

Rehmannia glutinosa

Plant Monograph

Dr. Patrick Jones





HomeGrown Herbalist
School of Botanical Medicine

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A Note On Formulas & Dosing...

Herb dosing and formulation guidelines for humans and animals can be found in the [*Herb Forms & Dosing Lesson*](#)

In discussing ailments, I often include herbs or formulas which I use to address them. Remember, there are many possible herbs or combinations of herbs that may work just as well or better. The herbs and formulas shown will give you an idea of where one can start.

Common Names: Chinese foxglove, Rehmannia Root, Di Huang, Gan Di Huang, Sheng Di, Sheng Ti Huang, Shu Ti Huang, Ti Huang Chiu, Ti Huang, Sheng Di Huang

Medicinal Parts: Root

Constituents:

Alanine, Arginine, Aspartic acid, Aucubin, Beta-sitosterol, Calcium, Catalpol, Copper, D-fructose, D-galactose, D-glucose, Gaba, Glucosamine, Glutamic- acid, Glycine, Histidine, Iron, Isoleucine, Leucine, Lysine, Magnesium, Manganese, Manninotriose, Mannitol, Melittoside, Methionine, Phenylalanine, Phosphoric-acid, Potassium, Proline, Raffinose, Rehmaglutins, Rehmanniosides, Serine, Stachyose, Sucrose, Threonine, Tyrosine, Valine, Verbascose, Zinc



Veterinary Applications

Rehmannia is safe for use in dogs and cats. Use it for the same issues for which you'd use it in humans.

The same contraindications apply as well.



Contraindications:

Don't take *Rehmannia* if you're pregnant or nursing. Don't take it if you are diabetic and taking meds. Don't combine it with blood thinners. Don't take it if you have liver disease or GI issues or if you have surgery coming up in the next week or so.

Preparation & Dosage: Standard infusion of 1 tsp dried root 2-3 times daily. Tincture 40-50% ethanol 1:5 ratio. Adult dose 10-30 drops 2-3 times daily

Edible Parts: In china, the root is used in a soup. It is boiled nine times (and the water removed each time) before it is eaten.

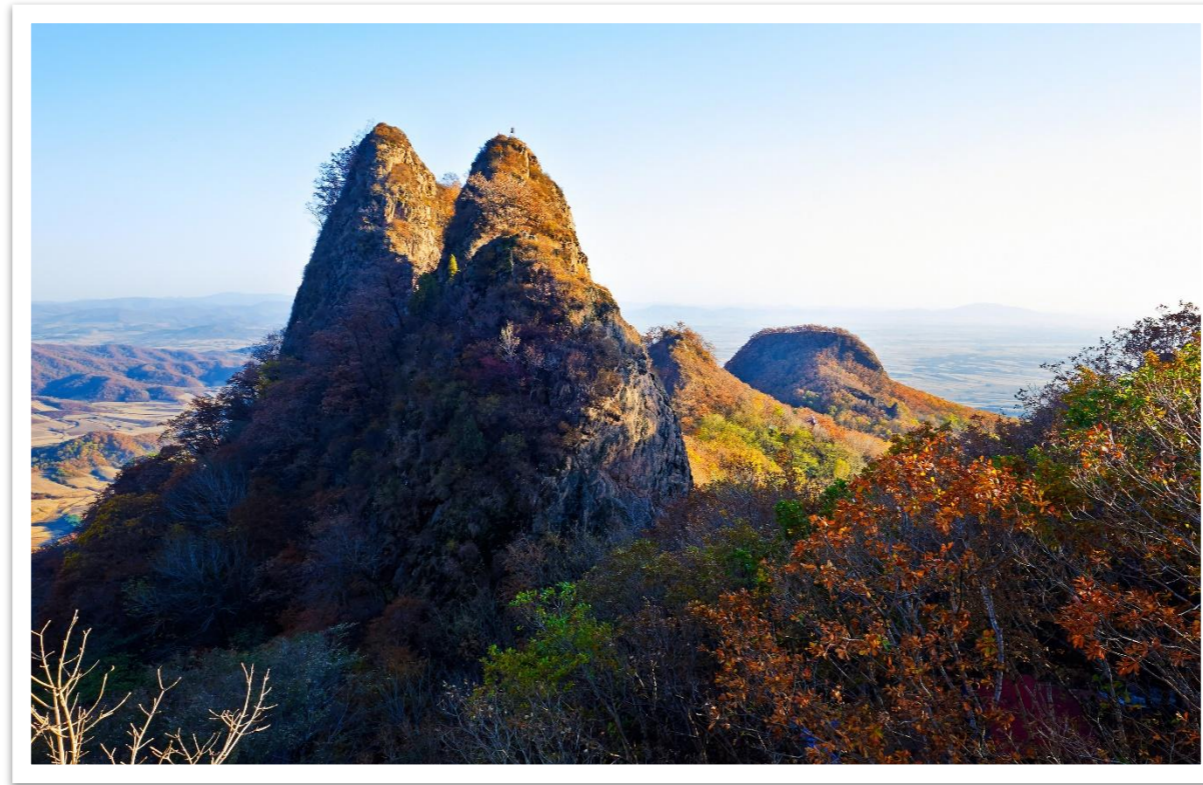


Description:

A perennial with purplish-green leaves with a downy surface. The roots are tuberous and orange turning black when dried. The toothed leaves are up to four inches long and form a basal rosette. Flowers range in color from purplish brown to reddish or dull yellow. Seed capsules are ovoid in shape. Height is typically six to twelve inches. Spread is about eight inches.

Energy/Flavor: Cool, yin, sweet, bitter





Cultivation: *Rehmannia* grows wild on the sunny mountain slopes of northern China, especially in Henan province. It requires a light, sandy, freely-draining, humus-rich , neutral to acid soil. Plant it in a warm sunny to lightly shaded location. *Rehmannia* is probably hardy to about -13°F. In the winter, the plants need to remain dry as the softly hairy leaves are susceptible to rot in warm damp winters. *Rehmannia* grows well in the greenhouses.

Harvesting:

The roots are harvested in the autumn or early winter or in early spring.

They can be used fresh or dried. Wash the roots and dry them. Because of its glutinous nature, the root can be difficult to dry thoroughly.



So, on the root thing...

Traditionally, and in fact *always* as near as I can tell, the medicinal part of *Rehmannia* has been considered to be the root. This is because most herbalists only read books by other herbalists. I am a bit odd in that I read scientific studies by researchers who don't care what herbalists think. They just like doing experiments and writing papers about it. A recent study by some nice fellows in Korea* showed that several of the principle active constituents of *Rehmannia* (aucubin, catapol and GABA) are actually *more* concentrated in the leaves and flowers than in the roots. *What??!*

So where does that leave us? Well for most of us it doesn't matter at all because all you can buy is the root. But, if you're someone that likes to grow yer own, I'd use the entire plant.

That said, my guess is that nothing above the ground tastes nearly as nice as those glorious roots.



*<https://www.koreascience.or.kr/article/JAKO201711656575266.page>

Taxonomy:

Kingdom: Plantae

Angiosperms

Eudicots

Asterids

Order: Lamiales

Family: Orobanchaceae*

Subfamily: Asteroideae

Tribe: Rehmannieae

Genus: *Rehmannia*

Species: *Rehmannia glutinosa*

**Rehmannia* used to be in the family Scrophulariaceae but they seem to have had some sort of falling out and aren't speaking anymore. It is now in the family Orobanchaceae.





