mu jin hua* is a diuretic, and it engages the urinary function as a route out of the body for the damp-heat pathogen. This strategy helps to protect the intestines from loss of *jing* and qi that can result from diarrhea. *Mu jin hua* has been shown to increase phagocytosis in neutrophilsⁱ and to facilitate the healing of wounds.ⁱⁱ In these actions can be seen evidence of it protecting property.

Celosiae (*ji guan hua*) is another deputy herb. Its emphasis is less upon dispersing toxic swellings and more upon clearing heat and cooling blood. It consolidates essence (*jing*), astringes body fluids, and has a direct action upon stopping diarrhea. *Ji guan hua* enters the liver and large intestine channel, and according to some sources, the kidney channel as well. One of its functions as deputy in this formula is to protect the body from loss of fluids. In a formula with coptis (*huang lian*) or pulsatilla (*bai tou weng*) as its chief, *ji guan hua* would be unadvised, since it would interfere with the purgative action of those, but in **Wu Hua Formula**, it is harmonized with the others to protect and consolidate the precious, while dispersing the evil.

Hou po hua, the flower of magnolia officinalis, serves in this formula as assistant. It is aromatic and enters the spleen and stomach channels to promote the smooth flow of qi through the chest and abdomen, much like the bark of the same plant, *hou po*, only more mildly. It is included in **Wu Hua Formula** to synergize with the other flowers in a way that *hou po* could not. It alleviates the fullness in the chest and abdomen that are the result of dampness leading to qi stagnation. It can help restore the proper flow of qi in the gut and wake up the appetite.

Ge hua is the flower of pueraria, which is the same plant from which *ge gen* is derived. *Ge hua* is sweet and neutral and enters the stomach channel. It is most

famous for its ability to treat intoxication and hangover. In **Wu Hua Formula**, it serves as a powerful assistant in the speedy transformation of damp-heat-toxin. *Jin yin hua*, by itself, is said to have a “gradual” nature,ⁱⁱⁱ and one of the functions of *ge hua* is to speed things up a bit. By itself, or in large doses, *ge hua* can easily damage the yin, but it comprises only 10% of **Wu Hua Formula** and is offset by the protective actions of the other herbs.

FORMULA DISCUSSION

The first of two principle applications of **Wu Hua Formula** is to remove damp-heat from the bowels and the skin. The second principle application of **Wu Hua Formula** is to disperse toxin. It is strong enough to accomplish this at the blood level, yet light enough to disperse it through the skin. While its primary actions are focused on eliminating damp-heat and dispersing toxin, this formula has a mild action to consolidate essence and body fluids. The dispersing and consolidating actions stop diarrhea synergistically; on the one hand, **Wu Hua Formula** gently astringes the intestines, while on the other hand eliminating the pathogenic heat and dampness at the root of the problem.

While primarily used for dispersing damp-heat and heat-toxin, **Wu Hua Formula** has a marked action upon the blood. The first three ingredients of **Wu Hua Formula** (*jin yin hua*, *mu jin hua*, and *ji guan hua*) constitute 80% of the total formula. All three of these herbs cool the blood, while *jin yin hua* also has a strong action to control and stop bleeding. This combined action is mainly directed toward controlling intestinal bleeding, but also has an effect on the stomach, the nose, bladder, and uterus.

MODERN APPLICATIONS

Intestinal Parasites

Parasitic diseases such as shigellosis, schistosomiasis, giardiasis, salmonellosis, amebiasis (dysentery), and cryptosporidiosis are still common today, especially to travelers. **Wu Hua Formula** is used to treat these diseases, which can affect the qi, nutritive, and blood levels.

Skin Disorders

Skin disorders that are due to internal damp-heat, such as eczema, boils, furuncles, carbuncles, hives, and atopic dermatitis may all be treated with **Wu Hua Formula**, especially if the *yangming* channel is involved. Skin disorders that sometimes accompany Leaky Gut Syndrome, Crohn's disease, and ulcerative colitis can be treated with **Wu Hua Formula**, when combined with the appropriate formulas. (See Formula Combinations.)

“Hot Qi” in Children

This term is often used in Asia to describe a condition seen in children. The primary symptoms are weepy or dry eyes, sore throat, halitosis, constipation, and irritability. These symptoms may or may not be accompanied at times by sneezing, congestion, wheezing, and skin rashes. This combination of symptoms often correlates with those experienced by children who suffer repeated infections and allergic reactions. Generally, children have vulnerable yin that can be easily

damaged by heat, especially long-term, recurring, chronic heat and inflammation. **Wu Hua Formula** is safe for use with children, since it does not contain cold, bitter, downward draining herbs. It will not contribute to further damage of the their tender yin and spleen qi. In China, clinical studies have shown the effectiveness of a **Wu Hua Formula** in treating this condition in children.^{iv}

FORMULA COMPARISONS

Wu Hua Formula & Peony Decoction (*Shao Yao Tang*)

In spite of the formula's name, and irregardless of the large amount of peony root (*shao yao*) in this formula, the chief ingredient of Peony Decoction is coptis (*huang lian*). The formula treats dysentery, damp-heat diarrhea, and heat-toxin in the intestines, but the actions are very different compared to **Wu Hua Formula**. Peony Decoction is a very powerful formula to purge the intestines of a serious toxin. The large amount of *shao yao* in Peony Decoction combine with the prepared licorice root (*zhi gan cao*) to address the paroxysmal pain that can be a symptom of dysentery. In addition to a large dose of coptis (*huang lian*), Peony Decoction contains costus root (*mu xiang*) and a big dose of rhubarb (*da huang*). It is appropriate when pain is a major factor in dysenteric disorders. Except for emergencies and severe conditions, the cold, purgative actions of Peony Decoction are too strong for weak constitutions.

