

Page i

Heal Your Heart

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From hawthorn berry, ginseng and ginkgo to cayenne, garlic and ginger, the heart-friendly herbs presented in this informative handbook have been proven to help improve circulation, lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, prevent clotting, nourish the body and reduce stress.

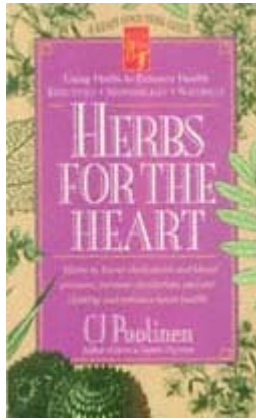
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About the Author

CJ Puotinen has studied with some of America's leading herbalists and is a member of the Herb Research Foundation, the American Herb Association and the Northeast Herbal Association. In addition to magazine and journal articles on health and medicinal herbs, she is the author of *Herbal Teas*, *Nature's Antiseptics: Tea Tree Oil and Grapefruit Seed Extract*, *Herbs to Help You Breathe Freely*, *Herbs for Men's Health* and *Herbs to Improve Digestion*, all published by Keats Publishing, Inc.

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A KEATS GOOD HERB GUIDE

Herbs for the Heart

Herbs to Lower Cholesterol and Blood Pressure, Increase Circulation, Prevent Clotting and Enhance Heart Health

CJ Puotinen



Keats Publishing, Inc.
New Canaan, Connecticut.

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Contents

Introduction	1
Preventing Heart Disease	6
	7
Nutrition	9
Essential Fatty Acids	10
The Importance of Salt	11
Smoking	12
Nutritional Minimums	13
Food Sensitivities	13
Dehydration and High Blood Pressure	14
Exercise, Oxygen and Stress Reduction	17
Dick Quinn's Story	19
On the Safety of Herbs	23
Herbs for the Heart	25
Herbal Preparations	26
Teas	28
Tinctures	30
Herbal Wines	31

Capsules	32
Dosages and Product Quality	33
Poultices and Plasters	35
Compresses and Fomentations	36
Oil Infusions and Salves	37
Hydrotherapy	39
The Heart-Friendly Herbal Pharmacy	71
Specific Therapies for Circulatory Problems	
Bibliography	78
Appendix: Resources and Recommended Reading	80

[< previous page](#)

page_v

[next page >](#)

If you like this book, buy it!

*For my teacher, Rosemary Gladstar,
who lives at the heart of American herbalism.*

If you like this book, buy it!

Introduction

Heart disease affects everyone. The number-one killer of both men and women in the United States, heart disease disrupts lives, businesses, families and every facet of society. The illness is color-blind, affecting people of every race and nationality; the wealthy are just as likely to die of it as the poor. An estimated 1.5 million North Americans suffer heart attacks every year, and only 23 percent survive. For most, the first attack is their last. This was true for my father, who died at 53, just as it's true for some of your own friends and relatives.

Despite decades of effort and billions of dollars spent on research, modern medicine has not found a cure for heart disease.

The reason for this is Western medicine's approach to healing. Physicians try, often aggressively, to suppress the symptoms of disease, but they don't address the cause or attempt to prevent the illness from developing. It's simpler, less expensive and more effective to prevent heart attacks before they occur with nutrition, exercise and stress management than to treat them after they occur with drugs and surgery. However, few physicians know anything about nutrition, exercise or stress management and very few insurance programs reimburse doctors for the time they would have to spend explaining these options. On the other hand, bypass surgery is so profitable and

so quickly reimbursed by insurance companies that it's the economic engine that keeps many hospitals and physicians in business.

Typically, a middle-aged man or woman is told, "You're a walking time bomb. Unless we operate immediately, you're going to die."

Is that true? According to Julian Whitaker, M.D., the answer is almost always no. His advice: Never agree to immediate surgery. Instead, get a second opinion and, before doing that, consider the evidence.

In 1977, results of an ambitious Veterans Administration Cooperative Study that tested bypass surgery were published. The scientifically controlled trial of 596 patients, all with the same degree of blocked arteries, concluded that surgery was no better than conventional medications at preventing heart attacks or saving lives. The patients were randomly assigned to receive either medical therapy or bypass surgery, and the death rate in both groups was identical.

The study was not well-received by surgeons, who demanded a new trial. The government then spent \$100 million dollars on the Coronary Artery Surgical Study, or CASS. This time 780 patients with severely blocked arteries were divided into two groups, one of which received surgery, the other conventional medical therapy. The results, published in 1983, showed that for the average patient, the risk of dying from bypass surgery is three to five times greater than the risk of dying from heart disease. In an editorial accompanying the CASS study, Eugene Braunwald, M.D., then chief of cardiology at Harvard Medical School, predicted that the use of bypass surgery would decrease because of its proven ineffectiveness.

Obviously, that didn't happen. Why are so many

men and women receiving bypass operations? In Dr. Whitaker's opinion,

If the profession followed the recommendations of its own scientific studies, the heart surgery industry would collapse overnight. In order for that industry to survive and flourish, it must perform large numbers of totally unnecessary procedures. And since that industry churns out about 1,000 newly minted heart surgeons each year, all eager to ply their craft "helping folks" with this terrible disease, the heart patient with just a little heart disease swims with sharks in a feeding frenzy. Friends, this is not a scientific debate among hard-working, concerned physicians doing their best to help their patients. This is fraud on a monstrous scale.

Robert D. Willix, Jr., M.D., was for many years a successful heart surgeonsuccessful in the financial sense, that is. When he faced the fact that his patients died or relapsed no matter what he did and that his own health was suffering as well, Willix turned to alternative therapies and learned how to prevent, treat and even cure heart disease without drugs or surgery.

Since 1978, angioplasty has surpassed bypass surgery as the favorite procedure, yet six times as many angioplasty patients need repeat treatment or surgery as those who had bypass. In angioplasty, a tiny balloon is threaded through blocked arteries and then expanded, supposedly clearing the arteries by pushing fatty "plaque" against the artery walls.

Some describe this treatment of heart disease as the "clogged drain approach." By any name, it's big business. "My colleagues perform about 300,000 angioplasties a year at an average cost of \$14,000,"

Willix wrote in 1995. "That's \$4.2 billion right there, not including drugs and follow-up."

In 1992, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that half of the angioplasties performed in the U.S. were unnecessary and that "not a single properly randomized study supports the superior advantage, if any, of angioplasty as compared with medical therapy."

In response to the procedure's drawbacks, ineffectiveness, risks and adverse side effects, the American College of Cardiologists asked, "Is angioplasty being done for cardiologists or for patients?"

Willix warned that bypass surgery and angioplasty may soon be replaced by "laser endarterectomy" and an even riskier procedure, "atherectomy." According to two studies, one out of every 12 atherectomy patients dies within six months, during which time the arteries of nearly half of all patients close up again.

For most of the 20th century, physicians have insisted that there is no link between diet and heart disease, that heart disease is irreversible and incurable and that the only appropriate treatments are symptom-suppressing drugs and surgery.

Then Nathan Pritikin cured his heart disease with a low-fat diet, and his health centers trained thousands to do the same. Still, physicians were skeptical. It wasn't until Dean Ornish conducted a clinical trial at the University of California that the medical establishment realized that heart disease can be not only stopped but reversed and cured by changes in diet and lifestyle. Dr. Willix uses this approach and claims a 99 percent success rate with patients who have been told they need angioplasty or coronary bypass.

Drugs for hypertension (high blood pressure) are pharmaceutical best-sellers, and patients typically take at least three medications, one to dilate or open blood vessels, another to slow the rapid heart beat the first drug causes as a side effect and a third to treat the fluid retention caused by either of the first two. In many cases, blood pressure remains high despite these drugs, and in some cases, the drugs have actually caused heart attacks. Despite risks and failure of these drugs, many physicians tell their patients to stay on them because they are the "approved treatment" and therefore the doctor's defense in case of lawsuits.

Add to this a lack of agreement on a definition of high blood pressure (what one physician considers high another may regard as normal, depending on the patient's age and history) and the pressure-raising anxiety many patients experience in a doctor's office ("white coat" blood pressure is a temporary, stress-induced spiking of pressure), and, according to many experts, you have an alarming number of "border-line" patients on medication that is not only unnecessary but potentially harmful.

Even when they aren't fatal, most hypertension drugs cause impotence in men and other side effects in both men and women. Diuretics can cause dizziness, depression, headaches and mineral imbalances, and they can cause cholesterol levels to rise.

Beta-blockers, another type of blood pressure drug, have even more dangerous side effects, ranging from possible depression, hallucination and insomnia to liver and kidney damage. Beta-blockers are especially dangerous to smokers and those with respiratory problems, including hay fever allergies.

In a recent University of Washington study of 2,600 patients with high blood pressure, Professor Bruce Psaty reported that the risk of a heart attack increased up to 60 percent in patients taking calcium channel blockers, another widely used hypertension medication.

In a survey published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, less than half of the patients surveyed reported that blood pressure medication had improved their lives and 98 percent of their friends and relatives reported that the patients' quality of life had deteriorated. According to long-term clinical studies published in 1985 by the *American Journal of Cardiology* and the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, people who do not take medication fare better over time than those who do.

Weighing the risks, outcomes and alternatives, a growing number of scientists, physicians and patients are considering other approaches.

Preventing Heart Disease

When it comes to heart disease, the best outcome is prevention never getting it in the first place. Second-best is reversing heart disease in its early stages, before its symptoms cause problems, which can be done with changes in diet (plus herbs and supplements), exercise and lifestyle.

It's more difficult, but still possible, to reverse and

even cure heart disease after it has caused serious problems and invasive measures have been taken, including medical procedures such as drugs and surgery.

Here are some effective strategies.

Nutrition

In 1893, Weston Price began half a century of medical anthropological research. Price visited and studied cultures in which people eating a "modern" diet lived near those who ate only traditional foods in locations as varied as remote parts of Canada, the United States, Australia, eastern and central Africa, the South Pacific, alpine valleys in Switzerland, the Outer Hebrides, New Zealand and Peru. Wherever possible, he studied skeletal remains of past generations as well.

Price found whole cultures that had no tooth decay, heart disease, cancer, tuberculosis, arthritis, rheumatism, diabetes or other chronic ailments. Yet when these same natives adopted the white flour, white sugar, refined salt and oils of modern civilization, their health decayed along with their teeth.

The native people who remained free of heart disease and other illnesses ate whole, unrefined, unprocessed foods, much of it raw, from a variety of sources. This is in keeping with what we know about the evolution of human digestion. Human beings are omnivores. Our bodies are designed to consume and digest just about everything: a variety of seeds, nuts, fruits, vegetables, all kinds of animals and eggs; in short, anything and everything that's edible.

Most Americans, on the other hand, eat the same

things every day. We may think we're eating a variety of foods but in most cases it's just different combinations of refined wheat, eggs, milk, potatoes and beef. A breakfast of eggs, sausage, milk, white toast and hash browns is the same as a lunch of hamburger, milkshake, white bun and fries or a dinner of pizza, steak and potatoes or pasta with ice cream for dessert. These meals, which are typical for adults and children across the country, are devoid of fruits and vegetables, low in enzymes, fiber and nutrients, high in fat, calories and toxins and as likely to generate modern illnesses as the white flour and white sugar that wrecked the health of Dr. Price's native tribes.

But when nutritionists, medical doctors and heart researchers discuss diet, the result is a lively and often acrimonious debate. No one can agree on all the details of the "right" diet to prevent heart disease. However, there is general agreement that a heart-healthy diet is low in fatty animal protein (meats, cheeses, ice cream), sugar and refined foods and high in plant fiber and nutrient-rich whole grains, vegetables, legumes, and fruits.

Nathan Pritikin was one of the first to make a low-fat diet popular. In 1955, when Pritikin was diagnosed with severe heart disease, he discovered that his doctors knew nothing about its cause or how to prevent its recurrence. With the help of books and other sources of information, he developed his own solution to the problem: a diet extremely low in fat. Nathan Pritikin proved how well the therapy worked when he died years later after developing cancer. His autopsy showed arteries clean as an infant's.

Dean Ornish prescribed a diet very much like Pritikin's in his famous clinical trial, the first to prove in

a medical setting that heart disease can be reversed with diet and lifestyle changes alone.

Essential Fatty Acids

Some argue that the extremely low-fat diet advocated by Pritikin and Ornish is itself unhealthy. In the 1980s, Ann Louise Gittleman worked as the Pritikin Center's director of nutrition. In her book *Beyond Pritikin*, she described the symptoms of nutritional deficiency experienced by people who adhere to a strict no-fat regimen and reviewed research proving the importance of "beneficial" fats in the diet. To Nathan Pritikin, there was no such thing as a beneficial fat, but some cultures, such as American Eskimos, have diets very high in fat without high rates of heart disease.

In the last few years, the abbreviations EFA (essential fatty acids), GLA (gamma linolenic acid), EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahex-aenoic acid) have become as widely used as the omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids they describe.

Omega-3 oils derived from fish and marine life and omega-6 oils from unrefined plant sources form the membrane that surrounds every cell in the body and are the source of prostaglandins, which regulate the entire body. A 1986 study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* indicated that oils such as olive and peanut oil are as effective in lowering cholesterol levels as a low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet. A case in point: the Greek island of Crete has the world's highest consumption of olive oil and the lowest rate of heart disease.

"Believe it or not," wrote Gittleman, "almost 80

million Americans are too fat and yet fat-deficient." That's because we eat too much saturated fat and other damaging fats and too little of the "good" fats. According to the research Gittleman cited, the benefits of essential fats include easy weight loss, lower serum cholesterol and triglycerides, reduced risk of heart attack, a stronger immune system and lower rates of cancer, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and other common ailments. A heart-friendly diet includes regular servings of cold-water fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines and or unrefined vegetable oils, such as flaxseed oil, olive oil, evening primrose oil and borage seed oil, all of which are important sources of essential fatty acids.