Joseph Rehmann
(1788–1831)

Etymology

Rehmannia is named for Dr. Joseph Rehmann, a Russian physician who spent time in China overseeing the Russian monopoly on Chinese rhubarb. The plant was originally named *Rehmannia chinensis* or *The plant Rehmann named in China*.

This seemed a little vague, so later taxonomists re-named the plant *Rehmannia glutinosa* or *The sticky plant Rehmann named* which was much more clear. Yeah...taxonomists need to get out more.

The Chinese *Di Huang* means *yellow earth* as *Rehmannia* is associated with the earth element of Chinese five-element theory (more on that later). *Shou* or *chiu* means cooked as the herb is often cooked to enhance its properties.

Probably Not Related



Illustration by Nobu Tamura
(Who was Not alive during the Jurassic Period)

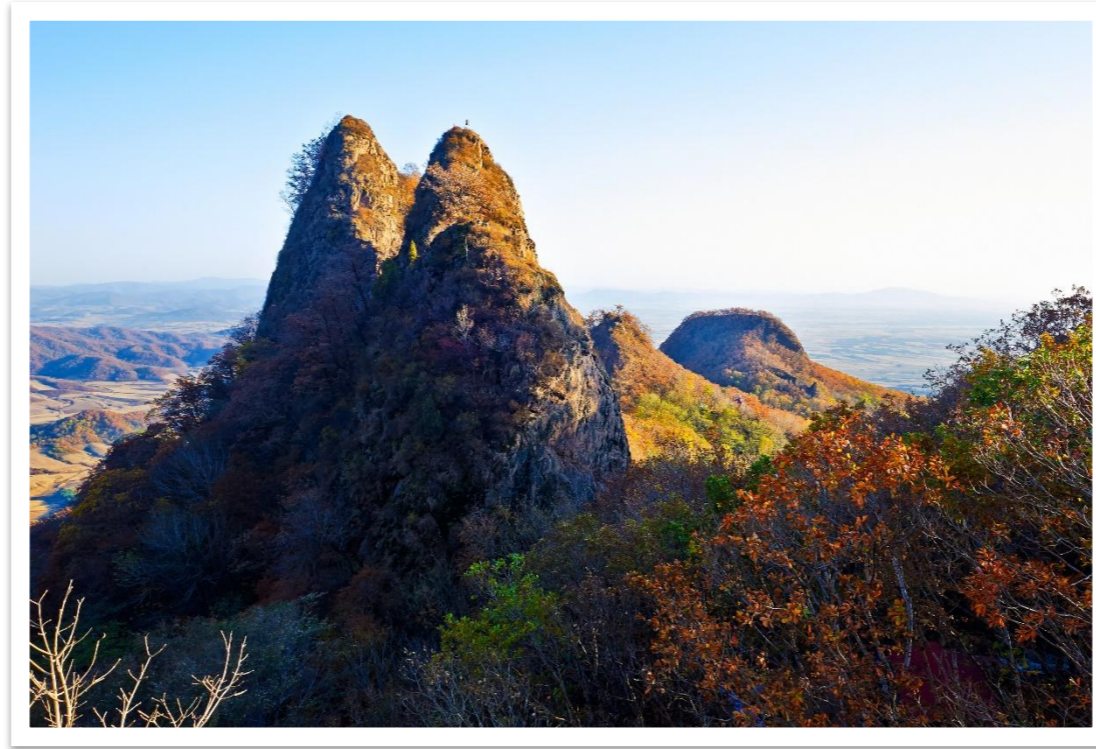
Rehmannia is also the genus name for a group of prehistoric Ammonites from the Jurassic period. Though no formal DNA testing has been done, modern botanists now believe that these two species are not related.

Traditional Chinese Medicine



Rehmannia has a long history and strong reputation in Traditional Chinese Medicine. In order to talk about that, you'll need a little crash course in TCM and its lingo. Buckle up.

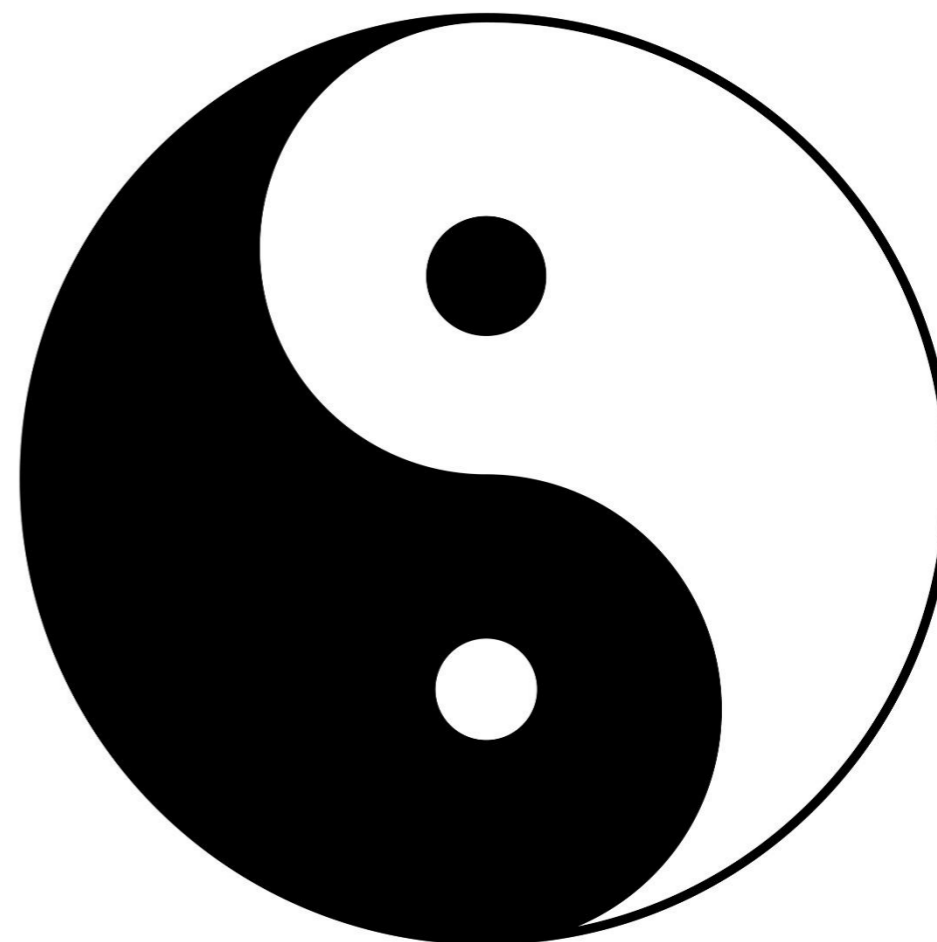
Yin & Yang



The Chinese word Yin (陰 or 阴) means the shady side of a hill. The word Yang (陽 or 阳) means the sunny side of a hill. In Chinese herbalism, plants are categorized according to their Yin or Yang energies. Yang is hot, dry, overt, male, confident, strong, open, external. Yin is cool, moist, covert, female, closed, nurturing and nourishing, internal.

