

# HEALTH

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## TCM

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### Quick fix

Dipsacus is one of the key herbs used to treat traumatic injuries. The Chinese name, *xu duan*, means "reconnection from broken parts". It's used for repairing structural tissue such as bones and ligaments, and can also help relieve swelling.

Bitter and acrid, dipsacus is usually used for tonifying the kidneys and liver. According to traditional Chinese medicine

(TCM), liver and kidney deficiencies are characterised by aches and pains in the lower extremities and are caused by insufficient nourishment in muscles and tendons.

A kidney tonic containing dipsacus is used to strengthen the skeletal structure. It's a good herb for athletes, dancers and construction workers. It's also said to help with sexual performance and relieve back pain.

According to TCM, it improves circulation by opening the blood vessels. It was commonly used in ancient China by pregnant women to relieve back pain and calm the foetus. It's also now used to treat heavy menstruation.

Dipsacus (below) can be combined with eucommia bark, cibotium and dodder seed in decoctions for strengthening the lower back and knees and tonifying the urinary tracts of elderly people.

An ancient story illustrates its origins: A herbalist once saved a child's life after prescribing him



dipsacus tablets. The wealthy owner of a herbal store heard about the incident, and tried to convince the herbalist to reveal his secret, but he refused.

So he sent two men to break the herbalist's legs. But the injured herbalist used the herb to heal his legs. When the rich man found out that the herbalist had recovered, he sent the two men back to kill him – which they did.

After his death, the wealthy man taught local people how to heal broken bones by using the herb.

*Before taking any medicine, consult your TCM or medical practitioner*