David G. Williams, M.D., recommends olive and flaxseed oils for salads, canola (rapeseed) oil for baking and extra virgin olive oil for cooking. The oils to avoid are those that have been heated with solvents, degummed, bleached, deodorized or hydrogenated in other words, most popular supermarket brands of vegetable oil and all vegetable shortenings and margarines. The saturated fats found in cheese, butter and animal protein should also be kept to a bare minimum.

The Importance of Salt

In 1995, salt made headlines. As the March edition of *Prevention* magazine exclaimed, "Miracle Salt Lowers Blood Pressure!" Editor Mark Bricklin described a rock salt mined in Iceland composed of not just sodium, but also the beneficial minerals potassium and magnesium. "When older people with mild to moderate hypertension were given the min-

eral salt for six months," he wrote, "their average blood pressure reading dropped by eight points systolic and three points diastolic." This reduction, he noted, is close to what physicians expect to see with drugs.

Although the Icelandic salt is not sold in the U.S. or Canada, unprocessed rock salt, which has a similar chemical composition, is sold in health food stores and by mail; unprocessed sea salts, which contain even more minerals and trace elements, are imported from France and Mexico.

American scientists know of only one type of salt, table salt, which is a by-product of the refining process that strips valuable minerals from salt for sale to industry. But research in France and other countries demonstrates the health benefits of natural salt that has its trace minerals intact. According to biochemist Jacques de Langre, Ph.D., high blood pressure often falls to normal levels within a month of a patient's change from refined table salt to unprocessed sea salt. In fact, low-sodium diets have been shown to stress the heart and create mineral imbalances. Low-sodium diets were created in response to the problems said to be caused or exacerbated by kiln-dried, refined table salt, which include high blood pressure, fluid retention and arthritis.

For sources of unrefined rock salt and sea salt, see the Appendix.

Smoking

There is no denying that cigarettes, pipes and cigars are risk factors for heart disease. Several herbs, including the relaxing nervines mentioned later, help

reduce the craving for nicotine. For an herbal "stop smoking" program, see my book *Herbs to Help You Breathe Freely* in this series.

Nutritional Minimums

How much of each vitamin and mineral do you really need for good health? Standards set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are conservative. Orthomolecular medicine, at the opposite extreme, uses megadoses. Somewhere in between are the observations of Emanuel Cheraskin, M.D., D.M.D., who is both a medical doctor and dentist as well as professor emeritus at the University of Alabama Medical School. Dr. Cheraskin has published over 700 papers in prominent medical journals, contributed to or written 23 books and received numerous awards for his research.

For over 20 years, Cheraskin monitored 1,405 dentists and their spouses, following even the most minor symptoms of physical illness as well as diet and nutritional supplements. In addition, he conducted hundreds of double-blind, placebo-controlled studies to test his survey findings. Cheraskin tested every vitamin, mineral and trace nutrient believed necessary for human health, including some that remain controversial. His goal was to establish the ideal amount of each nutrient necessary for the "most healthy" life, based on human rather than laboratory animal testing.

In all of these studies, Cheraskin and his research team found that optimum nutrition levels averaged five to nine times greater than government recommendations. Other scientists have since verified Cher-

askin's findings and, although the FDA's recommended daily allowances have not changed, a growing number of physicians and nutritionists now base their advice on Cheraskin's supplement recommendations (see pages 75-77).

Food Sensitivities

Although few heart doctors have explored this possibility, a growing body of evidence supports the theory that heart disease is linked to food sensitivities or allergies, especially a sensitivity to gluten, which is found in wheat, oats, rye and barley. According to Ann Louise Gittleman, some patients have been able to reduce their risk of heart attack and high blood pressure simply by eliminating dairy products (a lactose intolerance is often related to gluten sensitivities) and by substituting gluten-free grains such as rice, millet, corn, quinoa, amaranth and buckwheat for wheat, oats, rye and barley.

Dehydration and High Blood Pressure

Unique among alternative therapists is F. Batmanghelidj, M.D., author of *Your Body's Many Cries for Water*. Dr. Batmanghelidj's basic premise, which has been endorsed by reputable physicians, scientists and researchers worldwide, is that many illnesses, including heart disease, are caused by dehydration. His treatment could not be simpler: Drink more water. When the body is fully hydrated, blood vessels and capillaries operate properly instead of shutting down

to retain fluids. According to Dr. Batmanghelidj, fluid retention is caused by dehydration and treating fluid retention in someone who has high blood pressure with diuretics "is wrong to the point of scientific absurdity." As he reminds us, "Water by itself is the best natural diuretic." He recommends drinking as much as possible, up to a gallon a day of plain water; tea, soda, coffee, juices and carbonated mineral waters don't count. With this therapy alone, he has successfully treated hundreds of cases of hypertension and heart disease. For a complete explanation of the link between heart disease and dehydration, read *Your Body's Many Cries for Water*.

Exercise, Oxygen and Stress Reduction

Exercise does more than keep a body in shape. Active exercise expands the lungs, increases the distribution of oxygen throughout the body, improves digestion, strengthens the heart, stimulates the lymph system to remove waste products from the body and more.

It used to be thought that exercise had to be ambitious to make a difference but research shows that cardiovascular benefits derive from as little as half an hour of active exercise twice or three times a week. Jogging isn't necessary; in fact, walking provides as many health benefits without the risk of injury. Start slowly, gradually increase time and distance, rest when tired and avoid overexertion. This incremental approach is the healthiest way to get in shape. If you drive to and from work, sit at a desk all day and watch TV all night, hard workouts on the weekend won't make up for your lack of regular

exercise. In fact, the stress of irregular, uneven exertion can cause rather than prevent heart attacks.

What matters even more than regular exercise, according to many experts, is deep breathing. In our culture, we are taught to breathe shallowly, from the top of the chest down, with our shoulders back and stomachs flat. This may look fashionable, but it's not the way babies breathe. The next time you feel angry, upset, impatient, worried, apprehensive or hurt about something, stop and check your breathing. It's probably rapid and shallow rather than slow, deep and relaxed.

The connection between emotion and breath is so powerful that it works the other way around. You may be in a calm, peaceful environment doing something you enjoy, but if your breath is fast and shallow, your body will respond to what it perceives as a warning. Your shoulders may grow tense or your stomach tight, your hands and feet may perspire and adrenaline may flow without your conscious mind noticing, and all because of an unthinking habit. These responses lead to jangled nerves and put unnecessary stress on the heart.

The correct way to breathe is slowly and deeply, relaxing the stomach and shoulders, filling the lungs from the bottom up. Some health care professionals say that deep breathing is the single most important factor in stress management and good circulatory health. You can learn how by attending a yoga class, consulting a biofeedback instructor, going to a meditation workshop or simply practicing on your own. Sit quietly and let go of all tension in your body, especially in your torso. Instead of holding your stomach in, push it out as you inhale. Start with a

slow count of four; inhale 1-2-3-4, hold your breath 1-2-3-4 and exhale 1-2-3-4. Gradually increase the length of your exhalation to a count of eight. Remind yourself to practice this slower, more complete way of breathing as you walk, drive, read or work. With practice, you will remember to breathe correctly in stressful situations, no matter what their cause, and this alone will help defuse anxiety, tension, impatience and other blood pressure-raising reactions.

For an excellent overview of the connections between heart disease and emotions, see *Heartbreak & Heart Disease* by Stephen T. Sinatra, M.D. The author, a cardiologist, considers loneliness and heartbreak serious coronary risk factors along with anger, frustration, rage and other isolating emotions, and he uses simple exercises to help patients recognize and release self-imposed stress and isolation before it kills them.

In addition to the breathing exercises, meditation, physical exercises and group therapy Dr. Sinatra prescribes, consider using essential oils to help you relax and focus your attention. Essential oils, which are distilled from leaves, blossoms and other plant parts, are sold at aromatherapy counters in herb shops, department stores, health food stores and by mail. Most people find lavender, bergamot, basil, cypress and clary sage soothing, but any fragrance you find attractive and relaxing can be effective. To help you unwind at any time, place a drop of essential oil on a cold light bulb and turn it on; the bulb's warmth will release the fragrance. Or pour boiling water over a drop of essential oil in a cup or small bowl and breathe the vapor. Dilute several drops of essential oil in a tablespoon of vodka and add it to bath water

or add your favorite essential oil to any bath product or unscented "carrier" oil such as almond oil. For use away from home, place a drop on a folded handkerchief and inhale at any time. Aromatherapy can be an important factor in stress reduction and, it's easy to find books, brochures and classes that describe its many applications.

Dick Quinn's Story

Finding the right diet, nutritional supplements, herbs, exercise program and relaxing lifestyle isn't just an "ideal" for heart disease patients. For many, it's truly a matter of life and death. As much as we might wish otherwise, there is no single herb or supplement that will correct the problems caused by too much stress, fast food and fast living. This is the painful lesson brought home to us by Dick Quinn.

After a heart attack in 1978 at age 42, Quinn underwent bypass surgery. Instead of being cured, as his surgeon had promised, he nearly died and only by chance discovered an herb that saved his life. Every day for the next 18 years, Quinn dosed himself with cayenne pepper, which he promoted around the world as the essential herb for heart patients. His story, *Left for Dead*, has entertained and informed thousands.

But Dick Quinn is not alive today. He died of congestive heart failure and a ruptured aneurysm in the fall of 1995. In the months that followed his diagnosis, Quinn threw himself into researching this disease, which threatens not only everyone who has ever had a heart attack, but everyone who has under-

gone bypass surgery or suffered from heart disease. The book *Death by Deception: Unmasking Heart Failure* was completed by his children as a tribute to Quinn's life and as an information resource for all.

As his daughter explained, Quinn made two fatal mistakes. First, he led a hectic, stressful, sedentary life fueled by fast food (he cheerfully called himself a nutritionist's nightmare) and took none of the nutritional supplements that help heal and protect the heart. His second mistake, caused in part by his fear of physicians and unwillingness to use drugs with serious side effects, was to stop taking the digitalis which was prescribed when his congestive heart failure was diagnosed.

Unfortunately, he did not seek a second opinion or look for a doctor who would work with him. "Dad's fatal error," wrote Shannon Quinn, "was not his decision to get off the drug but how he handled it." An experienced herbalist or naturopathic physician could have safely weaned him off digitalis by substituting other herbs, as is commonly done in Europe, where botanical medicines are widely prescribed by orthodox physicians.

In fact, although they were not able to repair the damage caused by his sudden discontinuation of digitalis, German botanical medicines repeatedly saved Quinn's life, and he lived another 10 months before his aortic aneurysm ruptured.

Dick Quinn's story is important because it demonstrates so clearly the importance of heart disease prevention and its alternative therapies, including the well researched use of effective botanical medicines unfamiliar to American physicians but widely used in Germany and other countries. His books are rec-

ommended reading for everyone who cares about preventing or treating heart disease.

On the Safety of Herbs

To say that herbs are controversial is to make an understatement. Warnings about their potential toxicity abound. Is the user really in danger?

Foxglove, the source of digitalis, is a fatally poisonous plant, as is belladonna, also called deadly nightshade. A single seed of the castor oil plant, which must be cold-pressed to remove toxins from the oil, can kill a child. But no one recommends that these plants be brewed as teas or that anyone ingest poisonous berries or any plant known to be toxic.

Laxative herbs, such as cascara sagrada, should be taken in small doses and for a limited time to avoid diarrhea, bowel irritation and mineral imbalances. Some "diet" teas contain laxative and diuretic herbs and, although their labels seldom say so, they should be taken for short periods only.

Ephedra, a stimulant herb used in many allergy preparations, should not be taken by those with high blood pressure. Overdoses of ephedra by people seeking a legal "high" have caused heart attacks in young users. Anyone who suffers from high blood pressure, erratic heartbeat, a racing pulse or any symptom of heart disease should avoid products containing ephedra, Ma huang (its Chinese name), pseudoephedra or ephedrine.

Unprocessed licorice root is problematic for those with heart disease because in large doses it causes fluid retention and raises blood pressure. Licorice is otherwise versatile and beneficial, repairing the adrenal glands, preventing ulcers, improving digestion and treating coughs and hoarseness. The fluid retention is caused by glycyrrhizin, a chemical in natural licorice. In Europe, licorice roots are treated to remove their glycyrrhizin content, but in the U.S. and Canada, the roots are sold untreated. You can, however, purchase deglycyrrhized licorice capsules, tinctures and other preparations in health food stores. Because of its effectiveness, deglycyrrhized licorice is beginning to appear in over-the-counter drugstore products for the treatment of heartburn and acid indigestion.

Some of the herbs described here, such as lily of the valley and European mistletoe, are seldom used by American herbalists, who consider them dangerous. Yet these same plants are widely used in Europe, where they are considered safe, effective cardiac tonics. American warnings are usually based on theoretical evidence and an absence of clinical experience, while European safety reports are based on centuries of widespread use in humans. The greatest danger for heart patients who want to experiment with herbs comes not from plants but from the effects of medications they already take for high blood pressure or heart disease. Replacing prescription drugs with herbs is a common practice in Germany and other countries, but it requires the close attention and the expertise of an experienced healthcare professional.

Because herbs cannot be patented, there is no economic incentive for their testing in the United States,

so little meaningful research is conducted here. Yet federal regulations require that any herb or food for which a therapeutic claim is made be classified a drug and that any drug be proven safe and effective under FDA supervision (at an estimated cost of \$100 million) before any medical information can be put on its label. "It is impossible to deny the need in the United States today for a truly rational system to promote the availability and the rational use of phytomedicinals [plant drugs]," wrote Varro E. Tyler, Ph.D., Sc.D., Lilly Distinguished Professor of Pharmacognosy at the Purdue University School of Pharmacy and Pharmacal Sciences, in his book *Herbs of Choice: The Therapeutic Use of Phytomedicinals*. "Unfortunately, under the present restrictions imposed on herbs and herbal labeling in this country, the means of properly utilizing this potentially helpful type of over-the-counter medicament is denied the consumer."