Wu Hua Formula & Pulsatilla Decoction (*Bai Tou Weng Tang*)

Pulsatilla Decoction is perhaps the first formula many would consider to treat damp-heat diarrhea. It does not clear the pathogen by purgation, as Peony Decoction. Rather, its focus is on resolving dampness and clearing heat—especially heat at the blood level. There are no purgatives in Pulsatilla Decoction. Damp-heat can be the result of the body responding to heat with dampness, responding to dampness with heat, or it can be the nature of the pathogen itself. Similar to **Wu Hua Formula**, Pulsatilla Decoction is best suited to treat damp-heat where heat-toxin is the cause and dampness is the body's response to “put out the fire.” The difference is in each formula's strategy. Both have an action to resolve damp-heat, but **Wu Hua Formula** “disperses clumped heat,” with mild sweet herbs, while Pulsatilla Decoction “clears heat” using bitter cold herbs to “dowse the fire and flush it out.” The action of Pulsatilla Decoction is entirely directed to the intestines. **Wu Hua Formula** is therefore more appropriate if there are accompanying symptoms manifesting in hot skin lesions. Pulsatilla Decoction is very cold and over-use can result in damage to the spleen, causing spleen *xu* diarrhea. Pulsatilla Decoction should be discontinued when the strong foul odor of the stool is no longer present.

Wu Hua Formula & Rehmannia Cool Blood Formula (*Tu Fu Ling Sheng Di Huang Wan*)

Both of these formulas can treat skin disorders such as boils, carbuncles, eczema, hives, psoriasis, and atopic dermatitis, but there are key differences. The first major difference is that **Wu Hua Formula** can clear heat and promote urination to drain damp, whereas **Rehmannia Cool Blood** treats skin conditions that

WU HUA FORMULA 4 are characterized by deficiency heat in the blood level, but not damp. **Rehmannia Cool Blood** has some ingredients that are heavy and cloying in order to nourish yin and body fluids. It is not appropriate for damp-heat conditions. **Wu Hua Formula** clears heat-toxin and dampness from the qi, nutritive, and blood levels, but its nourishing actions are weak; it is very much directed to dispersing excess. **Rehmannia Cool Blood** clears heat from the blood level. Both formulas have the ability to clear heat-toxins from the blood level, but **Rehmannia Cool Blood** does not treat the more superficial layers.

Wu Hua Formula & Margarita Complexion Formula (Zhen Zhu Yu Rong Fang). Both formulas treat skin conditions such as boils, carbuncles, eczema, hives and atopic dermatitis. **Margarita Complexion Formula** puts much more emphasis on resolving heat and toxin in the liver-gallbladder channels and upon breaking up phlegm accumulations. The bitter and heavy substances in **Margarita Complexion Formula** make it strong to drain dampness downward and clear heat. **Margarita Complexion Formula**

is more appropriate for treating acne and other skin issues that are caused from factors like diet and hormones. **Wu Hua Formula** is better at treating these conditions when caused by an acute invading pathogen.

Wu Hua Formula & Four Marvel Formula (Si Miao Wan). These two formulas are directed to removing damp-heat but have some major differences in their specific uses. The action of **Four Marvel Formula** is directed to draining dampness and heat in the lower part of the body. In the damp-heat pattern that **Four Marvel Formula** addresses, dampness is primary, and heat is the body's response to it. The pattern that **Wu Hua Formula** addresses is primarily heat or heat-toxin that leads to dampness. In the **Four Marvel Formula** pattern, damp-heat diarrhea is not a significant symptom. The "lower body" here refers mainly to damp-heat lesions in the legs, genital sores, edema, and yellow vaginal discharge. For skin issues, **Wu Hua Formula** is better for the upper body, compared to **Four Marvel Formula**, and also more focused on dispersing heat and toxin, and more protective of yin.

USEFUL COMBINATIONS

To stop intestinal bleeding	Use with San Qi Tablets .
To treat intestinal damp-heat manifestations caused by parasitic infestation (diarrhea, dysenteric diarrhea, rectal bleeding, blood and pus in stool)	Use with Oregano Oil Formula . Because Wu Hua Formula is mild, but effective in treating the manifestations of parasitic infection, and Oregano Oil Formula has a strong action to eliminate parasites, alternating the two can help alleviate the symptoms and parasites quickly. It is best to begin with Wu Hua Formula to get the symptoms under control and make the patient comfortable. Then, when this is accomplished, switch over to Oregano Oil Formula to finish the job. It may be necessary to repeat this combination a few times.
For skin disorders that sometimes accompany Leaky Gut Syndrome, Crohn's disease, and colitis	Use with Pulsatilla Intestinal Formula . Wu Hua Formula can increase the former's action on the intestines as well as address the skin lesions.

ENDNOTES

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