

四君子湯

Four-Gentleman decoction (Si Jun Zi Tang)

Available in tincture form, code #040910

Composition: Ginseng (*panax quinquefolium*); *Atractylodis macrocephalae*; *Sclerotium poria cocos*; *Glycyrrhizae uralensis*.

Action: Strengthens the Spleen (digestion , absorption) and tonifies Spleen qi.

Indication:

1. Weak Spleen and stomach, reduced appetite, deficient Spleen qi, pallid complexion, loose stool, pale tongue body, weak pulses.
2. When Spleen qi is deficient, the assimilation and absorption of food are impaired, thus pallid complexion due to malnutrition.
3. Spleen qi deficiency leads to declined transporting ability of the whole digestive system. Thus reduced appetite and loose stool.
4. May be used for gastritis and duodenal ulcers that are due to chronic deficiency.

Analysis of formula:

1. The main component is ginseng (*Panax quinquefolium*), which tonify yin and qi, the king herb.
2. *Atractylodis* which strengthens the spleen and dries dampness, the minister herb.
3. The assistant herb, *Sclerotium poria cocos* leaches out dampness, assist king and minister herbs in strengthening the Spleen.
4. The carrier herb, *Glycyrrhizae* warms and harmonized the stomach.
5. All four herbs in the formula are mild in nature and suitable for long term use without side effect, and can be used for general weakness or weakness after disease condition.

Analysis of synergistic action:

1. Spleen deficiency and qi deficiency are closely related, usually are the cause and result of each other, like chicken and egg. Because of this relationship, tonifying qi and strengthening Spleen are used together.
2. Our body's source of nourishment depends upon the ability of Spleen and stomach to transport food in the digestive system. Thus, one who's proficient in treating deficient qi usually starts with strengthening Spleen and stomach.
3. When stomach and Spleen loss its transporting function, the breakdown of food and source of nourishment are impaired.
4. Thus when treating weak Spleen and stomach, one must utilize herbs that tonify qi in order to assist transporting and breaking down of food.
5. In this formula, Ginseng and *Glycyrrhizae* tonifies the qi. While *Atractylodis* and *Sclerotium poria cocos* strengthens the Spleen. This formula is suitable for general weakness and poor digestive function.
6. This is the foundation formula that other variations build on.

Caution and contraindications:

Patient with constipation, high fever, or heat symptoms due to deficiency.

Reference:

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2. Chinese herbal medicine "Formulas and Strategies" 1990, Eastland Press, by Bensky and Barolet.
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