Tyler proposed several changes in federal policy (described by him as "a regulatory Tower of Babel"), including adopting the German system of phytomedicinal evaluation, citing "that advanced country's excellent experience" and "a nearly total absence of supporting data of American origin." In 1978, Germany established Commission E to evaluate the safety and efficacy of 1,400 herbal drugs made from nearly 700 plant species, using results obtained from clinical trials, collections of single cases and scientifically documented medical experience. "The findings of the German Commission E on herb safety and efficacy constitute the most accurate body of scientific knowledge on that subject available in the world today," wrote Tyler. The com-

mission's reports are accepted by scientists everywhere as proof of a plant's safety and effectiveness, except at the FDA.

Some confusion in the U.S. stems from the FDA's "GRAS" or "Generally Recognized as Safe" list, which contains about 200 herbs commonly used as extracts, flavorings, oils and seasonings. An additional 200 herbs in common use do not appear on the list, such as burdock, flaxseed, gotu kola and skullcap, all of which are recommended for heart patients in this book. Such herbs are not necessarily unsafe; they are simply unlisted.

The Herb Research Foundation, which gathers scientific data pertaining to herb safety from sources around the world, publishes reports on the scientific research of individual plants and on the use of herbs for specific conditions, such as herbs for the heart. If you're concerned about the safety or scientific testing of any medicinal herb or if you'd like information about herbs used to treat specific conditions, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the Herb Research Foundation (see Appendix) requesting information.

Common sense and education are your best guides to herb use. Don't use an herb without learning about it first. Mislabeled herbs are rare, but a company that grows its own herbs and tests what it buys ensures product safety. The safest herbs may be those you grow yourself using organic methods or those you purchase from a reputable organic source. Unfortunately, nearly all herbs imported into the United States are fumigated, a consideration for anyone using herbs medicinally. No discussion of herb safety would be complete without a mention of this concern.

If you develop adverse symptoms after taking any

herb, such as a rash, nausea, diarrhea, numbness, rapid heart rate or difficulty breathing, trust your experience and discontinue its use. Even herbs generally recognized as safe may cause an allergic reaction in some people, and any herb taken in excess may be harmful.

Before taking herbal products if pregnant, or for the diagnosis and treatment of any physical problem, consult a health-care professional. For referral lists of physicians and other healthcare professionals knowledgeable about herbs and natural therapies, see the Appendix.

Herbs for the Heart

The following herbs have been proven to help improve circulation, reduce stress, lower blood pressure and lower cholesterol levels, but they can't repair the damage created by an unhealthy diet or sedentary lifestyle. A low-fat diet rich in whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, vitamins, mineral and trace mineral supplements, essential fatty acids; large quantities of drinking water, the use of unrefined sea salt rather than table salt and regular active exercise all improve the heart and circulatory system.

Herbalists use special terms to define the properties of medicinal plants. Antiseptic herbs, for example, kill germs and fight infection, while demulcent herbs soothe irritated tissues and vermifuge herbs help rid

the body of parasites. The following are categories of use in treating heart disease and circulatory problems.

Adaptogen herbs bring the body into balance, raising low blood pressure, lowering high blood pressure, speeding a weak, slow pulse, slowing a too-rapid pulse, and so on. Adaptogens are the most recently defined herb classification. Examples: Ginseng, Siberian ginseng and astragalus.

Alterative herbs work gradually to restore normal body functions. Often called blood cleansers, they help repair the entire body, not just specific organs; they also help neutralize acidic conditions in the body and aid in protein assimilation. Alterative herbs are usually rich in vitamins and minerals. Examples: Burdock root, red clover, stinging nettle.

Astringent herbs cause local contractions of the skin, blood vessels or other tissue; they have a drying influence. Most astringents contain tannins. Examples: Crampbark, horse chestnut.

Diuretic herbs increase the production and flow of urine and are used to treat fluid retention (edema). Unlike prescription diuretics, these herbs are gentle, have few if any side effects and do not disrupt the body's mineral balance. Examples: Parsley, parsley seed, dandelion, cornsilk.

Nervine herbs calm and soothe the nerves, reducing tension and anxiety. Examples: Chamomile, oatstraw, kava kava, passionflower, skullcap, valerian.

Rubefacient herbs stimulate capillary dilation and action, causing skin redness and drawing blood from deeper tissues and organs. For this purpose, these herbs are applied externally. Examples: Cayenne, ginger, mustard.

Stimulant herbs increase the activity or efficiency of an organ or system, such as digestion and circula-

tion. Examples: Cayenne, ginger, mustard, prickly ash bark, rosemary.

Tonic herbs restore and strengthen the entire system or specific organs, restoring normal tone. Heart tonic herbs include cayenne, hawthorn berry and motherwort.

Herbal Preparations

There are many ways to take herbs: as fresh plants in salads; fresh or dried in cooking; fresh or dried in teas; dried herbs in capsules or tablets; and fresh or dried herbs in syrups, lozenges and tinctures not to mention their external applications, such as compresses, poultices, washes and steam inhalations.

For best results, use herbs that were grown organically or wildcrafted, then dried at low temperature to maintain their flavor, color, essential oils and other properties. See the Appendix for a list of herbal tea companies that specialize in high-quality medicinal herbs.

If you are new to herbal medicine, remember that the recipes given here and in herbal reference books are flexible and forgiving. If you can't obtain an ingredient, ask an herbalist to suggest an appropriate substitute. Quantities are flexible, too. As you gain experience, you will be able to develop your own recipes. As you do so, be sure to refer to two or three different herbal references for information about each

plant so that you have a clear understanding of its benefits, potential side effects and special requirements.

Teas

To brew a tea of fresh or dried leaves or blossoms, use 1 to 2 tsp. dry herb or 1 to 2 Tbsp. fresh herb per cup of water. Bring the water to a boil, pour it over the herbs, cover the teapot or container with a lid and let it stand undisturbed for 10 minutes. This type of tea is called an *infusion*.

Example: For a tea blend to improve capillary circulation, combine 3 parts rosemary with 3 parts gotu kola leaf and 1 part fresh grated ginger root. All three plants are mild circulatory stimulants. As in all recipes of this nature, your "parts" can be teaspoons, tablespoons, cups or any other unit of volume. Blend the ingredients well. To make 1 quart of tea, place 4 tsp. of the blend in a large teapot or jar, add 4 cups boiling water, cover and let stand 10 to 15 minutes before straining. Drink 3 to 4 cups daily. These proportions (1 tsp. tea per cup of water) make a *beverage* strength tea. For a *medicinal* strength tea, recommended for acute conditions or for the more rapid healing of chronic conditions, use up to 1 Tbsp. herbs per cup of water and let the tea steep longer.

Some recipes call for a *cold infusion*. To brew this type of tea, soak fresh or dried herbs in a measured amount of cold water for 10 hours or overnight, stirring occasionally, then strain and gently heat until warm. Cold infusions can be made with leaves, flowers, roots, seeds and bark. Be sure to cut, chop,

shred or grind any hard or tough plant material before soaking.

To brew a *decoction*, recommended for most roots, bark or hard, woody material, use the quantities given above and place the herbs and cold water in a stainless steel pan, cover and heat to the boiling point. Lower the heat, simmer the tea for 10 to 15 minutes, then remove from heat and let stand another 5 minutes before straining and serving.

Example: To brew a mild circulatory tonic with a diuretic effect, mix equal parts of prickly ash bark, dandelion root and powdered ginger, combine 2 cups cold water with 1 to 2 Tbsp. herbs and proceed as above. The bark of the prickly ash tree is a mild circulatory stimulant that appears in many teas and tonics for the heart. Dandelion root, a diuretic herb, helps rid the body of excess fluids. Dried ginger root, a mild stimulant, should be simmered for best results, although powdered ginger can be used in infusions with good results and fresh grated ginger works very well in infusions.

Combined infusion/decoction. To make a tea that contains both flowers and barks or both leaves and roots, start by simmering the ingredients that should be decocted (most roots, seeds and barks), then after 10 to 15 minutes, remove from heat, add the ingredients that should be infused (most leaves, stems and blossoms), cover and let stand an additional 10 minutes.

Example: For improved circulation, especially if the hands and feet are cold, combine 3 parts prickly ash bark with 1 part dried chopped or powdered ginger. In a separate container, combine 3 parts hawthorn berry with 2 parts gotu kola leaf. For each cup

of tea, use 1 level tsp. of each blend. To brew a pint of tea, combine 2 cups cold water with 2 tsp. of the prickly ash bark/ginger blend, heat to boiling and simmer, covered, for 10 minutes. Remove from heat, add 2 tsp. of the hawthorn berry/gotu kola blend, replace the cover and let stand an additional 10 minutes. Strain and serve. Drink at least 2 cups per day.

If you purchase or make a tea containing both types of ingredients, use 1 tsp. of the dry blend per cup and make a beverage-strength decoction, remove the pan from heat and add the same amount again, then cover and let stand 10 minutes. In this way, half the ingredients are properly decocted and half are properly infused.

Medicinal herbs can be sweetened with honey to improve their taste or you can add flavors such as black cherry concentrate, molasses, fresh ginger or a pinch of stevia, the sweet herb widely used as a sugar substitute. Most herbalists recommend taking medicinal teas straight, with no added flavors or sweeteners, but they usually take some getting used to.

Tinctures

To make a tincture, which is a concentrated alcohol extract, fill a glass jar 1/3 to 1/2 full with fresh or dried herbs that you have cut or shredded into small pieces. Cover the herbs with 80-proof or higher proof vodka, rum, brandy or grain alcohol, with a few inches of alcohol above the plant matter. Some recipes call for 1 part plant matter to 4 parts alcohol, but using less alcohol or more plant material results in a more concentrated, medicinal tincture. Cover the jar tightly

and place it in a warm location. Check it every day or two, shaking it or briefly turning the jar upside down. As dried herbs absorb the liquid, add more alcohol. Let the tincture stand for three or four weeks before filtering. Some herbalists recommend straining and bottling tinctures at the full moon. There is no specific deadline; a tincture left for two months will be more potent than one left for two weeks. Strain the tincture through cheesecloth or muslin, pressing out as much liquid as possible before discarding the spent plant material. Alcohol tinctures have an indefinite shelf life. Stores in amber glass jars away from heat and light, they last for decades.

Example: To make a powerful, gentle tonic for the heart, use fresh or dried hawthorn berries and/or hawthorn leaves and blossoms, cover them with brandy or vodka and proceed as above.

For a more concentrated tincture, pour your filtered tincture into a jar containing new plant material and repeat the process. Small quantities of this "double strength" tincture will have a powerful medicinal effect, and you can use half the recommended dosage for the same results.

There is much confusion about tincture dosage, a misunderstanding that herbalist Rosemary Gladstar attributes to the caution of small companies marketing tinctures in the 1960s. "The only similar products were homeopathic preparations," she explains, "and their doses are measured in drops. Herbal tinctures are entirely different, and they should be taken by the half-teaspoon, teaspoon or tablespoon, not by the drop." Anyone buying, making or taking herbal tinctures should know that disappointing results may be caused not by a tincture's herbal ingredients but

rather by doses that are entirely too small. A few herbs should be taken in small doses, but most of the tinctures mentioned here are safe and effective in larger doses. Tinctures can be taken straight or diluted in tea, water or fruit juice.

One way to reduce the alcohol content of tinctures, if desired, is to cover the tincture with boiling water and let it stand for several minutes before drinking. This widely used method causes much, though not all, of the alcohol to evaporate.

If you prefer not to use alcohol in tincture making, substitute vegetable glycerine or mix glycerine with alcohol to reduce the alcohol content. Glycerine does not dissolve all of the medicinal constituents that alcohol extracts, but it is widely used in tinctures, especially for children. Glycerine adds a sweet taste and syrupy texture to tinctures. Cider vinegar can be used to make no-alcohol tinctures, though their shelf life (about one year when stored in well sealed containers away from heat and light) is shorter than glycerine or alcohol tinctures, and vinegar does not dissolve as many substances within the herbs as either glycerine or alcohol.

Herbal Wines

Another type of tincture is the herbal wine, a red or white wine in which fresh or dried herbs are soaked for a week or more.

Herbal wines are popular in Europe. In their book, *The Family Herbal*, Barbara and Peter Theiss describe rosemary wine, which they prepare in their pharmacy in Germany, where it is a favorite among

older customers. "A small glass every morning and evening has a strengthening effect on the blood vessels and acts as a general tonic," they write. "If you ever have the occasion to visit an elderly friend who is just recovering from a difficult health problem, this is the tonic to bring them!"

Example: The following recipe is adapted from the German original. Combine 1 part each dried ginger root, raisins, cinnamon bark, St. John's wort blossoms, yarrow flowers, comfrey root, oats and horsetail. To 1/4 cup of this mixture, add 1/2 cup rosemary leaves and 1/4 cup hawthorn berries and/or leaves. Place the herbs (1 cup altogether) in a half-gallon (2 quart) glass jar and fill to the top with a good quality white wine. Seal the jar with a tight-fitting lid and keep it in a warm dark place for 10 days to 2 weeks, shaking the jar daily. Strain the liquid and store it in a tightly sealed dark glass bottle. Drink 1/4 cup (4 tablespoons) morning and night.

Nearly any tincture recipe can be adapted to make an herbal wine. Hawthorn berries alone would make an effective heart tonic wine.

Capsules

Herbal capsules are widely sold and, if you need a special blend, some of the mail order herb companies prepare and encapsulate custom orders for a nominal fee. Or you can put your own herbs into capsules. For best results, leave dried herbs whole or in large pieces until needed to preserve their essential oils and medicinal properties. Herbs should be stored away from heat and light in well-sealed glass con-

tainers for maximum shelf life. When ready to use, crush or break them, then grind in a blender or coffee grinder until they are powdered. To reduce exposure to herb dust, which can irritate nasal passages, wear a pollen mask. Two-part gelatin capsules, including vegetable gelatin capsules for vegetarians, are sold in health food stores and herb catalogs. They come in three sizes. Many herbal companies sell mechanical capping devices that hold several capsules in place for faster and easier filling.