Yin & Yang

The Chinese view all disease as an imbalance in Yin and Yang. They use herbs to restore the balance and harmony of Yin and Yang and thus return the individual to health. So, if a person comes to Chinese herbalist, his Yin and Yang energies will be considered just as carefully as his symptoms when choosing herbal remedies. A brash, red-faced extrovert will be given Yin herbs to cool his Yang. A quiet, pale person that's cold all the time will receive Yang herbs to warm her up. Moist conditions are treated with Yang herbs. Hot, inflamed conditions are treated with Yin herbs etc... Many herbal texts are beginning to include the energetic tendencies of herbs in their descriptions. It's useful information and can be used to make more refined choices in selecting herbs to treat the individual (as opposed to treating the illness).



Acupuncture Meridians

According to TCM theory, the *Chi* or *Qi* is the life force which runs throughout the body through a network of channels or meridians. These meridians connect and interact with each other in various ways. Most disease is thought to relate to stagnation or insufficiency of *chi* in the various meridians.

Acupuncture points located along the meridians are used to simulate proper flow of the *chi* which restores balance and health.



Acupuncture Meridians

Stomach Meridian

Spleen Meridian

Small Intestine Meridian

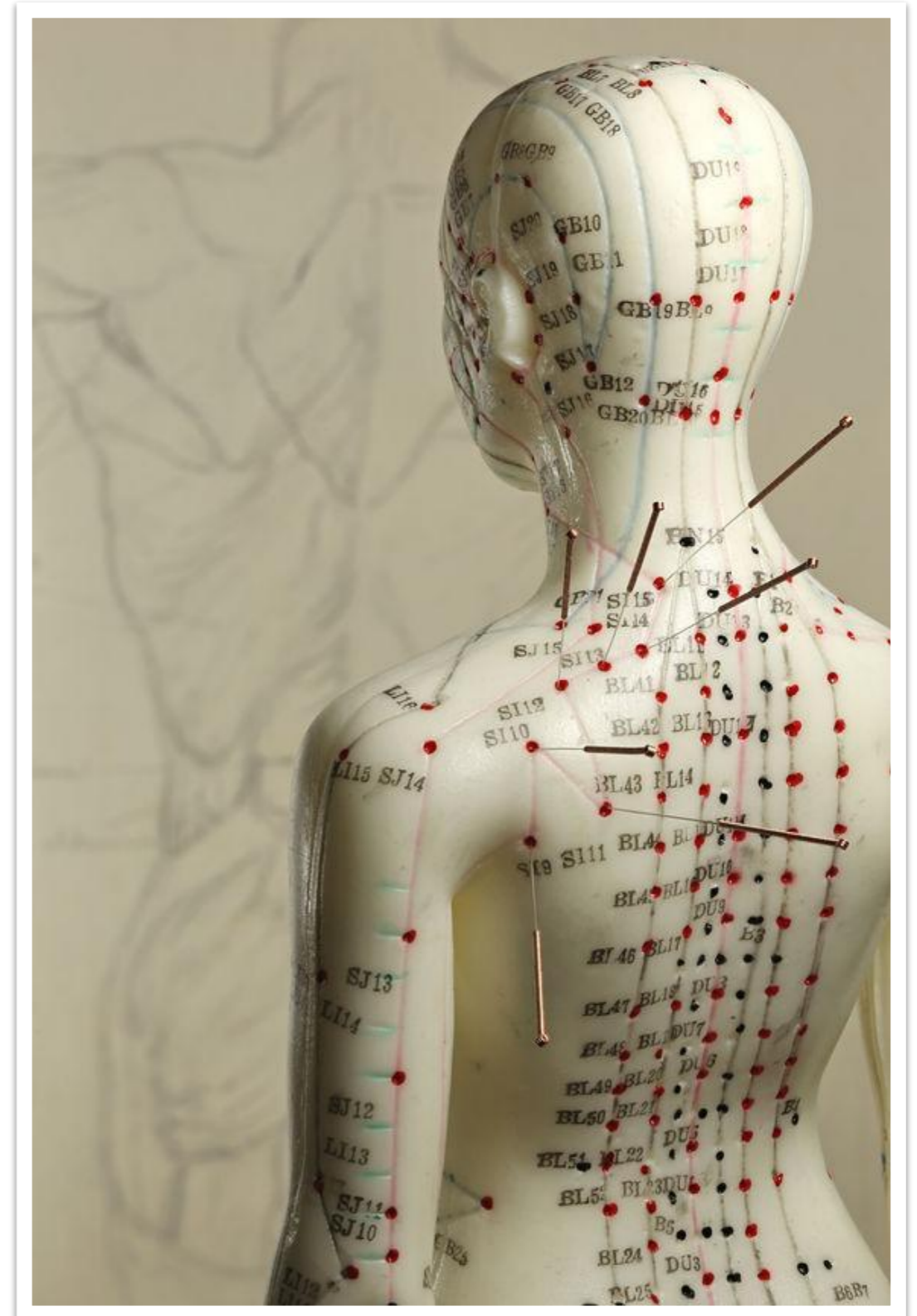
Heart Meridian

Bladder Meridian

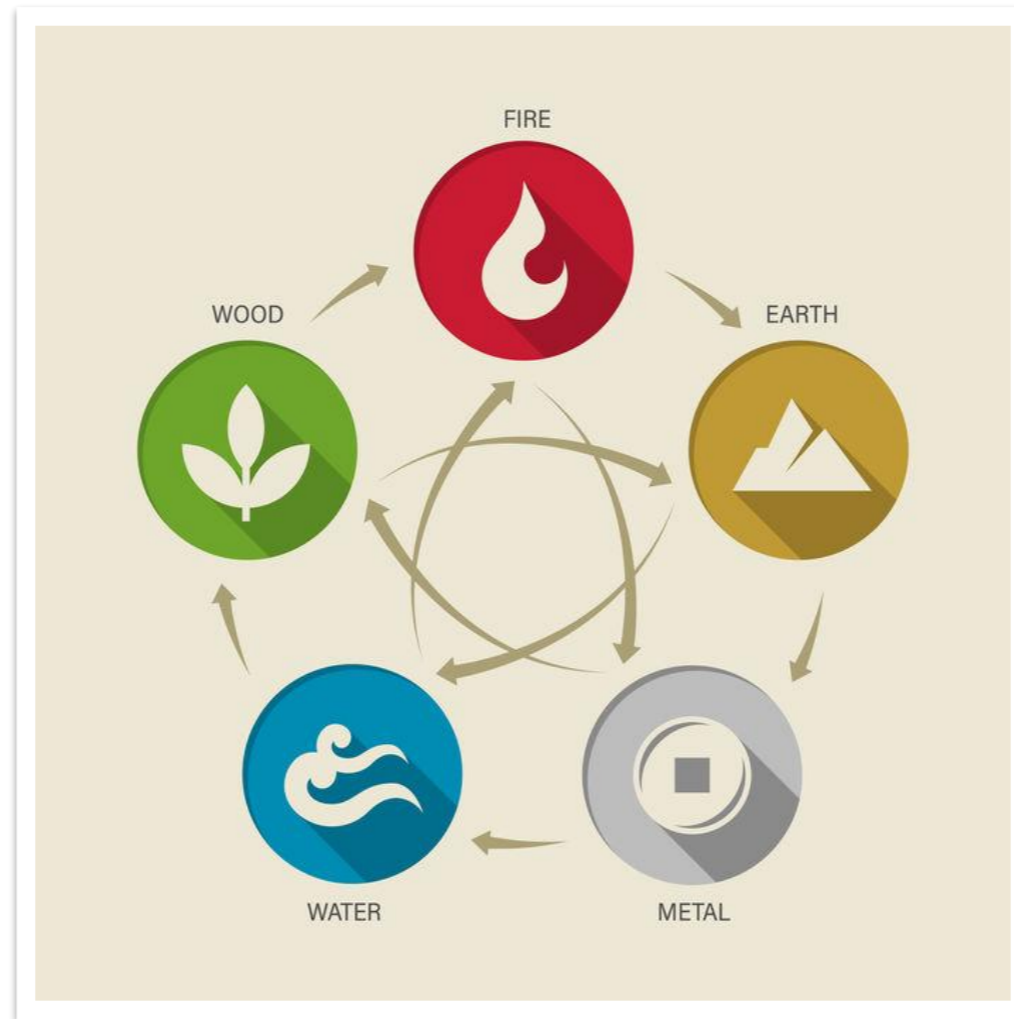
Kidney Meridian

Pericardium Meridian Triple Warmer Meridian

Gall Bladder Meridian Liver Meridian



Five Elements Theory



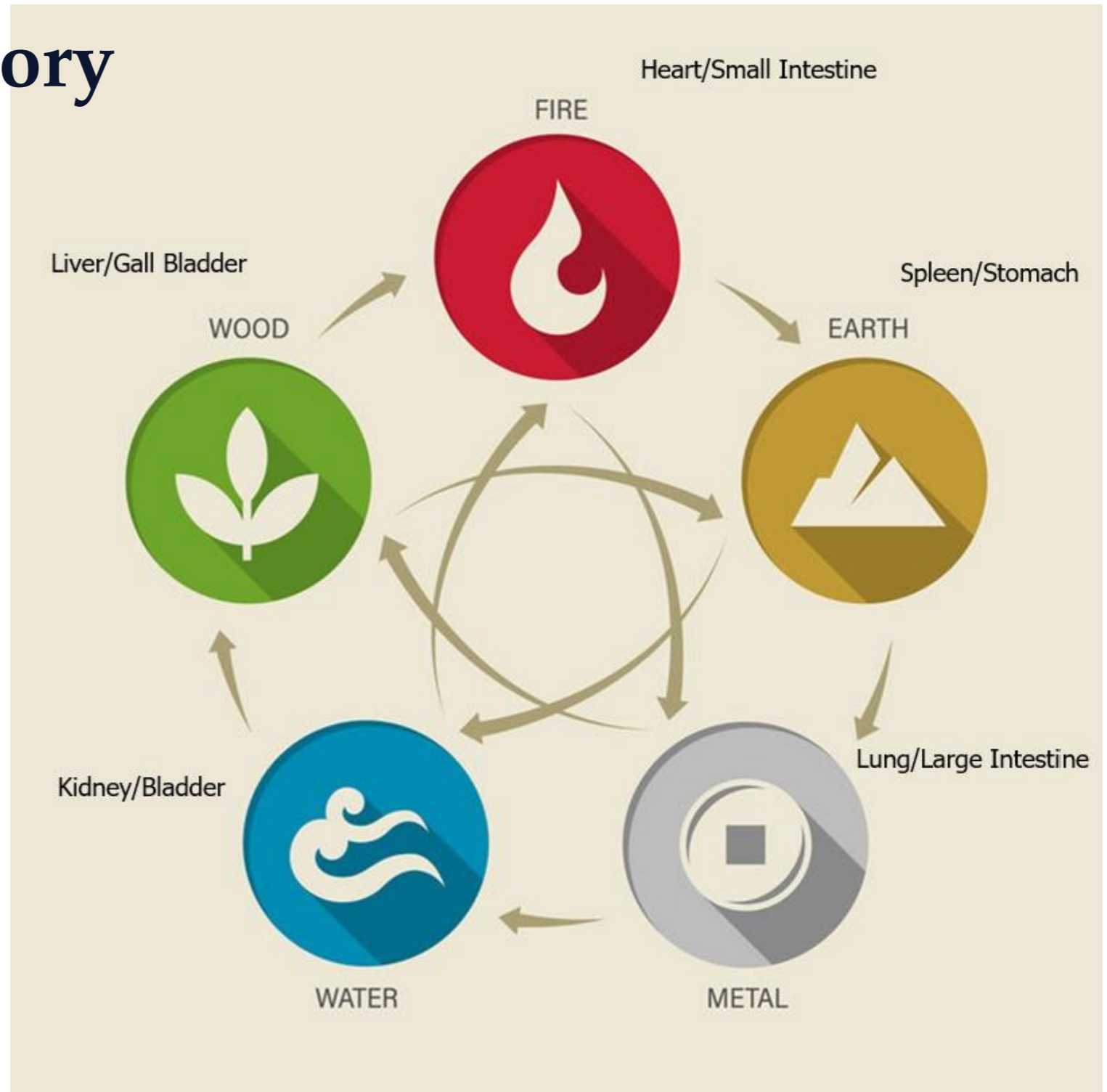
Traditional Chinese Medicine also uses a system called the Five Elements Theory. Each of the elements corresponds to specific meridians. The earth element in the system is characterized by the color yellow. The interior of *Rehmannia* root is yellow when it's fresh. The roots are also dark and moist which connect them with the very essence of earth. One of *Rehmannia*'s Chinese names, *Di Huang*, means *yellow earth*.

Five Elements Theory



Five Elements Theory

Each of the five elements also corresponds to specific meridians. The Earth element in the system corresponds with the Stomach and Spleen meridians. So *Rehmannia's* effects have an affinity for those meridians as well.



Rehmannia In Traditional Chinese Medicine:

Dark colors like black and blue represent yin energy. *Rehmannia* is a strong yin tonic.

