

HEALTH

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TCM

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Pain remedies

Existing and potential risks associated with some western medicines have led consumers to look at alternative remedies for pain relief.

Traditional Chinese medicine has many therapies that can help. Perhaps most commonly recognised for pain relief is acupuncture, but certain herbs are also known for their pain-relieving

capabilities. In TCM theory, pain is due to poor blood circulation. It doesn't mean there's a blood blockage or serious circulation disease present, but rather that the blood flow is a little slower. TCM practitioners will often promote blood circulation in order to relieve pain.

San qi (noto-ginseng or pseudo-ginseng) is a well-known herb for promoting blood circulation, relieving swelling and alleviating pain in TCM.

It's considered a mild herb and can be used by most people for promoting blood circulation. It's said to be ideal for those in pain from a syndrome known as congealed blood. Because of this,

it's the main ingredient in various drugs. For example, Yunnan Baiyao is a patent drug found in many Chinese households. This is widely used for injuries where there is swelling, tenderness, bruising and restriction of movement.

It's also used for swelling and pain from poor circulation, muscle ache and rheumatic joint pain.

There's a tale behind this herb's use. San qi in Chinese represents the number three – san – and the number seven – qi – so it's known as the three-seven root. The reason for this is a story that came from an old doctor who met a little boy carrying a large

amount of a single herb. The doctor had never seen this herb before and asked the boy to tell him about it.

The boy said it was an amazing herb that healed the broken leg of his little brother.

He told the doctor how he discovered it one day when he saw a group of monkeys playing beside his house. They were very annoying, so he threw a knife at them. The knife didn't hurt them, but cut off a vine growing nearby.

A few days later, the boy noticed that the broken vine was joined again.

In order to solve the mystery of this, he cut the vine again and watched it every day. He saw how

the monkey leader dug out a little of the herb and chewed its root. Then the monkey put the chewed root on the broken part of the vine. After the monkeys left, the boy checked the vine and found that the vine seemed to have never been broken.

He brought the root back home for his brother whose leg had never properly healed. After several treatments, his little brother could run and jump again.

The doctor asked the boy's name, which was Sanqi, named for his birth date of March 7.

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