Example: To make a nutritional tonic for the heart, combine equal parts dried hawthorn berries, motherwort, rosemary leaves, kelp and cayenne pepper. Handle cayenne pepper with care; it's a good idea to wear latex gloves and a pollen mask whenever you work with hot peppers, and remember not to touch your eyes. In *The Scientific Validation of Herbal Medicine*, Daniel Mowrey, Ph.D., suggested combining these herbs and placing them in capsules, then taking 2 to 4 capsules daily as a tonic in long-term health programs. For more information on Mowrey's heart support programs, see page 62.

Dosages and Product Quality

Most of the herbs recommended here are safe to take in teas, tinctures, syrups, capsules, tablets or lozenges several times daily for several days or weeks at a time. However, some herbs should be taken in small amounts or for short periods only, and health concerns have been raised about some plants. See individual descriptions for safety information and precautions.

As noted, the tincture doses that appear on the labels

of dropper bottles sold in health food stores, usually measured in drops, are insufficient for most acute conditions in adult humans. Also, many commercially prepared tinctures are weaker and less concentrated than what you can make at home, either because the proportion of alcohol to herbs is higher, creating a more dilute solution, because the tinctures are made quickly, allowing insufficient time for complete extraction, or because the quality of the raw materials is inferior.

Because concentration and quality vary among tinctures, just as the people who take them vary in size, weight and physical condition, it is impossible to specify a single dosage for best results. If you don't notice improvement after taking a tincture as directed, you probably need more. If you experience adverse side effects, you probably need less or should discontinue the product altogether.

If you purchase herbs in capsules, buy them from a retailer whose stock rotates quickly or who powders herbs for capsules as needed. Powdered herbs lose their potency when exposed to heat, light or humidity.

As you become familiar with herbs, experiment with small doses of single herbs in tea, tinctures or capsules before taking therapeutic doses such as several cups of medicinal-strength tea, a dozen capsules a day or a teaspoon of tincture three times daily. If you are allergic to an herb or have any adverse reaction to it, substitute something else.

Poultices and Plasters

A *poultice* is a wet herbal pack applied directly to an inflamed, irritated, swollen, infected or injured part of

the body. While poultices are often made of fresh mashed herbs, they can be made of the residue left after brewing tea. Poultices are usually applied cool rather than hot. Some herbalists recommend spreading a thin layer of olive oil or castor oil on the skin before applying the plant material. Use whatever will hold the poultice in place for several hours: bandages, plastic wrap, cheesecloth, muslin, etc. An elastic elbow brace or knee bandage can hold a poultice in place on arms or lower legs. A layer of plastic over the poultice helps prevent fabric stains.

A *plaster* is a dry poultice made by spreading dry powdered herbs, or a thick paste made by adding a small amount of water over cotton or muslin fabric. Additional fabric is spread over the skin to protect it, as most of the herbs used for plasters, such as mustard or cayenne, can be irritating to the skin. The plaster is held in place for several minutes, then lifted so the skin can be checked, and replaced if the skin isn't irritated. Plasters increase circulation and help clear congestion.

Although these therapies have little direct application to heart disease, they are important for other reasons. People with high blood pressure, a rapid pulse, irregular heartbeat or congestive heart failure should avoid ephedra (Ma huang), ephedrine and pseudoephedrine products, which are widely sold as decongestants for colds, flu and hay fever. The traditional mustard plaster, which does not have ephedra's side effects, relieves chest congestion and has been known to chase colds away overnight. Poultices, especially those made of comfrey leaf and root, help heal bed sores, leg ulcers and other external symptoms of insufficient circulation. Whenever an effective herbal therapy can be used in place of a prescription drug that

may cause complications, especially in combination with other medications, it is worth trying.

Compresses and Fomentations

A *compress* is an application of cold herbal tea on a saturated towel, diaper or thick cloth. Use medicinal-strength infusions or decoctions for this purpose. The herb arnica, a mild heart stimulant, is not recommended for internal use because of its potential side effects, but strong arnica tea makes an effective compress for the heart when applied externally.

To use arnica tea this way, soak a cloth in cold tea and wring it just until it stops dripping. The compress should be wet enough to stay cold for several minutes. When it warms to body temperature, soak it again, adding ice as needed to keep the tea cold. Repeat until the treatment has lasted 15 to 20 minutes. Dry the skin gently.

A *fomentation* is a hot compress. Fomentations increase circulation and help clear respiratory congestion. Wearing rubber gloves, saturate a thick cloth with strong, hot, strained tea; wring it gently, then unfold it to let it cool slightly. You don't want it to burn or scald, but for best results it must be as hot as possible. Test the temperature against your inner arm. When it's hot but not too hot, apply it to the desired area and cover it with a thick folded towel to retain heat. Repeat after 5 or 10 minutes. For best results, continue for 15 to 30 minutes. Obviously, this and any other treatment should be stopped if the person becomes uncomfortable or if the skin becomes irritated.

Ginger fomentations placed over the kidneys are a

traditional therapy for activating the kidneys to relieve fluid retention.

An effective treatment for circulatory problems is to alternate between cold compresses and hot fomentations. For example, in the treatment of varicose veins, apply alternating cold compresses and hot fomentations of arnica tea.

Oil Infusions and Salves

To make an oil infusion, such as an herbal massage oil to help calm the nerves or increase circulation, you can use the stove, an oven or the sun.

Lavender is one of the most effective plants to use for relaxation, while rosemary and cayenne are stimulating herbs that help increase blood circulation.

Cover the appropriate fresh or dried plant material with olive oil and heat it gently in the top of a double boiler above simmering water or in a closed glass jar set on a rack in a pan of simmering water for an hour or longer. If using dry herbs, additional oil may be needed as the plant matter absorbs it. Use enough oil to cover the herbs well but not so much that your result is weak and ineffective. Start with 2 cups oil to 1/2 cup dried herbs and adjust the proportions as desired. Fresh herbs will absorb less liquid, so simply cover them with oil.

Instead of olive oil, almond, hazelnut, jojoba, grapeseed, canola, peach kernel, apricot kernel, sesame or any other light, natural oil can be substituted, but olive oil is the traditional choice. Be sure you like the smell of an oil, which should be of good quality.

To make a *solar infusion*, which is my favorite

method, let fresh plant material wilt slightly to reduce its water content, loosely pack a clear jar with fresh herbs (fill the jar one-quarter full if using dried herbs) and then fill it to the top with oil. Clean the top of the jar well so that no oil or plant material interferes with a tight seal when you put the lid on and leave the jar outside in the sun for several weeks or months.

When ready to use, strain through cheesecloth and add a few drops of tea tree oil or grapefruit seed extract as a disinfecting preservative. Store in amber glass bottles; label with ingredients and date of preparation. Stored correctly, oils can last for years, though most herbalists prefer to make them annually for maximum freshness. Note that these oils are for external use only. Discard any oil that becomes rancid.

To turn any oil into a salve, simply add 1/2 to 1 ounce of beeswax per cup, depending on the consistency you desire. Test the salve by placing a teaspoon of oil in the freezer for a minute. If it's too thick, add more oil; if it's too soft, add more beeswax. Add several drops of tea tree oil, vitamin E or grapefruit seed extract as a preservative; pour into sterile jars or tins; seal, label and store away from heat and light.

Hydrotherapy

Hydrotherapy is a healing art in itself. A quart of very strong oatstraw, peppermint, chamomile, comfrey, lavender, ginger or lemon balm tea added to your bath is both an herbal and aromatherapy treatment. An effective therapy for muscle soreness and arthritis is to add salt as well as herbal teas to your

bath. For a luxurious spa treatment, look for bath salts from the Dead Sea or add a little seaweed to your salt bath. Try combining any quantity of table or sea salt, epsom salts (magnesium sulfate) from the drugstore or supermarket, baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) and/or borax, the laundry product. Dissolve at least four cups of this blend in hot water as you fill the tub. Adjust the temperature so it's comfortably warm; then, just before you climb in, add your quart of herbal tea.

Salt stimulates the skin, increases circulation, removes dead cells and increases nerve activity. For a salt scrub, add just enough water to sponge, scoop up a handful and rub as briskly as you can without irritating the skin, massaging feet, ankles, knees, hands, arms, back, chest and abdomen. Fill the tub with warm water and relax, rinsing the salt off. For an invigorating skin softening treatment, mix salt with massage oil instead of water and proceed as above. The oil will be slippery, so place a towel under your feet before standing.

Footbaths, sitz baths and even hand baths continue the hydrotherapy theme. All circulatory conditions respond well to alternating immersions in hot and cold water, and this is true for fomentations and compresses as well as baths. As *Humbart Santillo* wrote in *Natural Healing with Herbs*, a traditional therapy for angina pectoris is to take warm arm baths, immersing only the arms in warm or hot water for several minutes, or soak towels in hot apple cider vinegar and wrap the arms. "This is an old folk remedy that has been successful in Europe," he wrote. It relaxes the nervous system and relieves pain.

The Heart-Friendly Herbal Pharmacy

Apple Pectin

The pectin found in citrus fruits, apples, potatoes, green beans and strawberries, most familiar to cooks as the jelling agent that turns fruits into jams and jellies, has been shown to reduce cholesterol levels in laboratory animals and humans. In one three-week study, patients took 15 grams of apple pectin daily and their plasma cholesterol fell 13 percent or more. A 10-year study of nearly 4,000 men with high blood cholesterol levels tested the drug cholestyramine, which reduced cholesterol an average of 13.4 percent, a result almost identical to the effects of apple pectin. The drug, which had to be taken six times per day, cost \$150 a month and had such severe side effects that 27 percent of the volunteers dropped out of the study. Pectin has no adverse side effects and is inexpensive.

Pectin is a mucilaginous fiber, and mucilaginous fibers have been shown to reduce cholesterol levels more effectively than "roughage" fibers such as wheat bran. Pectin is especially effective at preventing the body's absorption of dietary cholesterol, making it the herb of choice for those who consume meat, eggs and dairy products. Among pectin's beneficial side effects are its ability to prevent gallstones, reduce blood sugar imbalances in diabetics and gen-

tly excrete lead, mercury and other toxins from the body. Stir 1 tsp. to 1 Tbsp. powdered pectin into juice once or twice a day (drink it quickly before it settles) and follow with a glass of plain water.

Astragalus (Astragalus Membranaceous)

One of the most popular Chinese herbs, astragalus root is revered as a powerful immune system strengthener. Traditionally used to treat anxiety and fatigue, astragalus has general tonic properties; that is, it heals, repairs and supports the entire body, increasing stamina and building resistance to disease and infection. Its diuretic action make it a specific for the kidneys and urinary tract; it is also recommended for conditions relating to the spleen, lungs and blood. In lab tests, astragalus has been shown to kill viruses, destroy cancer cells and stimulate interferon production.

In China, Coxsackie B viral myocarditis is a common ailment caused by the Coxsackie B virus. Although the illness is unheard of in America, it is slowly spreading around the world, thanks to jet travel and modern transportation. No drug is known to prevent or treat this fatal virus, but in 1987, Chinese researchers proved that astragalus extracts destroyed the virus before it could damage heart cells. In follow-up experiments, researchers found that astragalus could reduce cardiac cell damage and changes in the electrical activity of heart cells. Within hours of being treated with astragalus, infected and damaged heart cells returned to their regular rhythms, beat more strongly and began repairing the virus-caused cellular damage. As a side effect, some of the people treated with astragalus were "virtually free" from attacks of the common cold and

most had greatly reduced infections from contagious viruses.

Astragalus root can be brewed as a decoction (simmer 1 Tbsp. dried root in 2 cups water for 10 to 15 minutes, let stand 5 minutes, strain and serve; drink 1 or 2 cups daily), added to rice, soups or stews during cooking or sauteed in honey to create a medicinal syrup. Astragalus is an excellent herb to take during outbreaks of colds and flu, while training for athletic events and in times of stress or overwork.

No dangerous side effects have been reported, but some astragalus users have experienced mild diarrhea or abdominal bloating. Reducing the dosage eliminates these symptoms. A daily pint (2 cups) of astragalus tea, 2 to 4 astragalus capsules or a tablespoon of astragalus tincture has a beneficial tonic effect on the heart and circulatory system as well as every other system in the body.

Bilberry (Vaccinium Myrtillus)

The bilberry, a shrubby perennial plant that grows in the northeast United States and Europe, is commonly known as the wild blueberry, dyeberry, huckleberry, hurtleberry, whinberry, whortleberry or wineberry. Bilberry has become popular in recent years because of its ability to repair and improve the capillaries. When impaired, these fragile blood vessels can be linked to high blood pressure, atherosclerosis, diabetes, stroke, heart attack or blindness caused by damage to the retina. Less dramatic but still serious are the links between weak capillaries and bruising, varicose veins, "spider" veins, susceptibility to cold temperatures, poor night vision and numbness in the legs and feet.

Bilberries contain anthocyanins, flavonoid com-

pounds that color the berries' juice and skin. These compounds are antioxidants, which protect cells from the damage caused by free radicals. Free radicals are fragments of chemicals that can damage membranes and destroy cells, but capillaries protected by bilberry's flavonoids are able to stretch, increasing blood flow and oxygenation. The plant's leaves have a similar effect and are often used in place of the berries.

Research has shown that bilberry extracts not only strengthen capillaries and prevent bruising and hemorrhage, they reduce calcium plaque deposits in blood vessels, commonly called hardening of the arteries or atherosclerosis. Because bilberry thins the blood, it protects the circulatory system against clotting. In fact, bilberry strengthens the capillaries so effectively that in Europe it is used to prevent bleeding during and after surgery. Patients are treated for 10 days prior to surgery as a preventive measure.

In America, bilberry is best known for its ability to protect the eyes. During World War II, British pilots ate bilberry preserves to improve their eyesight, especially their night vision. Research has confirmed bilberry's effectiveness in this regard; not only does it reduce the amount of time the eye needs to adapt to darkness after exposure to bright light, it can significantly improve vision, probably because it improves blood circulation within the eye.