Hair growth and color, nourishes blood, sweet flavor indicates nourishing and tonifying

TCM Meridians Affected: Heart, Liver, Kidney

TCM Indications: Yin deficient (too much heat, thirst). Stomach or uterine bleeding, rising heart fire with mouth sores, insomnia, irritability, chronic low fever, anemia

TCM Contraindications: Spleen weakness with diarrhea, poor appetite, excess phlegm, pregnancy



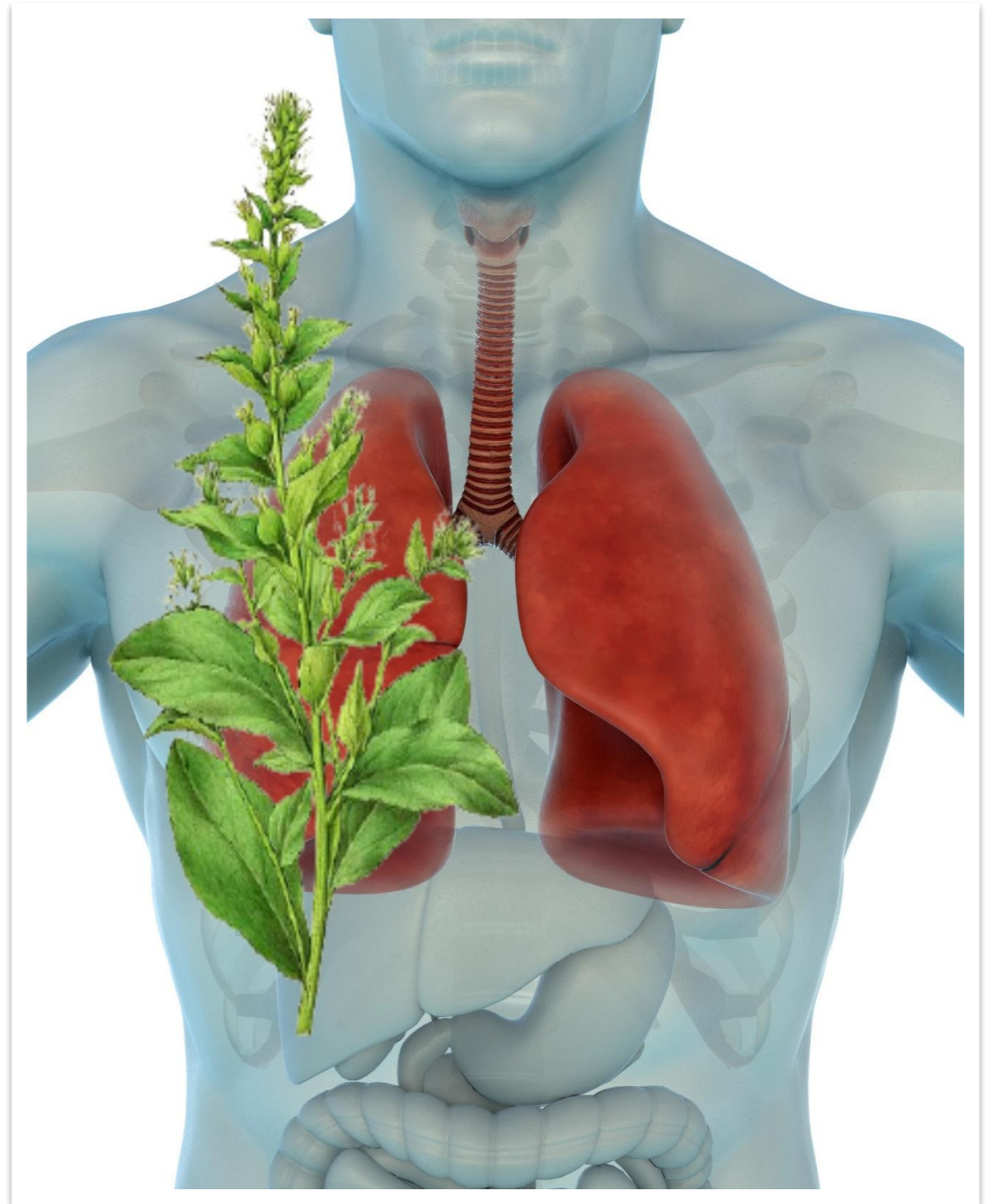
Rehmannia in Western Herbalism



Western Herbalism

Western herbalism is a simpler affair than Chinese medicine. It takes a more “allopathic” approach and categorizes plants by their actions on specific organs or body systems.

Ideally, the Western herbalist has some understanding of anatomy, physiology and pathology as well as some knowledge of the chemistry of the plant and what those chemical compounds are doing to the body. Unfortunately, some Western herbalists just learn lists of plants and what they do without really knowing how and why they do it.



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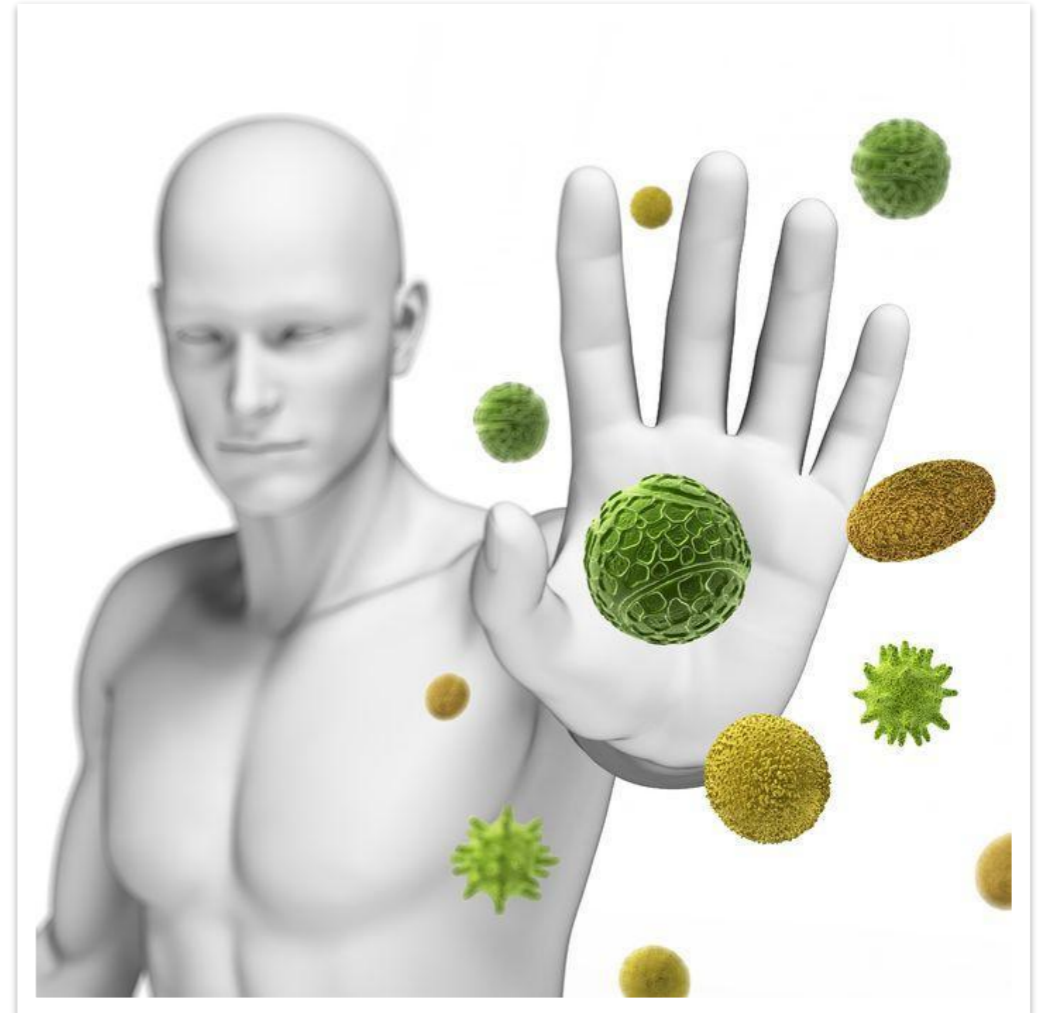


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Rehmannia & The Immune System

Rehmannia has some important immune-modulating properties that help the immune system to function properly.

