

THE NCCAOM  
CERTIFICATION IN  
CHINESE HERBOLOGY



# About Chinese Herbology

Chinese herbal medicine, also known as Chinese herbology is one of the primary modalities within the scope of Oriental medicine. According to the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Oriental medicine (which includes the practice of acupuncture, Chinese herbology and Asian bodywork therapy) is a complete system of healing that dates back to 200 B.C. <sup>1</sup>

Chinese herbology includes treatment with substances such as plants, roots, minerals and more. Like acupuncture, Chinese herbology has evolved as an integral part of Chinese medicine and is used to re-harmonize imbalances in the body. <sup>2</sup>

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines herbal medicines to include herbs, herbal materials, herbal preparations and finished herbal products that contain as active ingredients parts of plants, or other plant materials, or combinations. Chinese formulas are comprised of herbs designed for each individual patient. This special formulation is crucial because these formulas must be delicately composed for the purpose of achieving balance in each disharmonious state of being. Even small deviations in dosage or herb composition can change the entire focus of the formula and therefore, the results. <sup>3</sup>



# Herbal Descriptions and Forms

The following are descriptions of herbal medicines as defined by the WHO: <sup>4</sup>

**Herbs** are pure plant material such as leaves, flowers, fruit, seed, stems, wood, bark, roots, rhizomes or other plant parts, which may be whole, fragmented or powdered.

**Herbal Materials**, like actual herbs, consist of fresh juices, gums, fixed oils, essential oils, resins and dry powders of herbs. In some countries, these materials may be processed by various local procedures such as steaming, roasting, stir-baking with honey, alcoholic beverages or other materials.

**Herbal Preparations** are finished herbal products which may include pulverized or powdered herbal materials, extracts, tinctures and fatty oils of herbal materials. They also include preparations made by steeping or heating herbal materials in alcoholic beverages and/or honey, or in other materials.

**Finished Herbal Products** are products made from one or more herbs. If more than one herb is used, the term herbal mixture product can also be used. Finished herbal products may contain inert substances used as a diluent or vehicle for holding the herb.

**Raw Formulas** consists of carefully individually weighed unprocessed natural herbs placed together in individual bags.

**Prepared Patent Medicine** is a term used for popular formulas used for generations for common illnesses. They are tiny herbal pellets which are taken two to three times daily. These are pre-formulated based on treating a specific patient problem.

**Freeze Dried Granules or Freeze Dried Pills** are raw formulas cooked and freeze dried: Raw formulas are still the strongest method for taking Chinese herbs.

**Tinctures** are available in pre-packaged form and through special order. This method is comparable to the freeze-dried method.

**Topical Liquids and Creams** are numerous and available to treat many different medical conditions such as athlete's foot, burns, hemorrhoids, bleeding, and bone problems, to name a few.

# Chinese Herbs Can Relieve the Following Complaints

What are some of the ways that Chinese herbology can benefit me?

With the large quantities of Chinese herbs available, there are many complaints that are relieved through the use of different combinations. NCCAOM certified practitioners have found through their work that Chinese herbs have helped with the following complaints:

Allergies & Asthma

Anemia

Anorexia

Anxiety

Arthritis

Bloating & Distention

Chronic & Acute Colds

Chronic Diarrhea

Chronic Fatigue

Cold & Flu

Colitis/Crohns Disease

Depression

Dysmenorrhea

Eczema

Emphysema

Enuresis

Epigastric Pain & GERD

Food Allergies

Gastritis

Headaches & Migraines

High Cholesterol

Hypertension



Indigestion

Infertility in men & women

Insomnia

Irregular Menstruation

Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Low Back, Neck & Shoulder Pain

Muscle Spasms & Stiffness

Nasal Congestion & Sinusitis

Painful Menstruation

Peptic Ulcers

Pinched Nerve

Premenstrual Syndrome

Prostatitis

Sciatica

Sexual Dysfunction

Side Effects of Radiation

Sports Injuries

Stress

Upper Respiratory Disorder

Urinary Tract Infections

## How do I know that herbs are effective?

According to the WHO, about 25% of today's modern medicines have been developed from plants first used traditionally in herbal preparations. In China, traditional herbal preparations account for 30%-50% of the total medicinal consumption. <sup>4</sup> According to the WHO, the global market for herbal medicines currently stands at over \$60 billion annually and is growing steadily. <sup>4</sup>