Black Cohosh (Cimicifuga Racemosa)

A useful antispasmodic, black cohosh helps treat all nervous conditions, cramps and pains. This herb should be taken in small doses (up to 3 cups decoction made with 1/2 to 1 tsp. dried root per cup of water, or no more than 1 tsp. tincture taken 3 times

per day) because large quantities can cause side effects. It is often combined with other relaxing herbs in a reduced dosage that does not interfere with its effectiveness.

Black cohosh is often called a female tonic because it has so many beneficial effects on menstruation, menopause and childbirth, but it is appropriate in heart tonics for men as well. This herb should not be taken during the early months of pregnancy.

Burdock Root (Arctium Lappa)

Called gobo in Japan, where it is a common vegetable sold in markets and sushi bars, burdock root is a blood-cleansing herb and general tonic that promotes kidney function and helps clear the blood of harmful acids. In France, fresh burdock root is used to lower blood sugar and is prescribed for diabetics. Erroneous reports of toxicity in burdock stem from a single instance in which burdock root was contaminated with belladonna, which contains the poisonous compound atropine. The incident was never repeated, but some medical authorities still refer to the atropine content of burdock root.

Burdock root should be brewed as a decoction (simmer 1 Tbsp. dried root in 2 cups water for 10 to 15 minutes), and it is often combined with dandelion root, which has similar properties, and other herbs.

Butcher's Broom Rhizome (Ruscus Aculeatus)

A Mediterranean evergreen that resembles its close relative, the asparagus, butcher's broom has leathery-looking leaves that terminate in a sharp spine. Its

Latin name *aculeatus* means thorny or spiny. The fleshy rootstock is the part used medicinally.

Widely prescribed in Europe to relieve circulatory disorders, butcher's broom has both vasoconstrictive (blood vessel narrowing) and anti-inflammatory properties. Butcher's broom preparations are especially popular for improving circulation in the legs ("heavy legs") and for treating hemorrhoids, phlebitis, post-thrombotic syndrome, chilblains, varicose veins and varicose ulcers. As Daniel Mowrey reported in *Herbal Tonic Therapies*, "Dramatic improvement in both subjective and objective measures is often observed within days."

Toxicity studies have shown no adverse side effects other than occasional nausea or gastritis even at high doses. European butcher's broom preparations are sold in U.S. health food stores. Follow label directions.

Cayenne or Chile Peppers (Capsicum Annuum)

Hot peppers bring the dullest dish to life, warm the mind and body and when you swallow an unusually hot specimen, choke on the fumes of a freshly cut jalapeño or, even worse, touch your eye after chopping one, they can be the most irritating vegetables on the planet. No wonder their name derives from the Greek word meaning "to bite."

How hot is hot? The capsaicin content of peppers is measured on a scale of from 0 for sweet bell peppers to 350,000 for habañero or Scotch bonnet peppers. Ten thousand heat units is mildly spicy and 50,000 units tastes hot to most American palates. Anything over 100,000 is seriously hot.

Only recently have scientists discovered how heal-

ing peppers are. Taken internally, they improve digestion, increase circulation and enhance memory. Applied externally, they speed healing, though the initial application may sting. Cayenne peppers contain more vitamin C than any fruit, and they practically define Mexican cooking.

Cayenne has received publicity in recent years thanks to the efforts of Dick Quinn, author of the book *Left for Dead*; see page 17.

If you decide to try cayenne capsules, be sure to take them with food and plenty of water, tea or juice; cayenne taken on an empty stomach with small amounts of liquid can burn for hours. However, even this side effect disappears with regular use. The general recommendation is to take 1 capsule with each meal. If you'd like to reduce or eliminate your use of prescription drugs while taking cayenne, work with a healthcare professional.

Cayenne heals ulcers, stops hemorrhaging, speeds the healing of wounds, eases congestion, improves digestion and elimination, reduces pain, warms cold hands and feet, relieves swelling in varicose veins and hemorrhoids, helps prevent colds and flu and prevents the spread of infection. Although some who suffer from rheumatism and arthritis are sensitive to members of the nightshade family (tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, tobacco and peppers), those who are not derive significant pain relief from cayenne pepper and from massage oils containing cayenne. It relieves pain so effectively that researchers at Yale University developed a chile pepper taffy for patients with painful mouth lesions resulting from cancer therapy. Cayenne pepper creams are a popular treatment for the pain of fibromyalgia.

Chamomile (Matricaria Chamomilla, Annual German Chamomile; Anthemis Noblis, Perennial Roman Chamomile)

Chamomile blossoms are a popular, highly effective calming herb used to help prevent anxiety, improve sleep, prevent gastrointestinal distress and improve digestion. Usually taken as an infused tea, chamomile is also popular in tinctures. Applied externally, chamomile helps prevent swelling and inflammation; cold chamomile tea bags are a traditional therapy for under-eye circles. The herb is widely used in skin care products.

Chamomile is most helpful to those whose heart disease is complicated by anxiety and stress. In one study, 10 of 12 patients undergoing painful cardiac catheterization fell into a deep sleep within 10 minutes of drinking chamomile tea.

To prevent anxiety-triggered spiking of blood pressure or heartbeat, brew medicinal strength chamomile tea (2 tsp. to 1 Tbsp. dried herb per cup of boiling water) and drink 2 to 4 cups during the day. Chamomile capsules and tinctures are equally helpful; take 2 capsules or 1 tsp. of tincture 3 times daily, then adjust the dosage as required. Chamomile is so well-tolerated that it can be taken as often as needed. Patients learning biofeedback techniques, deep breathing and other forms of stress management often find that chamomile alone or in combination with valerian, kava kava, passionflower or other relaxing nervine herbs speeds the relaxation response.

Cleavers (Galium Aparine)

A diuretic, blood-cleansing, anti-inflammatory tonic herb, cleavers has a special affinity for the urinary

and lymph systems. Often combined with other herbs, such as dandelion and corn silk, cleavers helps relieve fluid retention associated with high blood pressure. Brew as an infusion and drink 3 or more cups of cleavers tea daily or take 1 tsp. tincture 3 times daily.

Coleus (Coleus Forskohlii)

The root of *Coleus forskohlii*, an herb used in India's traditional Ayurvedic medicine, contains a diterpene molecule called forskolin, which causes the heart muscle to contract more strongly, helping to relieve congestive heart failure.

In a large-scale pharmacological screening of medicinal plants conducted in 1974 by the Indian Central Drug Research Institute, extracts of coleus root showed significant blood-pressure lowering and antispasmodic effects. Worldwide research continues to investigate coleus, which is prescribed for hypertension, congestive heart failure, angina, asthma, eczema and psoriasis. The dosage for *Coleus forskohlii* extract is 200 to 400 mg 3 times daily with meals. No adverse reactions to the plant have been published in the scientific literature.

Crampbark (Viburnum Opulus)

The dried bark contains antispasmodic, sedative and astringent ingredients and, as its name suggests, it is best known for releasing muscular tension and spasm. In women, this herb relieves painful menstrual cramps and helps prevent premature labor and miscarriage. In both men and women, it helps calm an irregular or rapid heartbeat and reduce the anxiety associated with high blood pressure. Brew as a de-

coction using 2 tsp. bark per cup of water; drink 3 cups of hot tea per day, or take 1 tsp. crampbark tincture 2 or 3 times daily.

Dandelion (Taraxacum Officinale)

Dandelion leaf and root are best known for their tonic, blood-cleansing, diuretic and anti-rheumatic properties. According to David Hoffmann in *The Holistic Herbal*, dandelion is such a powerful diuretic that its action compares to that of the drug furosemide, without causing that drug's loss of potassium or disrupting the body's mineral balance. In fact, unlike pharmaceutical diuretics, dandelion supplies vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. Dandelion tea (infuse the leaf, decoct the root and drink 3 or 4 cups daily), dandelion tincture (1 tsp. 3 times daily) and dandelion capsules (up to 6 or 8 per day) work well in combination with other herbs to reduce fluid retention, gently remove toxins from the body and improve digestion. In addition, eat raw dandelion greens in salads or use them like spinach in recipes.

Flaxseed, Flaxseed Oil (Linum Usitatissimum)

The oil in flaxseeds contains linoleic, linolenic and oleic acids, mucilage, protein and the glycoside linamarin. Its essential fatty acid (EFA) content has made it a popular supplement, for EFAs have been shown to be essential for good health with such diverse benefits as lowering cholesterol and impeding tumor growth.

Whole flaxseed has significant laxative properties. A teaspoon to a tablespoon of ground flaxseed can be added to breakfast cereal to help relieve constipation. Flaxseed oil can be taken alone, in capsules, in juice, mixed into cereals or over salads. Fresh flaxseed oil

is tasteless (check pressing date on the label). It must always be kept refrigerated and, although it can be added to hot foods, it should not be used as a cooking oil.

Other sources of EFAs include evening primrose oil, borage seed oil and fatty cold-water fish such as salmon and sardines.

Garlic (Allium Sativum)

Garlic has been used for thousands and thousands of years for so long, in fact, that its medicinal and culinary applications are older than our written records. This versatile plant contains 33 sulfur compounds, 17 amino acids and several minerals, including germanium, calcium, copper, iron, potassium, magnesium, selenium and zinc. In addition, it contains vitamins A, B and C.

In the 1940s the substance allicin was discovered. It is a chemically unstable, colorless liquid that provides garlic's pungent odor. For several years, allicin was believed to be the most active ingredient in garlic, accounting for its therapeutic benefits. That claim is still made by the makers of garlic supplements. However, more recent research has shown that garlic contains several ingredients that help improve health. Allicin, because it is so unstable, is difficult to preserve in any manufactured supplement, and the benefits of a high allicin supplement may not be superior to those of other brands. Of course, fresh garlic is an excellent source of not only allicin but all of garlic's compounds.

An impressive body of research documents garlic's benefits, especially with regard to heart disease and the circulatory system. The chemical ajoene, a garlic ingre-

dient, helps prevent clot formation by inhibiting platelet aggregation that leads to strokes and heart attacks.

Although garlic supplements have no adverse side effects and fresh garlic's only problems are its odor and, in large quantities, some digestive disturbance, garlic may have one significant danger. Health officials warn that homemade garlic oil, consisting of olive oil and garlic, can harbor botulism. Commercial garlic and oil preparations are now required to contain lemon juice, vinegar, tomatoes or other acidifying ingredients or to be processed at high temperatures to prevent the growth of botulism bacteria. The traditional method of letting garlic and olive oil stand in sunlight for several days is considered unsafe for internal consumption.

To avoid garlic's social disadvantage, eat fresh garlic with large quantities of chlorophyll-rich plants, such as fresh parsley, or take a breath-freshening product that works internally, such as Breath Assure.

To increase garlic's benefits, combine it with onion whenever possible. Onion has its own heart-friendly medicinal properties, including blood-thinning, blood-purifying, digestive and diuretic effects.

Ginger (Zingiber Officinale)

Rich in volatile oils, ginger is both a popular culinary spice and a medicinal plant. Classified as a stimulant, carminative and rubefacient, ginger improves circulation and digestion, relieves intestinal gas and increases blood circulation to the skin when applied externally.

Add ginger to any herbal tea for improved flavor and to enhance the tea's action. Brew fresh-cut or grated ginger as an infusion; dried or powdered ginger should be simmered as a decoction. Ginger makes a delightful tea by itself; use 1 tsp. fresh root or 1-1/2 tsp. dried

herb per cup. Drink as often as desired. Ginger capsules are sold in health food stores, where they are best known for relieving the nausea of travel sickness or pregnancy. Because it combines so well with other herbs, ginger is an important ingredient in many blends. Ginger is a gentle circulatory stimulant; it increases circulation throughout the body without causing nervousness or anxiety.

As noted on page 35, hot ginger fomentations placed over the kidneys are a traditional therapy for relieving fluid retention.

Ginkgo (Ginkgo Biloba)

Botanists tell us that the ginkgo, also known as the maidenhair tree, is the oldest tree species on earth, having survived an estimated 200 million years. Its medicinal use goes back thousands of years and it remains one of China's most popular plants.

Today's ginkgo research focuses on the plant's ability to treat asthma, toxic shock, Alzheimer's disease and various circulatory disorders. It has repeatedly been shown to increase the flow of blood through aging vessels, especially in the brain. This explains its effectiveness in the treatment and prevention of problems as varied as asthma, hearing loss (cochlear deafness), stroke, heart attack, dementia, depression, tinnitus (ringing in the ears), fatigue, vision problems such as macular degeneration, high blood pressure, kidney problems, allergies, brain function impairment, memory loss, dizziness, impotence and poor circulation. Many hundreds of papers have been published in scientific and medical journals around the world reporting on laboratory tests and clinical trials examining ginkgo preparations.

Ginkgo's active constituents are present in the

leaves as they change from green to yellow in the fall. They consist of flavonoid glycosides and ginkgolides, both of which prevent inflammation and blood clotting. In most extraction processes, dried ginkgo leaves are ground and mixed with organic solvents that release their chemical compounds. The blend is heated and the process repeated several times before further refining, which results in an extract with a 24 percent concentration of flavonoids, believed by European pharmaceutical researchers to be the optimum therapeutic concentration. However, whole ginkgo leaves remain a popular ingredient in medicinal tea and tincture blends for which herbalists report good results and few side effects.

Because it interferes with blood clotting, ginkgo should not be taken by those with clotting disorders. Some users, after taking extremely large amounts, have reported restlessness, irritability, diarrhea, vomiting and nausea. The recommended dosages are considered nontoxic.

Most experts agree that ginkgo preparations have to be taken consistently for two to four months before significant results are noticed. Ginkgo leaves are often mixed with gotu kola, another memory-enhancing herb, in tea blends, tinctures and memory tonics. The medicinal constituents of ginkgo do not dissolve readily in water, which is why, unlike most leaves, they should be boiled as a decoction. To brew a memory tonic tea containing equal parts of ginkgo, gotu kola and the culinary herb rosemary, first simmer 1 tsp. ginkgo in 2 cups water for 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat, add 1 tsp. each of gotu kola and rosemary, cover and let stand an additional 10 minutes. Drink 2 to 4 cups daily.

