

**Traditional Chinese Medicine
Perspective on Knee Pain**

According to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), knee pain may be one of the symptoms that indicates a systemic illness. Knee pain may also be accompanied by general body ache, or pain in other joints. Here we discuss knee pain that is the sole or major problem.

As with many other symptoms or disorders, there are various causes and underlying conditions that can cause knee pain. However, based on twenty years of practice and study of cases in the United States, we have found that knee pain problems may be organized into three main categories:

- Knee pain caused by Deficiency
- Knee pain caused by Stagnation and
- Knee pain caused by Dampness and Excessive Heat.

1. KNEE PAIN CAUSED BY DEFICIENCY

Approximately seventy-to-eighty percent of knee pain problems belong to the category of Deficiency causes. According to TCM theory, many of the channels along which Qi flows through the body meet at and run through the knee. Also, since tendons and bones work together in the knee to support nearly the entire weight of the body, the knee is one of the major joints of the body and it is easy for any type of Deficiency, including Deficiencies of qi, blood, yin or yang to affect the knee joint.

TCM theory holds that the tendons are regulated by the Liver and the bones by the Kidney. Therefore, it is usually the case that most of the Deficiency conditions that underlie knee problems are mainly related to Liver and/or Kidney Deficiencies.

The main symptoms of knee pain caused by Deficiency are

1. knee pain that is intermittent and worse during or after physical activity (such as physical labor, exercise, and going up and down stairs), and
2. weakness of the knee(s) and leg(s). These symptoms are often accompanied by lower back pain or soreness, fatigue, and a proneness to feeling chilled or cold.

Knee pain caused by Deficiency gets worse in the fall and winter.

Continued on following panel.

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Continued from previous panel.

2. KNEE PAIN CAUSED BY STAGNATION

Stagnation refers to conditions in which the circulation of Qi or Blood becomes weak, sluggish, clotted, and even blocked. Stagnation may be caused by Deficiency conditions that involve poor nutritional extraction from food consumed with a resulting lack of energy that gradually induces Stagnation; or by External Causes, such as Wind, Cold, Dampness, injuries, or excessive exercise.

Knee pain caused by Stagnation is characteristically sharp, constant, and location-fixed. Movement and massage bring temporary relief. Individuals who suffer from Stagnation are prone to having cold hands and feet and a purplish color to the nails.

3. KNEE PAIN CAUSED BY DAMPNES AND EXCESSIVE HEAT

The causes of knee pain caused by Dampness or Excessive Heat may be either external or internal. This category also includes knee pain from acute infection, inflammation, or gout.

Dampness and Excessive Heat may also cause knee pain that is accompanied by swelling or a burning sensation. When this kind of knee pain gets worse, the skin around the knee gets red and feels warm, or even hot to the touch. A fever may also develop.

In cases of long-term knee pain, the causes become more complicated, often with two or more conditions existing together and exacerbating each other. For such compound problems, it is necessary to combine two or more formulas that match the underlying causes and presenting symptoms.

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Note: Words that are capitalized refer to terms used in TCM theory that may vary from commonly-used definitions or understanding.

Knee Pain

TCM FORMULA SELECTION GUIDE

QTT	Knee Support
B-DS	Promote Circulation
GJTF	Joint Support
XDH	Pelvic Support
YYT-2	Back Support
ZGTF	Sciatic Peace
JING	Lower Muscle Support
3LO-KNEE	Knee Lotion

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Knee Pain

Knee Support **QTT**

INDICATIONS: Knee pain; most kinds of knee disorders, such as stiffness, swelling, and weakness.

PROPERTIES: Warm and slightly Cool.

ACTIONS: Invigorates Blood and Qi circulation; clears Wind-Dampness and Cold; opens and activates the meridians and channels, tonifies Liver and Kidney; strengthens tendons and joints.

INGREDIENTS: Astragalus Root, Achyranthes Root, White Mustard Seed.