# Identifying a Qualified Chinese Herbology Practitioner

## How do I find a qualified Chinese herbology practitioner?

Look for a Diplomate of Chinese Herbology (NCCAOM)<sup>®</sup> or a Diplomate of Oriental Medicine through the NCCAOM<sup>®</sup> *Find a Practitioner* search engine at [www.nccaom.org](http://www.nccaom.org).

The additional designation of licensed acupuncturist (L.Ac.) is awarded by a state regulatory board. Currently, 43 states plus the the District of Columbia, require NCCAOM certification or the passing of the NCCAOM examination(s) as one requirement for a state license to practice acupuncture and/or Oriental medicine; however, one should always confirm the practitioner has a current state license to practice with the appropriate state board.

## What training does an NCCAOM Diplomate of Chinese Herbology have?

Comprehensive training in traditional differential diagnosis and proper treatment methods requires that a Diplomate of Chinese Herbology (NCCAOM)<sup>®</sup> completes four academic years of education at the master's degree level in an acupuncture and Chinese herbology program accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM) or has completed an international education program which is substantially equivalent to ACAOM standards. ACAOM is the only accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education as the authority for quality education and training in acupuncture and Oriental medicine. In addition to graduation from an ACAOM accredited program, a Diplomate of Chinese Herbology (NCCAOM)<sup>®</sup> must demonstrate professional competency by passing NCCAOM certification examinations in Foundations of Oriental Medicine, Chinese Herbology, and Biomedicine as well as meet other NCCAOM certification requirements. Generally, the NCCAOM Diplomate training and competency verification is in sharp contrast to the acupuncture training of other healthcare professionals such as chiropractors or registered nurses or even medical doctors who typically receive 100-300 hours of abbreviated training.<sup>5</sup>

Certified (and licensed) acupuncturists and Oriental medicine practitioners are also trained in standard medical history gathering, safety, ethics, common pharmaceuticals and supplements, and recognition of when to refer patients to other healthcare professionals or consult with other medical practitioners.

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## References

1. National Institute of Health, National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine; <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/acupuncture/>; accessed January 29, 2014.
2. Traditional Chinese Medicine Resource Center; [tmcentral.com](http://tmcentral.com); accessed January 29, 2014.
3. Zhang, Xiaorui. General Guidelines for Methodologies on Research and Evaluation of Traditional Medicine; 2002, World Health Organization, Geneva.
4. No. 134 Fact Sheet on Traditional Medicine; Updated on December 2008, World Health Organization, Geneva.
5. Know Your Acupuncturist, Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine; <http://www.ccaom.org>; accessed January 29, 2014.
6. The Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE); <http://www.credentialingexcellence.org/p/cm/ld/fid=50> accessed January 29, 2014.

# NCCAOM and its Diplomates

The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM®) is widely accepted as the most influential leader in the field of acupuncture and Oriental medicine. There are currently over 17,000 active NCCAOM Diplomates (NCCAOM certificate holders) practicing under an NCCAOM certification.

The NCCAOM, established in 1982, is a non-profit organization whose mission is to establish, assess, and promote recognized standards of competence and safety in acupuncture and Oriental medicine for the protection and benefit of the public. NCCAOM Acupuncture, Oriental Medicine and Chinese Herbology certification programs are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). NCCA's standards exceed the requirements set forth by the American Psychological Association and the United States Employment Opportunity Commission. As a requirement of accreditation the NCCAOM must submit annual reports to NCCA and must undergo a full reaccreditation every five years for each of its NCCA accredited programs. Additional information is available at <http://www.credentialingexcellence.org>.

Below are the service marks for the NCCAOM Certification Programs. The highlighted service mark is for the Chinese Herbology Certification Program.



The NCCAOM Diplomat of Acupuncture, Chinese Herbology, and Oriental Medicine programs carry the NCCA accreditation seal.



*Public Protection Through Quality Credentials*

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