For men, ginkgo is of special interest because it has been shown to cure impotence caused by blocked arteries. In one study, 50 patients with arterial erectile impotence were treated with 240 mg of ginkgo extract daily and all reported significantly improved erections; in another, 60 men who did not respond to injections of the erection-boosting drug papaverine took 60 mg of ginkgo extract daily and half regained potency within six months.

Ginseng (Panax Ginseng, P. Quinquefolius, Eleutherococcus Senticosus)

Ginseng, an unassuming leafy plant that's both hard to grow and expensive, is the world's most researched medicinal herb. Since the 17th century it has been the subject of thousands of books and papers, but the result of this international investigation has done little to reduce the controversy surrounding ginseng.

There are several ginseng species, but only three are widely used: *Panax ginseng*, also called Korean ginseng, *Panax quinquefolius*, or American ginseng, and *Eleutherococcus senticosus*, or Siberian ginseng. Research shows their effects are similar, though experts disagree on their potency and application. All of the ginsengs are adaptogens, a classification of herb with broad health benefits similar to a tonic. Adaptogens help boost the immune system, improve stamina and endurance, correct imbalances and reduce stress.

Ginseng has been shown to prevent the depletion of adrenal hormones, reduce cholesterol while increasing high-density lipoproteins (HDLs), reduce blood clotting, thus reducing the risk of heart attack, reduce blood sugar levels, thus helping control diabe-

tes, reduce cell damage from radiation, prevent liver damage, counteract fatigue without caffeine and improve the health of the elderly. In addition, ginseng is an antioxidant, which helps prevent cumulative cell damage leading to cancer. Its most famous reputation is as a tonic for the male reproductive system, and some say it has aphrodisiac powers. Although there is no human study to substantiate this last claim, experiments with laboratory mice showed increased mating activity in the ginseng-using group.

For every study proving the herb's efficacy, another concludes it has no effect at all. Critics have always suspected researcher bias, for or against, and poor project design for contradictory findings, but a more likely cause is the adulteration of ginseng with other herbs and inefficient preparation techniques. Because ginseng is so expensive, adulteration has always been a problem. A 1978 study of 54 commercial ginseng products showed that 60 percent contained too little of the herb to have any biological effect. In fact, 25 percent contained no ginseng at all. Another problem occurs with the use of immature roots. The active constituents of ginseng increase with the plant's age, and roots should be at least six years old before harvest. Last, most of the active constituents are in the root bark, not the pulp. Researchers who used ginseng root pulp found the herb ineffective.

Is ginseng safe? The literature indicates that ginseng should not be used by anyone suffering from asthma, emphysema, fever, cardiac arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat), hypertension (high blood pressure) or anxiety disorders. But individual responses vary, and some of these conditions, such as irregular heartbeat

and high blood pressure, have in many cases been corrected by ginseng. As noted, information about this herb is often contradictory.

Ginseng or Siberian ginseng in small amounts is probably safe for those with mild hypertension, especially when combined with relaxing herbs and a healthy diet. However, if you have serious hypertension or heart disease, consult with an experienced herbalist or physician before taking ginseng. See also *Ginseng* by Kathi Keville, another book in the Good Herb Guide series, for extensive information on ginseng's properties, safety, research and uses.

Gotu Kola (Centella Asiatica)

The round, fan-shaped leaves of gotu kola grow close to the ground in a thick green carpet. In tropical climates, it is a familiar lawn and roadside weed. Known to Indian writers centuries ago as an herb that increases longevity (it is said to be a favorite food of Indian elephants), gotu kola traveled with people from that country as they settled in the Caribbean, Hawaii and other warm climates. Now recognized as an important herb for the circulatory system, gotu kola is cultivated around the world for its medicinal benefits.

If you do not already grow gotu kola as a garden or house plant, consider doing so. Much of the gotu kola sold commercially is of poor quality, so your own plant is insurance of excellence. Fresh gotu kola has a pleasant, spicy or tangy taste in teas and salads. Gotu kola is easy to grow indoors in winter, outdoors in summer and outdoors all year in warm climates.

The name gotu kola may derive from the plant's Sinhalese name, *hingotu kola*, but this is uncertain.

Its common names include centella and Indian pennywort; its Sanskrit name is *brahmi*. It is not related to the kola nut, which contains caffeine; gotu kola does not.

Research has shown that a water extract of fresh gotu kola leaves increased the learning response of laboratory rats, and two studies of developmentally disabled children showed a significant increase in mental abilities. Gotu kola is used in memory tonics designed for students of all ages, for the elderly and for people in high-stress jobs who have to think and respond quickly. Herbalists consider gotu kola a specific for stroke victims and those recovering from head injuries that effect cerebral circulation.

During the last 20 years, scientists have studied the effects of gotu kola on not only mental function and skin disorders but heart disease, inflammatory illnesses, circulatory problems such as phlebitis, fluid retention and surgical wounds. It is said to improve sports performance and has a following among athletes.

Gotu kola's only known side effect is a skin rash in sensitive individuals. The recommended dose for tea (1 tsp. dried herb infused in 1 cup boiling water) is up to 2 cups per day. Gotu kola is often combined with other herbs.

Guggulow or Gum Guggul (Commiphor Mukul)

A tree resin widely used in Europe and its native India, guggulow helps normalize body weight and blood cholesterol levels. Research shows it to have few side effects; an estimated one percent of capsule users have an allergic reaction and should discontinue use. A mild thyroid tonic, guggulow helps balance

the metabolism, reduce obesity and prevent heart attacks.

Hawthorn Berries (Crataegus Oxyacantha)

Also called the hawmay, mayblossom, mayflower, maythorn or whitethorn, the hawthorn has nearly a thousand species in North America. Hawthorn belongs to the family Rosaceae, whose members include the rose, peach, almond, apple and strawberry. Its name comes from the sharp thorns on its twiggy branches.

The fruit, flowers and leaves of the hawthorn have been used to treat heart diseases for hundreds of years. Modern science has confirmed such use by demonstrating that hawthorn berries dilate blood vessels, allowing blood to circulate more efficiently, and lowering blood pressure. Hawthorn also improves the heart itself, acting directly on the heart muscle to help heal damage and improve the organ's operation.

Unlike prescription drugs prescribed for heart ailments, hawthorn berries appear to be safe, nontoxic and free from adverse side effects.

In 1953, scientists in Germany measured an 83 percent increase in coronary blood flow following the intravenous administration of hawthorn extract. Later research has shown that hawthorn preparations taken orally increase blood flow to the brain. A study conducted in 1984 demonstrated that hawthorn tablets reduced the pain of angina by 84 percent compared to a placebo's 37 percent reduction. Of the 29 patients involved in this study, 13 stopped taking nitroglycerine tablets altogether, while another 10 were able to reduce their intake of nitroglycerine. In 1987 another study showed hawthorn extract to be an effective pe-

ripheral vasodilator in a placebo-controlled double-blind study of older patients suffering from angina pectoris.

Among the conditions for which hawthorn preparations are recommended are irregular heartbeat, geriatric or stressed heart, hypertension, coronary insufficiency, myocardism following contagious disease, sensitivity to cardiac glycosides, cerebral circulatory disturbances, heart attack, damage to the coronary arteries and angina pectoris. Hawthorn is a mild sedative, making it useful in cases of heart disease linked to nervousness and stress. It does not lead to dependence and can be taken in large doses without harm. In fact, it is important to give a sufficiently large dose daily for at least three months and up to several years, as needed, because hawthorn's effect is not cumulative.

Hawthorn berry preparations are considered safe to use in combination with allopathic (symptom-treating) drugs, such as digitoxin, and in many cases its use allows the patient to reduce or eliminate the use of such drugs. Of course, such substitutions should be made under a physician's supervision.

In Germany, where over three dozen hawthorn-based heart medications are available, one teaspoon of hawthorn tincture on arising and another before bed is the standard recommendation. Because the taste is bitter, hawthorn can be mixed with honey, lemon, stevia or other herbs to improve its taste. In addition to its cardiovascular benefits, hawthorn berry is an excellent source of vitamin C. Hawthorn berry jams and jellies are popular wherever the plant grows wild, and the berries can be made into a fresh tincture or dried and made into a tea or tincture, as can the flowers and leaves.

To make your own hawthorn berry tincture, see the recipe on page 29. Dried hawthorn berries appear in recipes for teas and capsules on pages 27 and 32.

Horse Chestnut (Aesculus Hippocastanum)

This astringent circulatory tonic strengthens and tones the veins. Its tea, tinctures and capsules are taken for phlebitis, inflammation of veins, varicosity and hemorrhoids, and the tea is applied externally for the same conditions and for leg ulcers. Infuse 1 to 2 tsp. per cup; drink 3 times per day, or use as a lotion.

Horsetail (Equisetum Arvense)

Esteemed for centuries for its blood-staunching effect and its treatment of kidney and bladder complaints, horsetail is unusually rich in silicon, a mineral shown to protect the aorta against the development of arteriosclerosis. Horsetail is a mild diuretic that helps relieve fluid retention. The famous Austrian herbalist Maria Treben wrote, "I would advise anyone over 40 to drink 1 cup of horsetail tea every day." She recommended drinking the tea slowly, taking small sips at regular intervals throughout the day to help prevent gout, rheumatism, circulatory problems and other complaints associated with aging. Brew as an infusion.

Kava Kava (Piper Methysticum)

One nervine with a special affinity for today's stressed adults is kava kava, a Polynesian herb with a colorful history that calms the nerves without dulling the mind. Kava kava was traditionally prepared not as a tea but as a fermented beverage.

Polynesian tribes no longer ferment their kava

kava. Instead, they simply crush the roots, mix them with water or coconut milk and filter the liquid. The resulting beverage has a stimulating, tonic effect without being addictive.

Safety is a concern in any discussion of kava kava, for some herbal references dismiss the plant as potentially habit-forming, deservedly notorious and of unproven safety. However, in a report prepared for the *Townsend Letter for Doctors*, herbalist Kerry Bone reviewed the herb's pharmacology and concluded,

Kava is a safe stabilizing treatment for anxiety, which at normal therapeutic doses does not dampen alertness or interact with mild alcohol consumption. Unlike the benzodiazepine drugs, there is no risk of tolerance or addiction with kava. Its slight antidepressant activity makes it particularly suitable for the treatment of anxiety associated with minor forms of depression. Kava is one of the few safe skeletal muscle relaxants known in the plant kingdom. This property makes it useful for the treatment of nervous tension and conditions associated with skeletal muscle spasm and tension, such as headaches due to neck tension. Although pharmacological tests indicate that kava is not a sedative in the same sense as the antipsychotic and benzodiazepine drugs, it is an excellent hypnotic for the treatment of mild insomnia.

In a double-blind, placebo-controlled study of 58 patients whose anxiety was not caused by psychiatric disorders, kava extract significantly reduced depression and anxiety. Recent German studies demonstrate that kava is a "safe, nonaddictive antianxiety medicine that is as effective as prescription drugs such as Valium."

Long-term use of large quantities of kava causes a distinctive pigmented, dry, scaly skin lesion, which quickly disappears when the herb is discontinued. Adverse effects of kava usage in an Australian aboriginal community resulted from extremely high doses, more than a pound per week, and some researchers speculate that large quantities of alcohol may have contributed to kava's toxicity.

The recommended dosage, 1 to 3 grams per day of the powdered dry root in capsules or 1 to 1-1/2 tsp. of kava tincture per day, has caused no adverse side effects in trials lasting up to eight weeks of continuous use.

Kelp (Laminaria spp.) and Other Sea Vegetables

Seaweeds, now called sea vegetables, grow all over the world but until recently were used for food only in Japan. Researchers credit seaweed and the traditional Japanese diet with that country's unusually low incidence of breast cancer, obesity, heart disease, respiratory illness, rheumatism, arthritis, high blood pressure, thyroid deficiency, infectious diseases, constipation and other gastrointestinal problems. Modern Japanese who adopt a seaweed-free Western diet quickly develop those and other problems.

Kelp's major effects are nutritive, antibiotic (infection fighting) and hypotensive (blood-pressure lowering). Kelp has also been shown to reduce harmful cholesterol levels. The herb's principles include laminine and histamine.

Kelp has no known toxicity, even though some kelp species are known for their high arsenic content. Extensive testing has shown that the arsenic, although certainly present, is not absorbed by the body. Japanese tests on volunteers who ate kelp showed

that 100 percent of the seaweed's ingested arsenic was excreted in the urine within 60 hours.

For recipes using kelp and other sea vegetables, consult cookbooks which feature macrobiotic or Japanese foods. Note that some people are allergic to the iodine in kelp, which can cause acne-like skin breakouts. If this occurs, discontinue use.

Lily of the Valley (Convallaria Majalis)

The dried leaves of this shade-loving garden plant are widely used in Europe to treat cardiovascular problems, including congestive heart failure. Its action is similar to that of foxglove (digitalis) without that plant's toxic side effects. Because it has diuretic properties, lily of the valley is used to relieve fluid retention and congestive conditions of the heart.

As familiar as this plant is to European herbalists, it is seldom used in the U.S. for it was banned by the FDA after its cardioactive glycosides were isolated and fed in large quantities to laboratory rats, who suffered adverse effects. No one denies that the plant's red berries are poisonous, but lily of the valley has since been reapproved for use and is listed with other herbs in the Merck Index. However, few Americans know of its reclassification or appreciate the plant's uninterrupted history of effective use in Germany, England and other countries.

After developing congestive heart failure, Dick Quinn (see page 17) relied on a blend of 60 percent lily of the valley, 30 percent hawthorn berry, 15 percent rosemary leaf and 5 percent cayenne pepper to control his symptoms.

