



Chinese Herbal Therapy Concentrated Granules Extract

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Background

There are many different formats of Chinese herbal products (teas, capsules, tablets, loose powders). Typically, in China, you would be given a bag of dried, whole herbs which you would then brew into a tea. Depending on the formula and the number of days to be taken, the brewing process could take 2-3 hours per day, every other day or per week. This type of tea brewing is not like the typical 'steeping' of beverage teas, such as peppermint. Depending on the ingredients in the formula, the brewing process can be somewhat complex. Failure to brew properly can reduce the overall therapeutic effectiveness of the herbal tea. For these reasons, and also for convenience, Chinese herbs have been processed and formatted in different ways. Concentrated granules extract is one method.

Processing

The manufacturer starts with the same dried, whole herbs and brews them in a tea in the traditional method. The resulting water decoction is then sprayed through a large heated container which removes the water content, leaving the dried extract material. The result is somewhat similar to instant coffee or tea.

Customizing

As I have a granule pharmacy with both formulas and individual herbs, I can adjust the formula based on the individual, or their response to the herbs. Typically, a person's formula starts with a base, which is a classical Chinese prescription that has been used for hundreds of years. Then, individual ingredients are added or subtracted to make the formula "fit" the individual more closely. Customizing the formula to the individual is one of the main benefits to this approach, and how it differs from other types of medications and products. And, this customizing process can continue through the course of herbal therapy, adjusting the formula based on changes over time.

Guidelines for use

Dosage - The dose of herbs per day is dependent on many factors. The label on your bottle has your personal dosage range given in scoops. A plastic scoop is supplied in the bottle. One scoop is approximately one gram. Typically an adult will take from 6-9 grams/scoops per day. In acute conditions (such as colds or flus) that dose may increase up to double the average dose. Unlike pharmaceuticals, there is a wide range of acceptable dosage with herbs.

Taking Granules - There is no need to reconstitute the granules back into tea. Typically, the taste of the tea and granules are very strong, and many times bitter. Most adults prefer to take the granules by measuring the dose and placing it underneath the tongue, and then drinking 2-4 oz. of water. Placing the herbs directly on the tongue puts the concentrated tastes right on all the taste buds. Because they are loose and granulated, the extract can feel gritty. To avoid this, you may put the granules in gel caps.

Between Meals - It is preferable to take the daily dose spread out over 2-3 times per day. It is ideal to take each dose either 30 mins. or more before or 60 mins. or more after meals. This allows the body to process the herbs more simply, usually getting more therapeutic effective. Depending on your condition and the sensitivity of your stomach, you may find taking the dose is easier after rather than before meals. This varies tremendously between individuals and between herbal formulas.



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Side Effects

One of the main benefits of using Chinese herbs is the lack of side effects. However, if they do occur, it usually involves digestion or elimination. If this happens there are several ways to respond: taking the dose after meals or closer to food, reducing the dose, adding or deleting ingredients to the formula, changing formulas, using gel caps, or changing formats. Always feel free to call me, as usually, a phone call can help decide on the best response.

While Taking The Granules

Diet - Each individual may need to adjust some dietary aspects to receive the most effectiveness from the herbal therapy. These will be discussed at your consultation. Most people should avoid very greasy and spicy foods while taking herbs. In general, it is useful to practice moderation, particularly with foods such as caffeine (coffee, chocolate, soda pop), sugar, and dairy.

Feedback - Your feedback to me while taking the formula is very important. I have the ability to make small, medium, or large changes to the formula based on your progress. This is very different from taking a tablet or capsule.

Staying in Touch

It is important to stay in contact with me while you are taking herbs. My assumption, if I do not hear from you, is that everything is fine, progressing gradually. If not, or if you have any questions, I encourage you to call. If you get my answering machine, leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible.

Shelf Life & Future Use

The shelf life for granules is several years. If you do not finish the entire bottle, you may keep the remainder and use it for any future reoccurrences of the same situation. Remember that the formula is customized to you and the specific condition. If you have any question about whether it is appropriate to take the same formula in the future, just call me. A brief phone consultation will usually be sufficient.

Children and infants

Chinese herbs may be used very successfully with infants and children. Getting them to take the herbs requires some adaptation and flexibility.

Dosage - The amount of herbs for each child depends on their age, size, and condition. This may range from 1-6 grams/scoops per day and will be written on the label of your bottle.

Administration - Most parents find that mixing a small amount of granules (one half to one scoop) in some applesauce is a good method. The granules may also be reconstituted into tea by adding a small amount of boiling water, cover and let steep for 5- 10 mins. This may then be added to formula, juice, etc. This liquid may also be mixed with honey (for children over 2 yrs. old) or brown rice syrup (which has a less stimulating impact than honey) for a syrup version. Infants and children can be given the liquid form through a pediatric oral medicine syringe, commonly available at pharmacies.



As each child has different food tastes, finding a food that works can be a creative challenge. It is better to avoid dairy and very sugary foods.

Enjoy your herbs!!