



SHANDE TCM

Skin Comfort in Singapore

Acne, itch, irritation, skin-barrier care and safer TCM conversations

Table of Contents

Skin Health: TCM, Lifestyle and Conventional Care Can Coexist	3
Sensitive Skin and Itch: Triggers, Habits and Red Flags	4
Acne and Breakouts: Everyday Skin Care, TCM and Realistic Limits	5
Eczema-Like Itch and Sensitive Skin: Barrier Care, Triggers and TCM Conversations	7
Buying Chinese Medicine Safely in Singapore: Practical Checks Before You Pay	8
Acne, itch, irritation, skin-barrier care and safer TCM conversations	

How to use this guide

This guide groups related everyday concerns so you can ask better questions, observe changes that actually matter and know when ordinary self-care may be reasonable versus when conventional medical assessment should come first. TCM terminology is kept in its traditional context rather than presented as biomedical diagnosis.

Safety principle

Severe, persistent, rapidly worsening symptoms or clear red flags should be medically assessed first. Call 995 for life-threatening emergencies.

CHAPTER 01

Skin Health: TCM, Lifestyle and Conventional Care Can Coexist

A realistic guide to acne, eczema-like symptoms, irritation and cosmetic concerns without treating every skin problem as “heat” or “toxins”.



Key points

- Skin conditions can look similar but have different causes.
- Avoid strong claims about “detoxing” or curing chronic skin disease.
- Painful infection, rapidly spreading rash or severe allergic symptoms need medical care.

Skin health comes before appearance

Acne, eczema, irritation, fungal infection, allergic reactions and other conditions can overlap in appearance. Before focusing on brightening, glow or beauty goals, make sure an ongoing medical skin problem is not being missed.

TCM language is not a laboratory test

A practitioner may use terms such as heat, dampness or blood-related patterns to describe a traditional pattern. These concepts should not be presented as proof of toxins in the blood or as a biomedical explanation for every rash.

Lifestyle support can be simple

Gentle cleansing, avoiding known irritants, sleep, stress management and not picking inflamed skin can help support many routines. Overly aggressive scrubs, frequent product changes and multiple herbal creams may make it harder to identify what is causing irritation.

Tell both sides what you are using

If you use prescription creams, oral medicines, supplements or TCM products, keep both your doctor and TCM practitioner informed. Some topical products sold as “herbal” have been found to contain undeclared potent medicines, so reputable sourcing matters.

Get medical help for warning signs

Seek prompt care for rapidly spreading redness, severe pain, fever, facial swelling, difficulty breathing, blistering over large areas, eye involvement or signs of serious infection. Persistent or worsening skin problems also deserve proper diagnosis.

Treat skin as health before appearance

Take note of when the problem started, products being used, itch or pain, sleep, stress, medicines and whether there are signs of infection. Ask what can realistically improve, how long a trial should be, what would require dermatology or medical review, and whether any topical or herbal product has safety considerations.

Photographs can be useful when used carefully

Skin can look different from day to day. A photograph taken in similar lighting every few days can help show whether redness, swelling or distribution is actually changing. Also note new products, medicines and environmental exposures. Do not rely on photographs alone for diagnosis; painful, infected, rapidly spreading or otherwise concerning skin problems should be assessed in person.

CHAPTER 02

Sensitive Skin and Itch: Triggers, Habits and Red Flags

Itch can come from dry skin, eczema, allergy, infection, medicines or many other causes. The useful starting point is to protect the skin barrier and notice patterns.

Key points

- New facial swelling, breathing difficulty or a rapidly spreading severe rash need urgent care.
- Change one skincare product at a time when investigating irritation.
- TCM discussions should not delay review of persistent or unusual rashes.

Protect the skin barrier

Use gentle cleansing, avoid very hot showers and moisturise soon after bathing if dryness is a problem. Fragrance, strong acids and multiple active products can worsen irritation. When skin is already inflamed, simpler routines are often easier to tolerate.

Track exposures

New cosmetics, laundry products, jewellery, workplace chemicals, sweating, travel, pets and medicines can all change skin symptoms. Take clear photos during flares and note what changed in the days before.

Singapore heat and sweat

Heat and sweating can aggravate eczema, heat rash and friction. Breathable clothing, changing out of wet clothes and cooling the skin can reduce irritation. Persistent infected-looking areas, pus or fever need medical assessment.

Where TCM may fit

TCM may discuss skin symptoms alongside sleep, digestion, stress and traditional pattern concepts. Any internal herbal product should be considered an active exposure and disclosed with prescriptions, supplements, pregnancy and allergies.

Red flags

Seek urgent help for breathing difficulty, swelling of the lips or tongue, faintness or a severe rapidly spreading allergic reaction. See a doctor for persistent rash, signs of infection, significant pain, fever or blistering.

CHAPTER 03

Acne and Breakouts: Everyday Skin Care, TCM and Realistic Limits

A practical guide to breakouts, gentle skin routines, product overload, TCM conversations and when acne deserves medical review.



Key points

- Acne can be influenced by hormones, skin oil, inflammation, medicines and other factors; it is not simply a “heat” problem.
- A simple consistent skin routine is often easier to assess than changing many products at once.
- Painful nodules, scarring, sudden severe acne or significant emotional impact deserve proper medical review.