So many German preparations use lily of the valley that Rudolf Fritz Weiss, M.D., reviewed several

formulas in his book *Herbal Medicine*. Lily of the valley is often combined with peppermint, valerian root, hawthorn berry and other herbs. The plant contains eight flavonoids, which researchers now consider as important as its cardioactive ingredients in the treatment of heart disease.

Because of its immediate and dramatic effect on the heart, lily of the valley should be used under medical supervision, especially if it is being used to replace digitalis in a patient who is already taking that drug. Lily of the valley is safe and effective when used in small amounts as part of a blend, such as the formulas given by David Hoffmann in *The Holistic Herbal* for a heart tonic (2 parts each hawthorn berry and motherwort, 1 part lily of the valley) or for a tea to treat angina pectoris (3 parts hawthorn berry, 2 parts each motherwort and lime blossom, 1 part lily of the valley). Brew as an infusion; drink up to 3 cups daily. To learn more about this plant, see *Death by Deception* by Dick Quinn.

Lime Flower or Linden Blossom (Tilia Europea)

In Europe, everyone recognizes the sweet smelling linden, which has been used for centuries to reduce nervous tension, hypertension, the development of arteriosclerosis, migraine headaches and symptoms of the common cold. Often combined with hawthorn and mistletoe to treat high blood pressure, lime flowers can be used in tea (brew as an infusion and drink up to 3 cups per day), tincture (take up to 1/2 tsp. 3 times daily) or capsules (take 2 capsules 3 times per day).

David Hoffmann's formula for a cardiac tonic tea combines 1 part lime blossom, 3 parts hawthorn and

1 part each ginkgo, dandelion leaf, motherwort and crampbark. Brew as an infusion using 1-2 tsp. herbal blend per cup of boiling water or, if desired, brew the ginkgo leaves and crampbark separately as a decoction, remove the pan from heat, add the remaining ingredients, cover and let stand another 10 minutes. The proportions to use for 1 quart (4 cups) of tea would be 1 tsp. each crampbark and ginkgo for the decoction; add 1 Tbsp. hawthorn plus 1 tsp. each lime blossom, dandelion leaf and motherwort for the final 10 minutes of tea brewing.

Mistletoe, European (Viscum Album)

The European mistletoe, like lily of the valley, produces poisonous berries yet is an effective heart tonic. The similarities don't stop there, for both have been denounced as toxic by the FDA and are unfamiliar to American herbalists.

Note that European mistletoe (*Viscum album*) is a different plant with different properties from American mistletoe (*Viscum flavescen*).

Considering the large quantities of mistletoe that have been consumed with apparent safety by hundreds of thousands of Europeans during the past century, the FDA's concerns may be overly conservative. Dr. Weiss devoted several pages of *Herbal Medicine* to a review of the scientific literature regarding mistletoe and the controversy surrounding its effectiveness and safety. He concluded,

Mistletoe is a typical example of a gentle herbal drug, showing all the characteristics of that class: no dramatic effects can be determined, yet practitioners and patients repeatedly find that mistletoe has excel-

lent subjective effects on headaches, dizziness, loss of energy, irritability and other symptoms connected with raised blood pressure. It has no unpleasant side effects and is nontoxic in the usual doses. . . .

Mistletoe is appropriate for extended treatment, as one would expect with a gentle herbal drug.

As Dr. Weiss noted, mistletoe should be brewed as a cold infusion (see page 26), using 2-4 tsp. dried herb per cup of water. He recommended preparing one cup at night for consumption in the morning and another during the day for evening use. For an all-purpose heart tonic "which patients ask for again and again, because it obviously helps them and is well-tolerated," combine equal parts mistletoe, hawthorn (leaves and flowers or dried berries) and lemon balm. Brew an infusion using 2 tsp. tea per cup of boiling water. Weiss recommended sipping the tea slowly while warm.

In England, Germany and throughout Europe, European mistletoe is respected as an excellent relaxing nervine that tones the nervous system and acts directly on the vagus nerve to slow a rapid pulse while strengthening capillary walls, reducing blood pressure and easing the symptoms of arteriosclerosis. A specific for tachycardia or rapid pulse associated with stress or nervousness, mistletoe also relieves headaches caused by high blood pressure. It combines well with hawthorn berry and other herbs.

The Austrian herbalist Maria Treben recommended that once a year everyone drink 3 cups of mistletoe tea a day for three weeks, then 2 cups a day for two weeks, then 1 cup a day for one week. "By the end of the six weeks," she wrote in *Health from God's*

Garden, "you'll find that your blood pressure has returned to normal, no matter whether it was too high or too low. If you want to keep your circulatory system toned up and blood pressure normal, drink 1 cup every day."

Motherwort (Leonurus Cardiaca)

The leaves, stalks and flowers of this plant have traditionally had a dual purpose, as reflected by its name. Motherwort is a woman's herb, treating menstrual and uterine conditions, and as *cardiaca* indicates, it tones and strengthens the heart. Motherwort is a specific for rapid heartbeat and can be used for all heart conditions associated with tension, stress or anxiety.

To make motherwort tea, brew an infusion of 1-2 tsp. herb per cup of water and drink up to 3 cups daily. Take up to 1 tsp. tincture 3 times daily.

Night-Blooming Cereus (Selenicereus Grandiflorus)

Also called cactus flower or sweet-scented cactus, the night-blooming cereus of the American Southwest resembles hawthorn berry in its ability to stimulate the heart. Milder or weaker than lily of the valley, it is considered a safe, effective alternative to digitalis when used in small amounts. Overdoses have serious side effects, including mental confusion, gastric distress and, in some cases, hallucinations.

In Europe, night-blooming cereus is one of the plants used to wean patients off digitalis, a substitution that should only be done under the supervision of an experienced healthcare professional.

Night-blooming cereus is often combined with

other herbs, such as hawthorn berry and motherwort. It is seldom sold in the U.S. as an herb by itself, but it does appear in some cardiac tonics. Follow label directions.

Olive Leaf (Olea Europaea)

The olive, one of the Mediterranean's most important plants, is most familiar for its oil-rich fruits. But the leathery green leaves of the evergreen olive are important in their own right; they have become widely used, especially in Europe, as a treatment for hypertension.

Because the leaves are tough, they should be simmered as a decoction (1 to 2 teaspoons leaf per cup of water) or tinctured in alcohol.

According to Dr. Weiss, olive leaf is not sufficiently powerful to use in advanced cases of high blood pressure, but in moderate cases it may be effective. In addition to lowering blood pressure, the leaf is an antispasmodic. Unfortunately, it has an irritant effect on the gastric mucosa and can cause gastric symptoms if taken on an empty stomach. For best results, take olive leaf tea, tincture or capsules after meals.

Passionflower or Maypop (Passiflora Incarnata)

The dried leaves of this climbing vine have a sedative, relaxing, antispasmodic influence that makes it an herb of choice for insomnia and stress-related hypertension. Passionflower relaxes without causing drowsiness. It is often combined with valerian, chamomile and other relaxing herbs in teas, tinctures, capsules and tablets.

Pipsissewa or Prince's Pine (Chimaphila spp.)

Found in diuretic, urinary tract and prostate formulas, pipsissewa is both gentle and effective, relieving irritation and healing congestion. Because it improves circulation and does not disrupt the body's mineral balance while relieving fluid retention, pipsissewa is an excellent alternative to pharmaceutical diuretics. It combines well with dandelion and other herbs.

Prickly Ash Bark (Zanthoxylum Americanum)

The bark and berries of prickly ash act as a circulatory stimulant, blood tonic and carminative. The uses of prickly ash are similar to those of cayenne, though this herb is slower in action. Prickly ash is a specific for poor circulation and varicose veins. It is usually added to herbal blends as a catalyst or "delivery" herb.

Rosemary (Rosmarinus Officinalis)

The familiar, pine-scented culinary herb does more than flavor breads and stews. An aromatic, carminative, antispasmodic, antiseptic, antidepressive, rubefacient herb, rosemary acts as a circulatory and nervine stimulant. It is commonly combined with herbs such as ginkgo and gotu kola in memory tonics or with nervines such as skullcap to treat stress and anxiety. Its essential oil is used in aromatherapy as an energizing stimulant.

Skullcap (Scutellaria Lateriflora)

One of the safest and most effective sedative herbs, skullcap relaxes the nerves without causing drowsiness or interfering with physical coordination. It is

used to treat nerve-related disorders such as epilepsy, neuralgia, alcohol withdrawal symptoms, insomnia, stress and anxiety.

Skullcap is often combined with chamomile, hops, passionflower and other relaxing nervines. It is an important ingredient in some stop-smoking programs for it helps relieve nicotine cravings.

Stoneroot or Horse Balm (Collinsonia Canadensis)

Traditionally used to treat varicose veins, hemorrhoids and diarrhea and named for its use in the treatment of kidney stones, stoneroot is a rich source of rosmarinic acid, the same antioxidant found in rosemary. It is helpful to heart patients because, in addition to containing several bioflavonoids, stoneroot is an effective diuretic. In *The New Age Herbalist*, Richard Mabey wrote that the main use of this "undervalued herbal remedy" is to strengthen the structure and function of the veins, for which it is applied externally as well as consumed in teas and tinctures. Prepare as a decoction, using 1 to 3 tsp. dried root per cup and drink up to 3 cups daily or take 1/2 to 1 tsp. tincture 3 times daily. Stoneroot can be substituted for rosemary in any heart tonic blend.

The herbal pharmacist Ed Smith, whose Herb Pharm in Oregon is known for products of superior quality, prepares a mixture called Restorative Venous Tonic using 24 percent stoneroot, 24 percent horse chestnut seed, 24 percent butcher's broom rhizome, 18 percent rosemary flowering branches and 10 percent prickly ash bark. The resulting tincture treats varicose veins, phlebitis, damaged veins, cramps, heaviness or fatigue in the legs, hemorrhoids, throm-

bosis, bruises, swelling related to fractures or stroke and cold hands and feet. It can be taken internally (30 drops once or twice daily) or applied externally.

Turmeric (Curcuma Longa)

The primary ingredient in curry powders and sauces, turmeric contains a high percentage of curcumin, the spice's major active constituent. Like most of the spices used in Indian curries, turmeric inhibits platelet aggregation, lowers cholesterol and keeps blood flowing correctly. In fact, heart disease and circulatory problems tend to be lower in countries that emphasize curries.

If spicy dishes are not to your liking, curcumin can be purchased separately in capsules. Follow label directions. In the amounts commonly used in cooking, turmeric has no known side effects or toxicity. However, turmeric is a gallbladder stimulant (its regular use improves digestion), and very large quantities may trigger such strong bile duct activity that it might aggravate the passage of gallstones. In normal amounts, according to herbalist Daniel Mowrey, this reaction is very unlikely, even among people suffering from gallstones.

Valerian Root (Valeriana Officinalis)

The root and rhizome of valerian, also known as garden heliotrope, are beyond aromaticthey smell so strong that the scent fills the room and there's no disguising it. Some call the scent earthy, others say valerian smells like old socks and a few dislike the odor so much they refuse to take it. But for those who can swallow valerian tinctures, tablets, capsules or tea, the rewards are the reduction of high blood

pressure, relaxation under stress, relief from pain and a good night's sleep. Valerian does not interfere with a person's ability to drive or operate machinery; in fact, it has been shown to increase efficiency.

Not everyone finds valerian relaxing, however. An estimated 5 to 7 percent of those who try it react with increased agitation and hyperactivity, the opposite of what most users experience. If you have never taken valerian, start with half the recommended dosage and monitor your response. If your pulse accelerates or if you feel at all uncomfortable or anxious, discontinue use.

Valerian is one root that should not be boiled as a decoction. Its volatile oils are so fragile the root should be brewed as an infusion. Pour 2 cups boiling water over 2 tsp. to 1 Tbsp. dried herb, cover, let stand 10 to 15 minutes, strain and serve.

Specific Therapies for Circulatory Problems

If you have heart disease, high blood pressure, varicose veins or any symptoms of circulatory problems, or if they run in your family and you want to prevent them, the best thing you can do is become informed. Check the recommended reading list in the Appendix and educate yourself about strategies that work. Seek a health care professional who has studied nutrition and natural therapies. Make the changes that will prevent, reverse and cure heart disease and enjoy a life free of debilitating symptoms.

In *The Scientific Validation of Herbal Medicine*, Daniel Mowrey developed an herbal heart support

program that is well-planned and effective. It consists of herbal formulas in capsules taken in certain combinations, depending on the specific ailment.

The following combinations are based on Dr. Mowrey's book and, in each case, I have added one or two alternative formulas based on the writings of other authorities. Recommended capsule size is 00. See page 31 for information on filling your own capsules or contact herbal tea companies listed in the Appendix for custom-filled capsules. All of the recommended herbs are described in this book. For additional information on the herbs in Dr. Mowrey's formulas, see *The Scientific Validation of Herbal Medicine*, which includes extensive documentation from medical journals and research reports for the conditions treated. For additional information on the alternative formulas, see *The Holistic Herbal* by David Hoffmann, *The New Age Herbalist* by Richard Mabey and *Herbal Medicine* by Rudolf Fritz Weiss.

Formula #1: Heart Blend

Combine equal parts hawthorn berry, motherwort, rosemary leaf, kelp and cayenne pepper.

Formula #1A: Alternative Heart Blend

Combine equal parts hawthorn berry and cayenne.

Formula #1B

Combine 3 parts hawthorn berry with 2 parts motherwort, 2 parts lime blossom and 1 part lily of the valley.

Formula #2: High Blood Pressure Blend

Combine equal parts powdered garlic, valerian root, black cohosh root, cayenne and kelp.

Formula #2A: Alternative High Blood Pressure Blend
Combine equal parts bilberry, chamomile, ginkgo and kelp.

Formula #2B
Combine equal parts hawthorn berry and European mistletoe.

Formula #3: Diuretic Blend
Combine equal parts cornsilk, parsley, kelp and cayenne.

Formula #3A: Alternative Diuretic Blend
Combine equal parts astragalus and parsley seed.

