

General Knowledge of Toxic Chinese Herbal Medicines

Toxic Chinese herbal medicines have very strong properties and contain toxic ingredients. Improper dosage or usage of such medicines may cause poisoning or even death. One should therefore pay attention to the methods of administration as instructed by a Chinese medicine practitioner.



Department of Health



- Symptoms of the nervous system, e.g. dizziness, headache, numbness of mouth and tongue, limbs or body, blurred vision, hearing impairment or even coma, paralysis.

- Symptoms of urinary system, e.g. difficulty in passing urine, oedema.



Chronic poisoning

- May lead to anaemia, impairment of liver or kidney function.

Chinese Medicine Regulatory Office
Department of Health
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Symptoms of poisoning by Chinese herbal medicines

Acute poisoning



- Symptoms of the digestive system, e.g. nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, or even vomiting blood, bloody stool.



- Symptoms of the circulatory system, e.g. chest discomfort, palpitation, irregular heartbeat.

- Symptoms of the respiratory system, e.g. dyspnoea, bluish and purplish lip.

Points to note when taking toxic Chinese herbal medicines

- 31 toxic Chinese herbal medicines specified in Schedule 1 of the Chinese Medicine Ordinance (Cap. 549) can only be purchased in accordance with a prescription given by a registered Chinese medicine practitioner. Methods for making decoction and administration as instructed by a Chinese medicine practitioner should be complied with.



- Seek medical advice immediately if any symptoms of herbal poisoning are noticed.



Unprocessed Radix Aconiti Kusnezoffii



Flos Rhododendri Mollis



Arsenic Trioxide



Mylabris



Unprocessed Radix Aconiti



Unprocessed Semen Strychni



Cinnabaris (Cinnabaris in lumps)



Flos Daturae Metelis

The 31 Chinese herbal medicines specified in Schedule 1 of the Chinese Medicine Ordinance have strong or very strong toxic effects / potency.

Herbals

Radix or Rhizoma Podophylli Emodis, or Radix or Rhizoma Dysosmatis*	Unprocessed Radix Euphorbiae Fischerianae, Radix Euphorbiae Ebracteolatae or Radix Stellerae	Radix Sophorae Tonkinensis
Radix Aconiti Brachypodi or Radix Aconiti Szechenyani	Unprocessed Radix Aconiti Kusnezoffii	Unprocessed Semen Euphorbiae
Flos Rhododendri Mollis	Unprocessed Semen Strychni	Unprocessed Radix Aconiti
Unprocessed Rhizoma Pinelliae	Unprocessed Resina Garcinia Morellae	Unprocessed Semen Hyoscyami
Unprocessed Radix Kansui	Flos Daturae Metelis	Unprocessed Rhizoma Arisaematis
Unprocessed Rhizoma Typhonii or Radix Aconiti Coreani	Unprocessed Radix Aconiti Lateralis	Unprocessed Fructus Crotonis

* Radix or Rhizoma Dysosmatis [Rhizoma or root of Dysosma Versipellis (Hance) M. Cheng or Dysosma Pleiantha (Hance) Woodson]

Minerals

Hydrargyri Oxydum Rubrum	Arsenolite	Mercury
Calomelas	Arsenic Trioxide	Mercurous Chloride and Mercuric Chloride
Orpiment	Realgar	Cinnabaris

Animals

Venenum Bufonis	Mylabris	Huechys
		Lytta