Some studies suggest that *Rehmannia* contains immunologically active polysaccharides that may help to increase resistance to infections.



Rehmannia & Histamines

Histamines are chemicals released by mast cells and basophils in response to allergens and pathogens. In addition to causing the symptoms of allergies (in an attempt to drive allergens and pathogens from the body), histamines also attract white blood cells to sites of infection. Histamines also increase the permeability of the blood vessels to facilitate the white blood cells entering the tissues and then activates those cells causing inflammation.

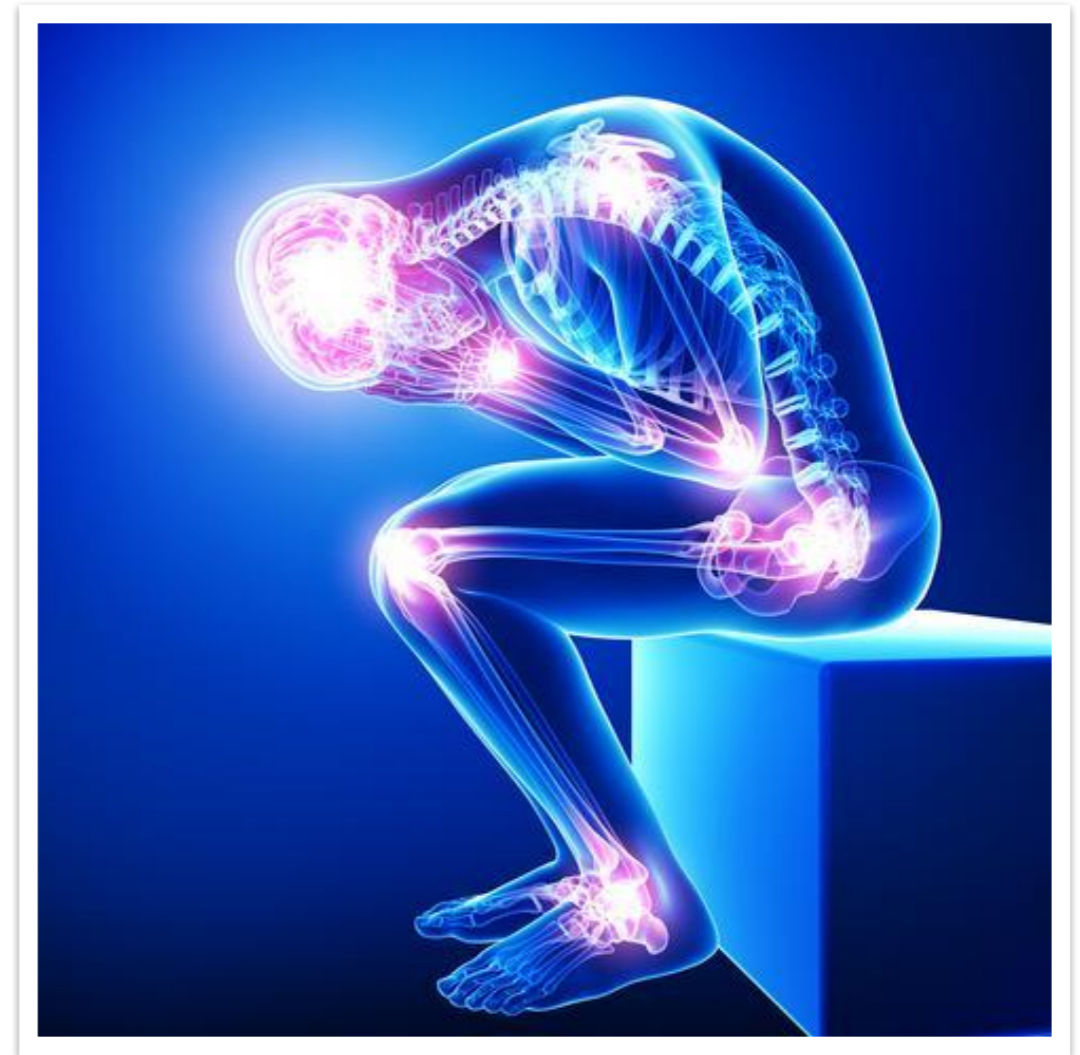
Rehmannia decreases serum histamine levels and inhibits mast cells from releasing histamines. As a result, it is helpful for allergy symptoms and autoimmune cases.



Rehmannia & Inflammation

In addition to decreasing histamine levels, *Rehmannia* also stimulates release of corticosteroid hormones from the adrenal glands that decrease inflammation. *Rehmannia* also contains aucubin a monoterpene with strong anti-inflammatory properties.

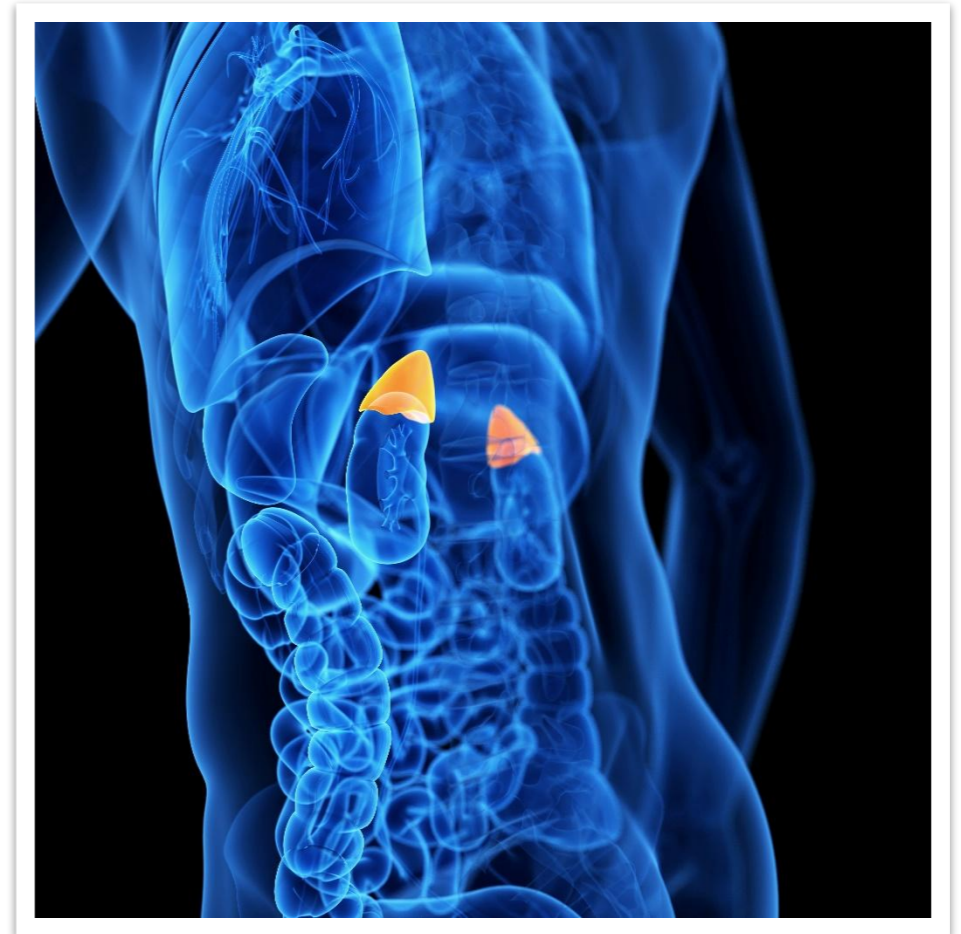
I've used it in allergy cases, dermatitis flare-ups, and perhaps most importantly, in autoimmune cases. There is good research to support *Rehmannia*'s benefits in a number of autoimmune conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, fibromyalgia, etc...



