



\*Image references in Refs section



## Plant medicine for the treatment of GER, GERD/GORD, an East West Perspective:

### What is GER?

Gastro-oesophageal reflux or GER, is a mild/medium form of acid reflux that occurs occasionally, also known as heartburn. The stomach acid and contents back up into the esophagus causing irritation to the tissues. GER can be caused by a defective/damaged/relaxed lower esophageal sphincter (the opening from the esophagus to the stomach). Some contributors to acid reflux are obesity, hiatal hernia, smoking, acidic drinks like orange juice/coffee/tea, alcohol intake, caffeine/fat found in chocolate, fried foods, etc.

### What is GERD/GORD?

Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease is a more chronic (defined as 1-2 episodes per week on average)\*1998-2020 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research (MFMER) and is a more severe form of acid reflux. The stomach acid and contents back up into the esophagus causing consistent tissue irritation, a bitter taste in the mouth, potentially coughing, pain when lying down, etc. Untreated GERD/GORD can potentially lead to esophageal cancer and long-term damage.

\*<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gerd/symptoms-causes/syc-20361940>

## Chinese Herbal Formula Research:

**Ligan Hewei & Jianpi therapies**- are combined therapies used in China, pharmaceuticals like PPIs (proton-pump inhibitors), herbs, acupuncture, etc. to lessen symptoms of GERD. The list of herbs used is extensive. Some herbs included are **Panax Ginseng, Licorice root, Codonopsis root, Atractylodes, Zizyphus seed, Poria mushroom, Pinella, etc.** Many of these herbs act on the Spleen and/or Kidneys.

“Therefore, Ligan Hewei therapy and Jianpi therapy could be promising complementary and alternative therapies in the management of GERD, which potentially provides TCM practitioners with more suggestions and guidance in clinical decisions, as well as for treatments based on syndrome differentiation.” (Dai, Yun-kai, et al. 2020)

**Wu chu yu tang- (Evodia, Ginger, Zizyphus seed, jujube date fruit)** “A clinical study showed that wu chu yu tang (affiliated to Jianpi therapy) could improve the symptoms of GERD through anti-inflammation, antioxidant activity, acid suppression, reduction in pepsin secretion, and mucosal protection.” (Dai, Yun-kai, et al. 2020)

**Modified Banxia Xiexin decoction (MBXD)- (Pinellia, Ginger, Zizyphus seed, Licorice root, Baikal skullcap, Panax ginseng, Coptis)**

“This systematic review indicates that MBXD may have potential effects on the treatment of patients with GERD.” (Dai, Yunkai, et al. 2017)

**Sini Zuojin Decoction (SNZJD)- (Bupleurum root, Immature bitter orange peel, White Peony root, Honey-fried licorice root)**

“SNZJD might be useful in the treatment of GERD, but its long-term effects and specific clinical mechanisms are unclear.” (Li, Shaowei, et al. 2020)

**Wendan decoction (WDD)- (Bamboo shavings, Immature bitter orange peel, Citrus peel, jujube date fruit, Pinellia, Poria, Ginger root, Prepare licorice root)**

“The relapse rate was 12.4% for WDD, significantly lower than 44.0% for conventional therapies” (Ling, Wei, et al. 2015)

## Western Herbal Research:

Full formulations unspecified but contained **Slippery Elm, Peppermint oil**, and an altered form of **Licorice root**- "A herbal formula designed to sooth and protect the gastric mucosa may be a better alternative than acid-suppressive drugs for people suffering with gastric irritation and GERD." (Setright, Russell, 2017)

Some herbs outlined- (**Calendula, Marshmallow root, Licorice root, Slippery elm, Ginger root, Turmeric root, Rosemary, Comfrey leaf, Aloe vera, Celandine**)-"A multifaceted herbal approach can help both treat underlying causes of GERD as well as managing symptoms, helping many patients reduce or avoid long-term use of antacid drugs." (Kathy Abascal, 2010)

**Aloe vera, Slippery elm, Licorice root, Marshmallow root**- "Demulcent herbs contain mucilaginous materials that coat the lining of the gastrointestinal tract and can soothe irritation and inflammation. They repair the mucosa by reducing irritation of the bowel and decreasing sensitivity to gastric acid." (Czibulka, Agnes, 2019)

**Bitter candytuft, Angelica root, Chamomile flowers, Caraway fruits, Milk thistle fruits, Ginger root, Citrus peels**- "Other herbs, including Iberogast, ginger, and D-limonene, have been found in clinical studies to reduce gastric acidity, improve gastric emptying, and promote gastric healing." (Czibulka, Agnes, 2019)

### REFs:

Images:

GERD- <https://www.thehealthjournals.com/chest-pain-gastroesophageal-reflux-disease-gerd/>

Marshmallow root- <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/324860#what-is-marshmallow-root>

- 1) Dai, Yun-kai, et al. "Different Traditional Herbal Medicines for the Treatment of Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease in Adults." *Frontiers in pharmacology* 11 (2020): 884.
- 2) Dai, Yunkai, et al. "Efficacy and safety of modified Banxia Xiexin decoction (Pinellia decoction for draining the heart) for gastroesophageal reflux disease in adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis." *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* 2017 (2017).
- 3) Li, Shaowei, et al. "Efficacy of Chinese Herbal Formula Sini Zuojin Decoction in Treating Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease: Clinical Evidence and Potential Mechanisms." *Frontiers in pharmacology* 11 (2020): 76.
- 4) Ling, Wei, et al. "Consistent efficacy of wendan decoction for the treatment of digestive reflux disorders." *The American journal of Chinese medicine* 43.05 (2015): 893-913.
- 5) Setright, Russell. "Prevention of symptoms of gastric irritation (GERD) using two herbal formulas: an observational study." *Journal of the Australian Traditional-Medicine Society* 23.2 (2017): 68.
- 6) Kathy Abascal, B. S. "Herbs for Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease." *ALTERNATIVE AND COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES* (2010).
- 7) Czibulka, Agnes. "Probiotics and Herbal Therapies." *Laryngopharyngeal Reflux Disease*. Springer, Cham, 2019. 103-113.

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