

Frequently asked questions regarding concentrated herbs

How many raw herbs are needed to make the concentrates?

There are several possibilities to answer that question. The simplest answer is that 250 to 500 g of raw herbs are needed to prepare 100 g of concentrate. Thus one can speak of a concentrate ratio of 2.5:1 to 5:1, depending on the formulas used or the single herbs. Most formulas are in the order of 3:1 or 4:1. Formulas that are naturally sticky have a greater need for the starch to be transformed into a dry form and thus have a lower concentration.

However, these figures are misleading, because thanks to the specific preparation methods of the concentrates and the re-introduction of the released essential oils, one can count on a superior result than if one tried to imitate this same brew at home. So we can say that with 250 to 500 g of raw herbs a more potent product can be prepared than when the same amount of herbs would be prepared less efficiently.

Are all simple herbal preparations concentrates?

No, it is impossible to make a concentrate of minerals because their ingredients are often not water-soluble. These ingredients are sold as ground powder when they occur in the form of a single preparation. In formulas, they are usually cooked together with the rest of the herbs and form part of the base on which the concentrates are dispersed in the flow coat tunnel.

Do herbal concentrates contain corn derivatives?

KPC has for some time stopped using cornstarch as a carrier. Currently, potato starch is used (not genetically manipulated) as a carrier for the herbal concentrates.

What dose of concentrated granules do I give a patient daily?

Most experts in Taiwan, where they have been working with the concentrated granules for more than 40 years, recommend the following quantities:

- For adults: between 4 and 12 g per day.
- In children under 30 kg: between 2 and 4 g per day
- In infants and toddlers: about half to one gram per intake and this 4 to 5 times a day.

Can one better use ready-made formulas or is it appropriate to mix unitary herbs?

The advantage of ready-made formulas is based on the fact that the herbs are cooked together and that some non-soluble ingredients such as juices and minerals are included in the concentrate.

On the other hand, when compiling a customized formula for the patient, one can meet his/her specific needs. We will come back to this later.

USE OF THE CONCENTRATES

Working with herbal granules presupposes a different approach than working with single herbs for two reasons. First and foremost, the concentrated herbal formulas are available in the form of both ready-to-use formulas and in the form of unitary herbs. Thus, both composition and dosage of both forms must be taken into account. Secondly, experience has shown that for herbal concentrates 10 g per day is sufficient (about 3 x 3 g/day), which means that the prescribed herbs have to comply with that rate of 10 g and thus some calculation work is required.

When a ready-made formula is prescribed at a rate of 10 g per day, this is very simple and therefore user-friendly. But when more than one formula is used, or single herbs are added to a formula, there are three possible strategies:

1. one or two formulas with or without single herbs
2. three or more formulas with or without single herbs
3. work exclusively with single herbs

Each of the strategies will be discussed separately below.

One or two formulas with or without single herbs

This strategy assumes one or two conventional formulas as the basis for treatment and adds simple herbs to meet the exact needs of the patient or to neutralize that aspect of the formula that the patient does not need. This is the most common method.

Examples:

A patient shows bloodlessness resulting in scarce menstruation, pale tongue, fine pulse, and dizziness. He/she complains of restless sleep and waking up at night. The prescription is blood toning with the classic formula for this pattern, being Si Wu Tang (Tangkuei Four Combination). However, herbs are added to treat nightly waking up. A 10-day formula is prescribed.

Si Wu Tang (Tangkuei Four Combination)	75 g
Ye Jiao Teng (Polygonum multifloru Vine)	15 g
Suan Zao Ren (Zizyphus)	10 g
<hr/>	
Total	100 g

A 6-year-old boy has chronic nasal congestion. The therapist or doctor decides, after analysis of the wrist, tongue, and other symptoms, that given the constitution, the boy would benefit from Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang (Ginseng and Astragalus Combination). Given the nasal mucous are slightly yellow colored, Cang Er San (Xanthium Formula) and Huang Qin (Scute) are added to the formula to treat this symptom. A 10-day formula is prescribed at a rate of 3 x 2 g/day (dose for a child)

Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang (Ginseng & Astragalus Combination)	25 g
Cang Er San (Xanthium Formula)	30 g
Huang Qin (Scute)	5 g
<hr/>	
Total	60 g

After the treatment of 10 days, enormous progress has already been made, and much of the mucous has already been disappeared. The following 10-day formula is prescribed:

Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang (Ginseng & Astragalus Combination)	35 g
Cang Er San (Xanthium Formula)	20 g
Huang Qin (Scute)	5 g
<hr/>	
Total	60 g

This adjustment of the formula shows that there is a shift in the approach and that the emphasis in the first instance is on the fundamental constitutional imbalance and secondly on how the remaining mucous leaves the system. By using a formula for the treatment of the constitutional problem on the one hand and a formula for treating the symptoms, on the other hand, it is relatively easy to effect a gradual shift from side treatment to constitutional treatment.