Adrenal Support With Rehmannia

Rehmannia is also an excellent supporter of the adrenal glands. In addition to containing many chemical building blocks to help these glands produce what they need to produce, it also supports the glands generally by regulating the activity of the adrenal cortex. It does this by promoting the function of the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal axis and the release of steroid hormones.

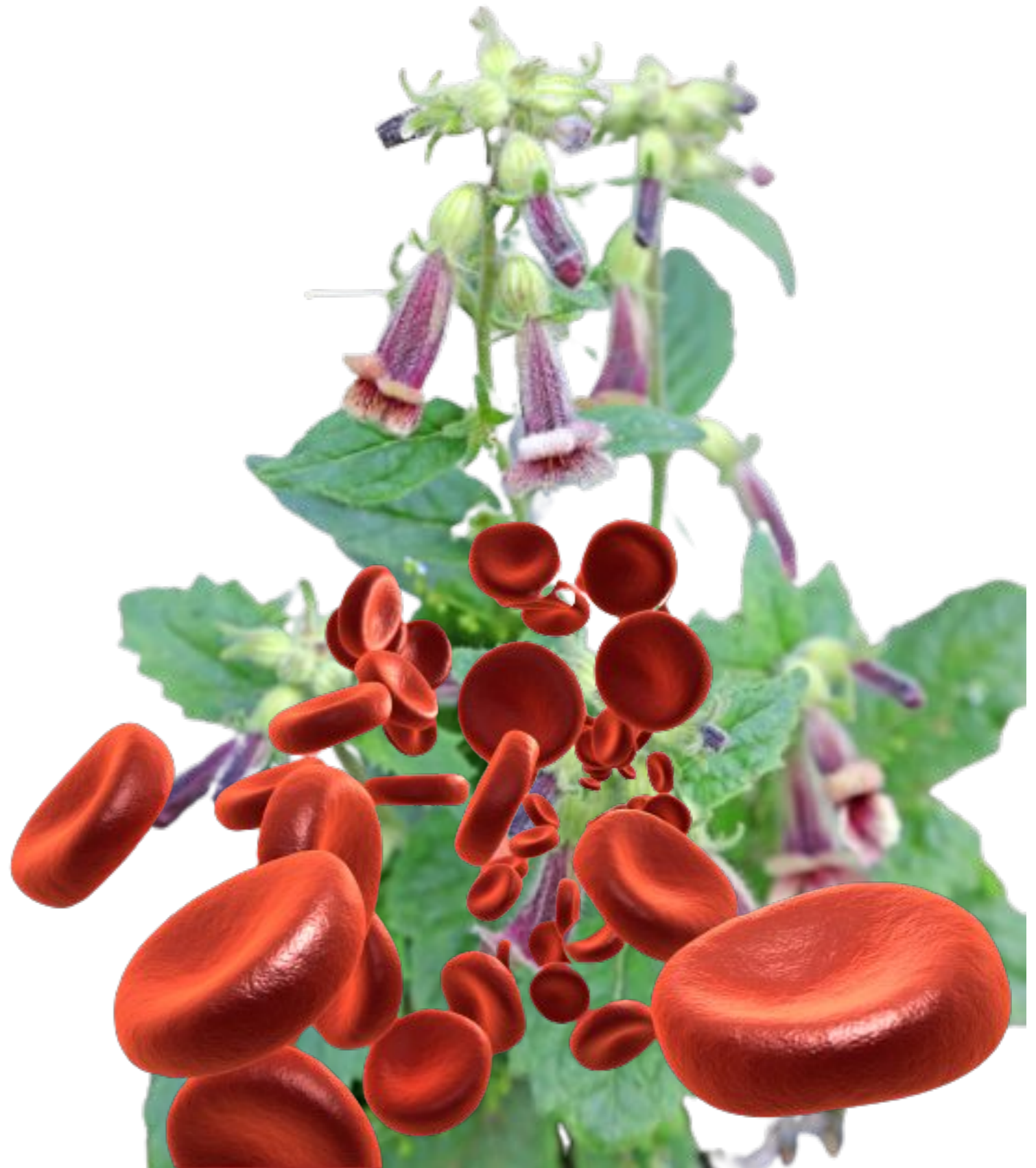
I find it helpful for folks suffering from stress and adrenal fatigue.



Rehmannia Builds Blood

One of the properties, which I use in my Blood Builder formula, is *Rehmannia's* ability to support patients suffering from anemia.

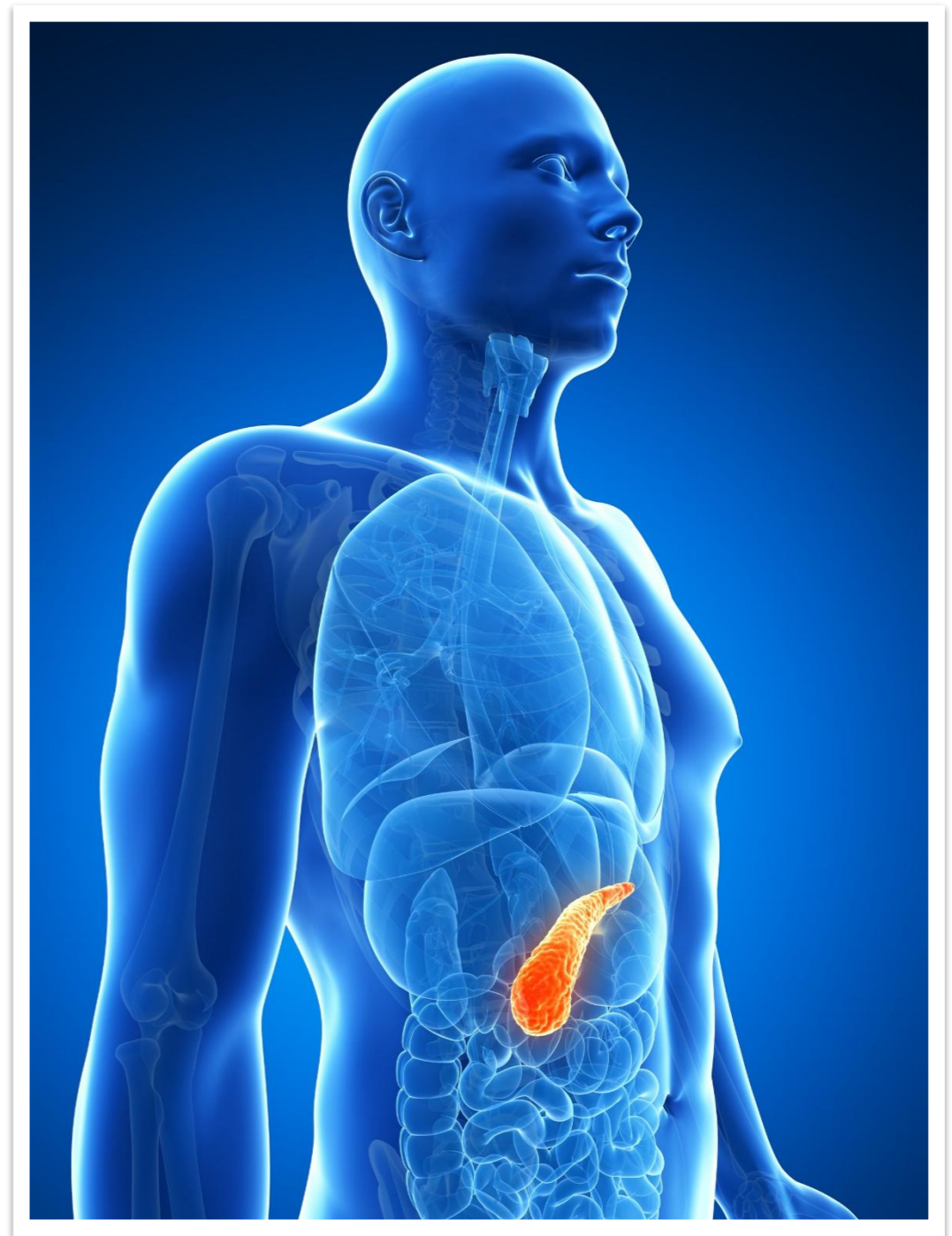
Research shows that it may be particularly beneficial in cases of anemia that accompany chemotherapy for cancer patients.



