



The Brilliance of Sheng Hua Tang for Postpartum Health

Dr. Maryam Mahanian, Dr. TCM

Sheng Hua Tang is an excellent Chinese herbal formula given to almost all women immediately following childbirth in China and Taiwan. It is a popular postpartum herbal formula and one that I love to use for patients in my clinical practice.

Sheng Hua Tang was developed by the famous gynecologist Fu Qing Zhu who came from seven generations of gynecologists before him. Fu Qing Zhu's book on Gynecology (Fu Qing Zhu Fu Ke) is an excellent reference book I have in my clinic.

COMMON PROBLEMS IN THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD:

Commonly seen postpartum problems include: insufficient breast milk; depression; abdominal pain; lochia which does not descend or cease; dizziness; fever and constipation. In my clinical practice, the most common postpartum problems that I treat include insufficient breast milk and postpartum depression.

THE CAUSES OF PROBLEMS IN THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD:

Pregnancy and childbirth are very taxing on a woman's body. It depletes the mother of her Qi (energy) and Blood, which leads to stagnation of Blood.

There are three main causes for problems in the postpartum time:

1. Detriment and damage of Chong and Ren, excessive loss of blood, and loss of blood damaging fluids
2. Cold congelation, Qi stagnation, and Blood stagnation
3. External pathogen invasion, poor diet, or bedroom taxation

WHAT MAKES SHENG HUA TANG SO APPROPRIATE FOR POSTPARTUM HEALTH?

Sheng Hua Tang means 'Generate and Transform Decoction' and also known as 'Giving Birth Decoction'. Sheng Hua Tang 'generates and transforms' means that it nourishes and moves the Blood. When you get rid of old Blood in order to generate new Blood, this results in recovery of the whole body.

Sharon Weizenbaum, a highly respected teacher and Doctor of Chinese medicine, who has used Sheng Hua Tang "more times than she can count" says "the formula essentially ensures that the uterus is clear, clean and warm after birth."

Sheng Hua Tang's action in moving and warming Blood benefits uterus involution (contracting the uterus to return it to its normal state), discharge

of lochia (vaginal discharge of blood, mucus and uterine tissue which occurs for 4 to 6 weeks following childbirth), warming the uterus, dispelling pain and generating Blood. It is a great formula to also strengthen the immunity of the mother.

Sheng Hua Tang can also be given to women suffering from post miscarriage, abortion, dilation & curettage (D&C) or after heavy bleeding.

The ingredients of this incredible formula are listed below but please keep in mind that TCM doctors often modify it customizing it to the individual. This allows for even greater effectiveness.

INGREDIENTS:

- Dang Gui (angelica) 24gm
- Chuan Xiong (ligusticum) 9gm
- Tao Ren (prunus) 6-9 gm
- Pao Jiang (zingiber) 1.5gm
- Zhi Gan Cao (glycyrrhiza) 1.5gm

Traditionally, the decoction is prepared with equal parts yellow wine and young boy's urine (under 12 years of age). While all the herbs in the formula are warming, boy's urine is actually nourishing to the yin, has a cooling nature and directs fire downward. In present day, you obviously would not use urine and can substitute it with Xuan Shen or Mai Men Dong for example. The reason for preparing the decoction with wine is to enhance the active and moving nature of the formula. In present day, adding wine is optional.

A couple of interesting notes on this formula is that the dosage of Dang Gui is quite high.

This shows that in this situation, tonifying the Blood is highly important and more necessary than moving the Blood. "If one desires to unblock, it is first necessary to make full" is an important adage in Chinese medicine.

Also, Pao Jiang is used instead of Sheng Jiang or Gan Jiang as Pao Jiang has a greater warming effect and enters the Blood aspect.

At the same time that Sheng Hua Tang is so often used for almost all women immediately following childbirth, it is advised to not be used unless there is Cold, Blood stagnation and Blood deficiency present; otherwise you can run the risk of causing Yin deficiency.

It is recommended that this formula is started two days postpartum and taken continuously for one week. Following Sheng Hua Tang, I often switch to a modified Ba Zhen Tang unless their pattern at that time demands a different formula. Pattern differentiation is of the utmost importance.

I take the time to educate my postpartum patients on proper nutrition and advise that Sheng Hua Tang can be taken as a tea and can even be added to nourishing soups and bone broths. The patients are generally very compliant and see positive results.

In conjunction with Sheng Hua Tang, I give my postpartum patients acupuncture at least once per week following childbirth for several weeks. This will help move and nourish the Blood of the mother, bring in breast milk (increasing let down and supply of breast milk), support the mother's emotions and support physical healing.

I recently saw a 28 year old woman one month postpartum who was referred to me by her midwife. She had bleeding and upon ultrasound, it was confirmed that there was retained product in her uterus. She had moderate breast milk, bright red blood with small clots, fatigue, cold hands and body, puffy purplish tongue with teethmarks and a bowstring pulse. There was evidence of cold, blood deficiency and blood stasis with underlying spleen and kidney deficiency so I saw it appropriate to use

a modified Sheng Hua Tang. I added Wang Bu Liu Xing, Gui Zhi, Niu Xi, and Che Qian Zi. I also gave her acupuncture using Liver 3, Spleen 6, Stomach 36, Ren 4, Ren 6, Ren 12, Stomach 28, Large Intestine 4, Du 20 and Yintang with Infrared heat on her abdomen. She came back 7 days later with no more bleeding or discomfort and adequate breast milk. After administering two more weekly treatments, I decided that she had a successful outcome and to discontinue treatment. She responded very well to the treatment plan thanks to this remarkable formula.

- Maryam Mahanian

Chinese Herbal Medicine Formulas and Strategies by Dan Bensky & Randall Barolet

A Handbook of Traditional Chinese Gynecology - compiled by Zhejiang College of Traditional Chinese Gynecology

Topics in Chinese Medicine Blog/Whitepine Institute : Postpartum use of Sheng Hua Tang by Sharon Weizenbaum



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Maryam Mahanian is a registered doctor of TCM. Her private practice in North Vancouver BC focuses on infertility, pregnancy, women's health, skin disorders, and cosmetic acupuncture. When she is not seeing patients, she is trying to keep up with her energetic two children.

Website: chinesemedicineclinic.com