Three or more formulas with or without single herbs

This method is usually used to treat a rather complicated pathology for which no conventional formula is available. In the following example we take the same 6-year-old boy, but with the following symptoms: night/nocturnal heat and restless sleep (tossing around to fall asleep, throwing blankets off), thirst and a thin, fast pulse. The doctor or therapist wants to feed yin and avoid the drying out nature of the formula. This can be achieved by adding Liu Wei Di Huang Wan (Rehmannia Six Combination) to the above formula and making other adjustments. The 10-day formula is the following: (3 x 2 g per day as a typical dose for a child)

Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang (Ginseng & Astragalus Combination)	15 g
Cang Er San (Xanthium Formula)	7 g
Huang Qin (Scute)	5 g
Liu Wei Di Huang Wan (Rehmannia Six Formula)	15 g
Qing Bi Tang (Pueraria Nasal Combination)	8 g
Shi Hu (Ephemerantha Fimbriata)	5 g
Ge Gen (Pueraria Root)	5 g
<hr/>	
Total	60 g

In this case, the dose of Can Er San is reduced because it has a drying effect. The treatment of nasal congestion is controlled by Qing Bi Tang (Pueraria Nasal Combination) which is less detrimental to the yin and fluids than Can Er San. Components to dissolve vacuity of yin are also added.

Combine single herbs

This strategy is mainly applied when no formula can be found that corresponds to the disease patterns of the patient concerned or to determine how a patient responds to certain herbs. It is recommended to use no more than ten different herbs per formula so that the influence of each herb within the 10-day formula is noticeable.

Example:

A 50-year-old woman is told by her Western physician that she has a heart condition. She has chest pain, feels weak, is dizzy and short of breath. In Chinese medicine, this is seen as stasis blood with the vacuity of qi. The following formula is prescribed:

San Qi (Pseudoginseng)	15 g
Dan Shen (Salvia)	20 g

Ren Shen (Ginseng)	17 g
Xue Jie (Dragon's Blood)	8 g
<hr/>	
Total	60 g

Since the formula consists of only four herbs, it is not necessary to prescribe 10 g per day. In this case, 2 g per dose x 3/day is sufficient. The share of Xue Jie has been deliberately kept low because this is difficult to digest ingredient.

DETERMINE DOSAGE

Concentrates are vacuum dried granules of formulated formulas or single herbs. As discussed above, there is an essential difference between the preparation of granules that are the result of a sophisticated extraction process and the decocting of raw herbs in the patient's home. The system explained here is based on the observation of prescribing methods in Taiwan, where concentrated granules have long been established as an herbal treatment.

The usual dose for an adult is 3 g, 3 x/day. To keep things simple, this is often rounded off to 10 g/day. Suitable dosing of each component can be determined according to a four-step plan.

Step 1. Calculate the total number of grams by multiplying the daily dose by the number of days that the total herbal prescription should be taken. For example, if 10 g of herbs are to be taken for ten days, 100 g of herbs should be available.

Step 2. Dispense the simple herbs that one wants to add to one or more ready-made "departure formula(s)" at a rate of 0.5 to 2 g/day. Herbs that are typically low-dosed such as Yuan Zhi (Polygala) and Fu Zi (Aconite) will be dosed at a rate of 0.5g/day. Others, on the other hand, which are usually dosed high, such as Ye Jiao Teng (Polygonum multiflorous Vine) and Yi Yi Ren (Coix), must be used at a rate of 1.5 to 2 g/day. However, most herbs are dosed at a rate of 1g/day.

Step 3. When the total daily dose of the single herbs is determined, it should be subtracted from the total daily dose to be administered as determined in step 1. The obtained number is the number of grams that must be used for the "departure formula(s)."

Step 4. Divide the calculated quantity from step 3 over the number of ready-made formulas that will be used and assign the force majeure to the main formula.

By way of illustration, we use the previously discussed strategy as an example:

Si Wu Tang (Tangkuei Four Combination)	75 g
Ye Jiao Teng (Polygonum multifloru Vine)	15 g
Suan Zao Ren (Zizyphus)	10 g
<hr/>	
Total	100 g

With this rule, we proceed as follows.

Step 1. The prescription prescribes 10 g/day for ten days. So we need 100 g of herbs for this treatment.

Step 2. The prescription has two single herbs, of which Ye Jiao Teng is usually dosed high (especially in the treatment of insomnia), e.g., 1.5g/day for 10 days. Suan Zao Ren (Zizyphus) is normally dosed normally, being 1g/day, which brings us to a total of 10 g for the treatment for 10 days.

Step 3. The total number of grams of the single herbs is thus 25 g. (10 g for Suan Zao Ren and 15 g for Ye Jiao Teng) This 25 g is subtracted from the 100 g and brings us to 75 g available for the ready-made formulas.

Step 4. Since only one formula is used in this prescription, the 75 g is fully devoted to that formula. If there are two formulas, the 75 g would be divided over both formulas with a force majeure for the most important formula for the treatment of the condition.