

[IMAGE]

Herbal Formulas to Help Relieve Menstrual Pain

By Mark Reps, DC

Patients with chronic, recurrent menstrual pain are highly motivated to get well. They often look to alternative care for treatment as an adjunct to their medical care or even as a new primary methodology of treatment.

Success ratios for treatment with chiropractic spinal manipulative therapy (SMT) are generally quite good, with SMT having less risk and fewer side effects than medicinal prophylactics. However, many women tend to have menstrual cramps and pain on a recurring basis, which may require over-the-counter or prescription drug intervention. Fortunately, nondrug alternatives exist that can complement your chiropractor's adjustments, such as herbal medicine.

Herbal medicine has long been used around the world and has been thoroughly researched for symptoms related to painful menstruation. The Chinese herb *Dan Gui Shao Yao San* also known in Japan as *Toki-shakuyaku-san*, has been proven effective in the treatment of dysmenorrhea, including symptomatic relief of concomitant symptoms such as feeling cold, dizziness, headaches and shoulder stiffness. Of note, no significant side effects were observed in the group of patients who used *Toki-shakuyaku-san* – an important finding because by comparison, all Western medicines have been shown to have some side effects.

A February 2014 study evaluated numerous herbal formulas for the treatment of primary dysmenorrhea in women ages 13-25. This study targeted the analgesic, mood-modifying and hormonal adjustments of the herbs. In reviewing more than 57,000 prescriptions of traditionally used herbal formulations, the study found that *Dan Gui Shao Yao San* and *Yan Hu Suo* (Corydalis) were significantly more effective than other formulations; and that when taken in combination, these two formulas proved to be among the most effective.

menstrual symptoms - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Another herb, *Gui Zhi Fu Ling Tang*, can be used when dysmenorrhea is accompanied by uterine fibroids, which occur in approximately 25 percent of all women of reproductive age and 30-40 percent of all women over the age of 40. About half the time, they are

symptomatic with menstrual pain and pressure being among the primary complaints. *Gui Zhi Fu Ling Tang* was shown to potentially reduce the volume of uterine fibroids, the most common benign tumor of the female reproductive tract.

Research indicates that the primary complaints of lower abdominal pain and pain that radiates to the back (spinal pain) and thigh (leg pain) that Chiropractors commonly see in patients with dysmenorrhea, as well as compensatory complaints of headaches, dizziness, shoulder pain and feeling cold, are well addressed by the Chinese herb *Dan Gui Shao Yao San*, also known in Japan as *Toki-shakuyaku-san*. In addition, patients who have the common concomitant condition of uterine fibroids have an herbal alternative as well, not only for the symptoms of dysmenorrhea, but the potential to reduce the number of uterine fibroid tumors.

When you are looking for a better and more complete way to manage menstrual symptoms, scientific research has proven herbal medicine to be effective. Talk to your doctor for more information.

Mark Reps, DC, is a chiropractor and certified acupuncturist with 35 years of clinical experience. He also serves as a chiropractic advisor / consultant on the board of [TCMzone, LLC](#); writes an alternative / natural health column for a half-dozen Minnesota newspapers; and has published four mystery novels. He will soon release his book, *Perfect Health: Why Be Sick When You Can Be Well*.

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