Start by describing the breakout

Notice whether spots are mainly blackheads, whiteheads, inflamed pimples, deep painful nodules or a mixture. Record where they occur, how quickly they appeared and whether there were recent changes in medicines, supplements, skincare, hair products or hormonal patterns.

Do not turn every breakout into a “detox” story

TCM may use traditional pattern language such as heat, dampness or blood-related terms. These are part of a traditional framework, not laboratory proof that the skin is releasing toxins. Avoid health claims that make a visible breakout sound like evidence of internal poisoning.

A boring routine can be useful

Gentle cleansing, non-irritating moisturiser, sunscreen and a limited number of active products are easier to evaluate than a constantly changing routine. Scrubbing, squeezing and stacking multiple strong products can worsen irritation and make it harder to know what is helping.

Tell both practitioners about medicines and products

If you use prescription acne treatment, hormonal medicines, supplements or herbal products, make sure both your doctor and TCM practitioner know. Pregnancy planning also

matters because some acne medicines are not suitable in pregnancy.

Scarring and pain are reasons not to wait too long

Deep painful acne and ongoing inflammation can leave scars. Medical treatment can be important even if you also want TCM or lifestyle support. Seek prompt review for rapidly worsening acne, severe swelling, infection or an unexpected widespread rash.

Measure progress with photographs and a timeline

Take occasional photos in similar lighting and note changes over several weeks rather than judging day to day. Record new products and major cycle, stress or medication changes. A clear timeline makes it easier to decide whether a treatment is genuinely helping.

CHAPTER 04

Eczema-Like Itch and Sensitive Skin: Barrier Care, Triggers and TCM Conversations

A skin-first guide to itch, dryness, irritation, moisturising, trigger tracking and when a persistent rash needs medical diagnosis.

Key points

- Itch and dry inflamed skin can have many causes; appearance alone does not confirm eczema.
- Protecting the skin barrier and reducing irritation are useful regardless of whether TCM support is also used.
- Oozing, crusting, painful spreading redness, fever or rapidly worsening skin can signal infection and needs medical care.

Do not diagnose every itchy rash by appearance alone

Eczema is common, but fungal infection, contact allergy, hives, scabies and other conditions can look similar. Persistent or recurrent rashes are worth diagnosing properly, especially if the pattern is changing or treatment is not working.

Barrier care is not glamorous, but it matters

Use gentle cleansing, avoid unnecessary fragrance or harsh scrubs, moisturise regularly and try to reduce scratching. A stable routine helps protect the skin barrier and makes it easier to identify true triggers.

Track exposures instead of banning everything

Notice soaps, detergents, sweating, heat, air-conditioning, fabrics, pets, new skincare and occupational exposures. Change one or two likely triggers at a time. Extremely restrictive diets should not be started casually, especially for children.

TCM can be discussed without replacing diagnosis

A TCM practitioner may use traditional pattern terms and may discuss acupuncture, herbs or lifestyle advice. These approaches should be considered alongside - not instead of - appropriate medical assessment, especially for moderate or severe disease.

Be careful with unlabelled creams

Products described as “herbal” or “natural” are not automatically risk-free. Do not use unknown creams repeatedly on a chronic rash without knowing what they contain, particularly on the face, folds or children.

Know signs of infection and severe allergy

Seek prompt care for painful rapidly spreading redness, pus, honey-coloured crusts, fever, eye involvement, facial swelling, difficulty breathing, widespread blistering or a person who looks systemically unwell.

CHAPTER 05

Buying Chinese Medicine Safely in Singapore: Practical Checks Before You Pay

A consumer checklist for product identity, exaggerated claims, online sellers and when professional advice matters.



Buy the product, not the promise

Start with what the product actually is, who supplies it, the ingredients and directions. A dramatic testimonial or “secret formula” story does not tell you whether a product is appropriate or safe.

Be cautious with anonymous online sellers

Products obtained from unknown overseas sellers can be harder to verify. If something arrives without clear labelling, supplier information or usable instructions, the uncertainty itself is a reason to pause.

Avoid products that promise impossible breadth

One product claiming to cure pain, diabetes, cancer, sexual problems, weight issues and many unrelated conditions should raise concern. Responsible products and practitioners do not need universal cure claims.

Special situations deserve professional review

Pregnancy, children, older adults with multiple medicines, chronic liver or kidney disease and people preparing for surgery should avoid casual trial-and-error with medicinal products.

Keep receipts and packaging

If you need advice later, the exact product matters. Keep the label, batch information and seller details rather than transferring pills into an unmarked container.

Use HSA and professional sources when uncertain

Singapore's Health Sciences Authority provides information on Chinese Proprietary Medicines and safety alerts. For individual suitability, ask a qualified healthcare professional rather than relying only on social-media claims.

Practical checklist

Is the problem getting worse or clearly affecting daily function?

Are there breathing, consciousness, bleeding, dehydration or neurological red flags that should come first?

What prescription medicines, over-the-counter products, supplements or TCM products are already being used?

If an approach is tried, when will progress be reviewed?

What change would mean self-care should stop and professional assessment should come first?

References & further reading

Health Sciences Authority (HSA): Chinese proprietary medicines and complementary health product safety. Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF): Emergency Medical Services and guidance on when to call 995.