Rehmannia Lowers Blood Sugar

Rehmannia supports pancreas function and can help to lower blood sugars. It can reportedly be helpful for folks that are in the early stages of diabetes.

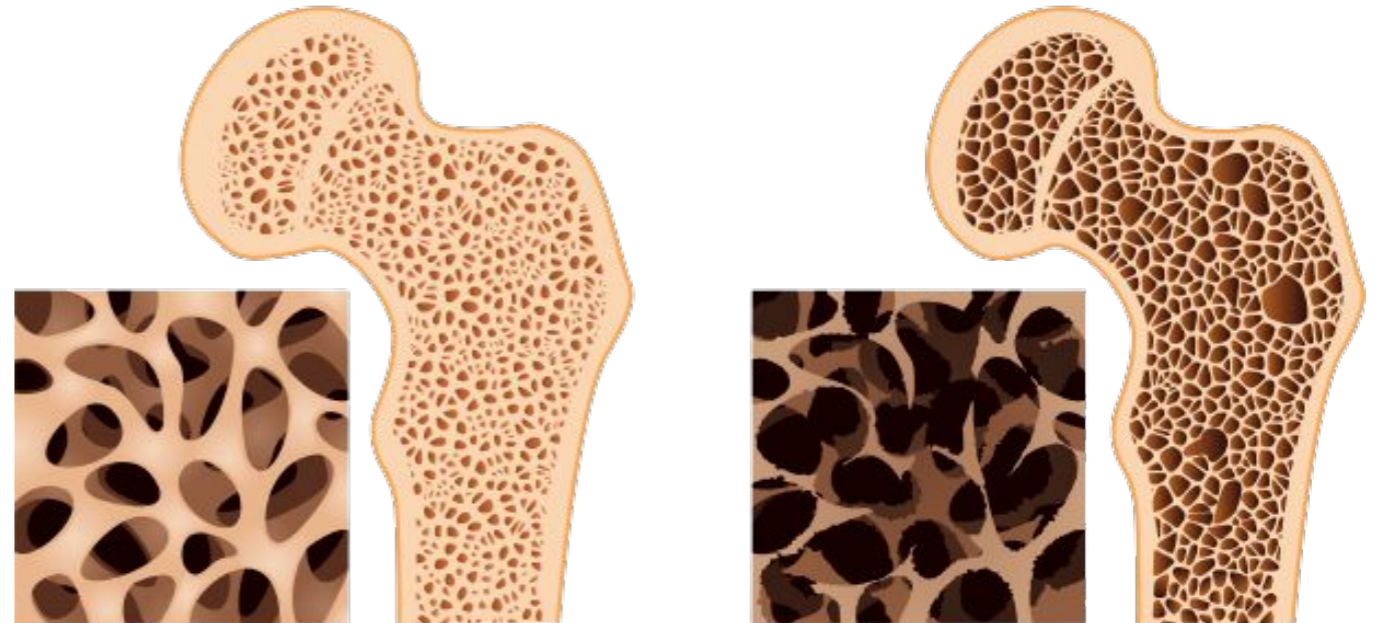
People taking insulin or other medications that lower blood sugar, or people prone to low blood sugar for other reasons, should avoid herbs like *Rehmannia* as its additive effect to medications they're already taking may lower blood sugars too much and cause problems with hypoglycemia.



Rehmannia & Bone Health

In addition to building blood, *Rehmannia* also helps to build bone particularly in post-menopausal women who may be struggling with osteoporosis. Numerous studies have shown *Rehmannia*'s ability to positively benefit osteoporosis patients through a variety of mechanisms.

Rehmannia also support bone healing in fracture cases.



Normal Bone

Osteoporosis

Rehmannia for Hormonal Irregularities.

Rehmannia supports production of female reproductive hormones and can be beneficial to post-menopausal women. It can also help younger women who are having difficulty with irregular cycles.

It can also be helpful with male hormones and can help with low libido and sexual dysfunction in men.





Neuroprotective Functions.

Rehmannia also has some neuroprotective functions and can be helpful in brain injury and stroke cases. Recent studies have also shown that it can play a positive role in dementia and Alzheimer's patients.

Rehmannia And The Kidneys

I also use *Rehmannia* to support and restore the kidneys. There are a lot of herbs that'll make you pee more...diuretics like dandelion, burdock, and parsley can all be beneficial for bladder infections and kidney stones by increasing urine output and flushing the system. But *Rehmannia* belongs to an elite and special category of kidney protective and restorative herbs like astragalus, chamomile, and nettle seed that can actually support and heal the kidneys when they are struggling.



Take Rehmannia When You Feel Lousy

The reason I usually take it is that it just makes me feel better when I'm sick. For me (and many others), *Rehmannia* eliminates that weak, miserable, malaise that invariably accompanies any sort of illness. Whether it's the immune-modulatory properties, the anti-inflammatory properties, or the adrenal support functions I don't know for sure. What I do know is that when I'm under the weather and take some *Rehmannia* I feel much, much better. So much better in fact, that I have to remind myself that I'm sick and probably shouldn't go to work and get everyone else sick even though I feel pretty good.

This same property can be used for elderly folks or cases of general debility and recuperation from chronic illnesses.

Oh, and one more thing...*Rehmannia* is, in my professional herbalist opinion, the best tasting herb of all. Yup, it's delicious AND it makes you feel better.

Shameless Commercial Announcement

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Doc's Rehmannia
Formulas





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