Promote Circulation **B-DS**

INDICATIONS: Chronic deep, sharp, and stubborn pain problems; numbness and dysfunction.

PROPERTIES: Cool.

ACTIONS: Cools Blood; promotes Blood circulation to remove stubborn stagnation.

INGREDIENTS: Peach Seed, Chinese Rhubarb Rhizome, Eupolyphaga, Red Peony Root, Safflower, Achyranthes Root.

Joint Support **GJTF**

INDICATIONS: Muscle and joint pain; swelling and stiffness. Also, arthritis with heat and dampness.

PROPERTIES: Neutral

ACTIONS: Removes Wind, Heat, Dampness, and Stagnation, especially in limbs and joint areas; strengthens muscles, tendons, and joints.

INGREDIENTS: Achyranthes Root, Chinese Dodder Seed, Job's Tears Seed, Phaseolus Seed, Pubescent Angelica Root, Lycopus.

LIFE RISING® PRODUCT SELECTION GUIDE

Main Symptoms and Underlying Conditions	Key Formula
KNEE PAIN of DEFICIENCY TYPE (main symptoms include KNEE PAIN, stiffness, weakness)	QTT
KNEE PAIN of STAGNATION TYPE (pain is usually sharp and constant; pain location(s) fixed)	QTT + B-DS
KNEE PAIN of DAMPNES-HEAT TYPE	QTT + XDH
Add as Needed	<i>Use One of Above With</i>
if w LOWER BACK PAIN	+ YYT-2
if w LEG SPASM(S)	+ JING
if w SCIATIC PAIN	+ ZGTF
if w GENERAL JOINT PAIN or ARTHRITIS	+ GJTF
Also, for most KNEE PAIN apply KNEE LOTION w self-massage	3LO-KNEE

Pelvic Support **XDH**

INDICATIONS: Painful, burning, itching, frequent and urgent urination with dark or cloudy urine as with urinary tract infection or acute prostate gland infection. Burning and itching vagina with yellow, strong-smelling discharge as with acute vaginal yeast infection.

PROPERTIES: Cold

ACTIONS: Clears Lower Burner Damp-Heat, Toxic Heat, and Excess Heat; induces diuresis and relieves water retention.

INGREDIENTS: Phellodendron Bark, Southern Tsangshu Rhizome, Gardenia Fruit, Black Nightshade, Asian Psyllium.

Back Support **YYT-2**

INDICATIONS: Lower back pain and stiffness, especially after long periods of sitting or standing. Also, fatigue, proneness to feeling chilled, and other typical symptoms of Kidney Yang Deficiency. Also for frequent urination.

PROPERTIES: Warm and Hot.

ACTIONS: Tonifies Kidney and Liver, especially Kidney Yang. Eliminates Cold and Damp. Strengthens tendons and bones.

INGREDIENTS: Prepared Aconitum Tuber, Chinese Dodder Seed, Mistletoe Stem, Drynaria Rhizome, Sichuan Teasel Root, Pubescent Angelica Root, Ginger Rhizome.

Lower Muscle Support **JING**

INDICATIONS: Leg muscle spasms. Weak, stiff, or aching lower back and legs.

PROPERTIES: Warm

ACTIONS: Tonifies Liver Yin and Blood. Removes Dampness. Promotes Channel circulation. Nourishes and strengthens tendons and muscles.

INGREDIENTS: White Peony Root, Flowering Quince Fruit, Achyranthes Root, Nut Grass Rhizome, Pubescent Angelica Root.

Sciatic Peace **ZGTF**

INDICATIONS: Sciatic Pain; most kinds of pain or numbness; muscle spasms.

PROPERTIES: Warm. Slightly Spicy.

ACTIONS: Quiets Wind. Cleanses Mucus. Resolves Stagnation. Opens the Channels and Collaterals. Improves circulation, especially in sciatic and general leg areas.

INGREDIENTS: Scorpion. Agkistrodon.