Formula #3B
Combine equal parts dandelion leaf or root and pipsissewa.

Formula #4: Whole Body Tonic
Combine equal parts burdock root, Siberian ginseng root, gotu kola, licorice root and cayenne pepper.

Formula #4A: Alternative Whole Body Tonic
Combine equal parts astragalus root and burdock root.

Formula #5: Cholesterol Regulation Blend
Combine equal parts apple pectin, hawthorn berry and black cohosh root.

Formula #5A: Alternative Cholesterol Regulation Blend
Combine equal parts gugulow, kelp and turmeric.

Formula #6: Circulation Blend
Combine equal parts cayenne, kelp and ginger.

Formula #6A: Alternative Circulation Blend

Combine 3 parts prickly ash bark (and or berries), hawthorn berry and ginger.

Formula #6B

Combine equal parts ginkgo, gotu kola and rosemary.

Formula #7: Fatigue Blend

Combine equal parts cayenne, Siberian ginseng, gotu kola, kelp and ginger.

Formula #7A: Alternative Fatigue Blend

Combine equal parts ginkgo, ginger and rosemary.

Formula #8: Low Blood Pressure Blend

Combine equal parts butcher's broom, hawthorn berries and kola nut, a natural source of caffeine. Substitute green tea for the kola nut if desired.

Formula #8A: Alternative Low Blood Pressure Blend

Combine equal parts unprocessed licorice root and cayenne pepper.

Suggested Dosages

For suggested dosages, refer to the table on the next page. Divide the day's total capsules into three groups in order to take them with meals. When taking capsules containing cayenne pepper, follow with plenty of food and water. Cayenne can produce a heartburn-like reaction, but it is usually short-lived. Apple juice and peppermint help to neutralize cayenne's hotness.

In addition, for all circulatory conditions, add the following nutrients on a daily basis, using the highest quality supplements. The amounts shown in the first

HEART SUPPORT PROGRAM

Numbers of Capsules Per Day

FORMULA (either)	#1 #1A #1B	#2 #2A #2B	#3 #3A #3B	#4 #4A	#5 #5A	#6 #6A #6B	#7 #7A	#8 #8A
Maintain Cardiac Health	2-4	1-2		2-3	2-4	0-2	0-3	
High Blood Pressure	2-4	2-4	0-2	1-3	2-4	0-2	0-3	
Coronary Heart Disease	2-4	0-3	0-4	0-3	1-3	2-4	1-3	
Fluid Retention (Edema)	2-4	1-3	5-8: Acute 1-3: Chronic	2-4	1-3	1-3	2-4	
Post- surgery Recovery	2-4	0-3	0-2	4-6	0-3	2-4	4-6	
Low Blood Pressure	2-4			2-4		2-4		4-8

column, for healthy adults, are recommended by Dr. E. Cheraskin, whose research was described on page 12. Amounts in the second column are recommended for heart disease patients by several of the experts quoted in this booklet, including herbalist Daniel Mowrey, Julian Whitaker, M.D. and David Williams, M.D.

VITAMINS	For health maintenance	For heart patients
Vitamin A	5,000 I.U.	15,000 I.U.
Beta-carotene	15,000 I.U.	20,000 I.U.
Vitamin B1	50 mg	50-100 mg
Vitamin B2	10 mg	25-100 mg
Vitamin B3	45 mg	100 mg
Vitamin B6	50 mg	50-100 mg
Vitamin B12	50 mcg	50-100 mcg
Vitamin C:	2,000 mg	3,000 mg, or to bowel tolerance
Bioflavonoids	100-300 mg	500 mg
Vitamin D	1,000 I.U.	1,000 I.U.
Vitamin E	400 I.U.	600-1,200 I.U.
Biotin	300 mcg	500 mcg
Choline	250 mg	1,000 mg
Folic acid	400 mcg	500 mcg
Inositol	30 mg	1,000 mg
Pantothenic acid	50 mg	50-100 mg

MINERALS

All-purpose mineral/trace element supplement:

Calcium	1,000 mg	1,500 mg
Magnesium	500 mg	750 mg
Potassium	50 mg	2,000 mg
Iron	18 mg	food sources only
Zinc	30 mg	30-50 mg
Manganese	10 mg	25 mg
Copper	3 mg	5 mg
Iodine	75 mg	100 mg
Silicon	20 mg	50 mcg

MINERALS	For health maintenance	For heart patients
Selenium	100 mcg	200-300 mcg
Chromium	300 mcg	500 mcg
Molybdenum	150 mcg	200 mcg

MISCELLANEOUS

Essential fatty acids (fish oils, evening primrose oil, flaxseed oil, borage seed oil)*

Lecithin	48 g (1-1/2 oz)
Coenzyme Q-10	100 mg-1000 mg
L-carnitine	500-1,000 mg
Bromelain enzyme	4,000 mg
Amino acids, including taurine	*
(*per package directions)	

If you like this book, buy it!

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Willix, Robert D., Jr. *New Cures for Almost Every Major Disease*. Baltimore, MD: Health & Longevity, 1995.

Appendix: Resources and Recommended Reading

The resources listed here are only a few of the hundreds available in the U.S. Because the world of herbal medicine is growing fast, there will be even more by the time you read this. For up-to-date addresses, phone numbers, prices, book reviews, herb sources, correspondence courses, schools and workshops, see the recommended catalogs and magazines. The recommended herbals and related references can be ordered through any bookstore.

Recommended Herbals for Students

Foster, Steven, and James A. Duke. *Peterson Field Guides: Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990. Superior field guide with well-documented medicinal uses.

Gladstar, Rosemary. *Herbal Healing for Women*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993. Recommended.

Hoffmann, David. *The Holistic Herbal*. Dorset, England: Element Books, 1983. Popular modern reference.

Keville, Kathi. *The Illustrated Herbal Encyclopedia*. New York: Bantam Doubleday, 1992. Recommended.

Kloss, Jethro. *Back to Eden*. Loma Linda, CA: Back to Eden Books, 1988. Updated classic.

Lust, John. *The Herb Book*. New York: Bantam Books, 1974. Excellent, inexpensive basic herbal.

Reader's Digest. *Magic and Medicine of Plants*. Pleasantville, NY: Reader's Digest Association, 1986. Good overview, some overly cautious warnings.

Theiss, Barbara and Peter. *The Family Herbal*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 1989. Introduction to European herbalism, recommended.

Tierra, Michael. *The Way of Herbs*. New York: Pocket Books, 1983. Recommended basic herbal.

Weiss, Rudolf Fritz. *Herbal Medicine*. English translation of the sixth German edition. Beaconsfield, England: Beaconsfield Publishers Ltd., 1988. Of interest to heart patients and their physicians because of its comprehensive review of German botanical medicines, including several that are not available in the U.S., such as *Strophanthus* and *Rauwolfia*, as well as herbs available but unfamiliar to most physicians and herbalists, such as lily of the valley and European mistletoe.

Worwood, Valerie. *The Complete Book of Aromatherapy and Essential Oils*. Excellent publication.

Herb Magazines

The Herb Companion, 201 East 4th Street, Loveland, CO 80537.

The Herb Quarterly, P.O. Box 689, San Anselmo, CA 94960.

HerbalGram, P.O. Box 201660, Austin, TX 78720.

Herbal Correspondence Courses

East West Master Course in Herbology by Michael Tierra, P.O. Box 712, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.

The Science and Art of Herbalism: A Home Study Course by Rosemary Gladstar, P.O. Box 420, East Barre, VT 05649.

Herbal Organizations

American Botanical Council, P.O. Box 201660, Austin, TX 78720.

American Herb Association, P.O. Box 1673, Nevada City, CA 95959.

Herb Research Foundation, 1007 Pearl Street, Suite 200, Boulder, CO 80302.

International Herb Association, 1202 Allanson Road, Mundelein, IL 60060.

Northeast Herbal Association, P.O. Box 479, Milton, NY 12547.

Dried Herbs and Teas by Mail

Avena Botanicals, P.O. Box 365, West Rockport, ME 04865.

Blessed Herbs, 109 Barre Plains Road, Oakham, ME 01068.

Cayenne Trading Company, 811 East 48th Street, Minneapolis MN 55417. Maker of Quinn's Blend Formulas.

Enzymatic Therapy, P.O. Box 1508, Green Bay, WI 54305. Source of concentrated *Coleus forskohlii* extract.

Frontier Cooperative Herbs, P.O. Box 299, Norway, IA 52318.

Green Terrestrial, P.O. Box 41, Route 9W, Milton, NY 12547.

The Herb Closet, 104 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602.

HerbPharm, P.O. Box 116, Williams OR 97544.

Island Herbs, Ryan Drum, Waldron Island, WA 98297.

Jean's Greens, 54 McManus Road, Rensselaerville, NY 12147.

Mountain Rose Herbs, Box 2000, Redway, CA. 95560.

Pacific Botanicals, Catalog Request, 4350 Fish Hatchery Road, Grants Pass, OR 97527.

Richters, Goodwood, Ontario L0C 1A0, Canada. Source of dried mistletoe, lily of the valley and other unusual herbs.

Sage Mountain Herb Products, P.O. Box 420, East Barre, VT 05649. Rosemary Gladstar's formulas.

Trinity Herbs, P.O. Box 199, Bodega, CA 94992.

Wild Weeds, P.O. Box 88, Redway, CA 95560.

Unrefined Salt

American Orsa, Inc., 75 South State, Redmond, UT 84652. Produces Real Salt, a mined rock salt. Mail order and health food store distribution.

Eden Foods, 701 Tecumseh Road, Clinton, MI 49236. Imports Lima Salt from France. Health food store distribution.

Grain and Salt Society, P.O. Box DD, Magalia, CA 95954. Imports Celtic Salt from France. Mail order.

Gold Mine Natural Food Company, 3419 Hancock Street, San Diego, CA 92110-4307. Mail order source of several unrefined salts.

Colloidal and Plant-Based Mineral Supplements

Ameriflex, Inc., 232 N.E. Lincoln Street #G, Hillsboro OR 97124.

Daily Manufacturing, Inc., P.O. Box 7, Rockwell, NC 28138.

Health Watchers, 13402 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85264.

New Vision Intl., 14982 N. 83rd Place, Scottsdale, AZ 85260.

T.J. Clark & Company, 1145 N. 1100 Street W., St. George, UT 84770.

Physician Referrals

American Association of Naturopathic Physicians, 2366 Eastlake Avenue, Suite 322, Seattle, WA 98102.

American College of Advancement in Medicine, P.O. Box 3427, Laguna Hills, CA 92654.

American Holistic Medical Association, 4101 Lake Boone Trail, Suite 201, Raleigh, NC 27607.

Health Newsletters

Newsletters published by medical doctors and journalists have become very popular, in part because they make scientific research understandable to lay readers because the writers have extensive clinical experience and because they often emphasize therapies with minimal side effects. I subscribe to all of the following and half a dozen more. For a free sample copy and subscription information, send a postcard with your name and address. All are interesting, opinionated sources of timely information on heart disease, nutrition and other medical topics.

Alternatives by David G. Williams, M.D., Mountain Home Publishing, 2700 Cummings Lane, Kerrville, TX 78028.

Health Alert by Dr. Bruce West, P.O. Box 22620, Carmel, CA 93922-2620.

Health & Healing by Julian Whitaker, M.D., Phillips Publishing, 7811 Montrose Road, Potomac, MD 20854.

Health & Longevity by Robert D. Willix, Jr., M.D., 105 W. Monument Street, P.O. Box 17477, Baltimore, MD 21298.

Nutrition & Healing by Jonathan W. Wright, M.D., P.O. Box 84909, Phoenix, AZ 85071.

Second Opinion by William Campbell Douglass, M.D., 7100 Peachtree-Dunwoody Road, Suite 100, Atlanta, GA 30328.

Self Healing by Andrew Weil, M.D., Thorne Communications, 42 Pleasant Street, Watertown, MA 02172.

What Doctors Don't Tell You by medical journalist Lynn McTaggart, P.O. Box 17088, 105 West Monument Street, Baltimore, MD 21201.

If you like this book, buy it!

Index

A

acid indigestion *see* digestion

adaptogen herbs, 24, 53

see also astragalus; ginseng

ajoene, 49-50

alcohol extracts *see* tinctures

allergies

to herbs, 22-23

see also food sensitivities; hay fever

allicin, 49

alterative herbs, 24

see also burdock root

Alzheimer's disease, and ginkgo, 51

amino acids, 77

angina pectoris

and coleus, 47

and hawthorn berries, 57-58

and hydrotherapy, 38

angioplasty, 3-4

anthocyanins, 41-42

anti-inflammatories *see* inflammation

antioxidants, 42

see also ginseng

antiseptic herbs, 23

antispasmodics, 42

see also muscle tension

anxiety *see* stress

apple cider vinegar bath, 38

apple pectin, 39-40

arnica, 35

aromatherapy, 37-38

 rosemary as, 68

 and stress reduction, 17

arteriosclerosis

 and European mistletoe, 65

 and horsetail, 59

arthritis

 and nightshade family, 45

 and salt, 11, 37-38

asthma

 and coleus, 47

 and ginkgo, 51

astragalus, 40-41

astringent herbs, 24

see also crampbark; horse chestnut

atherectomy, 4

atherosclerosis, and bilberry, 42

Ayurvedic medicine, 47

B

baking soda, 38

basil, 16

baths, herbal, 37-38

bed sores, and comfrey, 34

belladonna, 19

bergamot, 16

beta-blockers, 5

bilberry, 41-42

biofeedback, 15, 46

black cohosh, 42-43

blood pressure

 and adaptogen herbs, 23

 and kelp, 61

 and licorice root, 20

 white coat, 5

see also high blood pressure

borage seed oil, 49

borax, 38

botanical medications *see* herbal preparations

breathing, 15-16

bromelain enzyme, 77

burdock root, 43

butcher's broom rhizome, 43-44

bypass surgery, 1-3

C

cactus flower, 66-67

calcium channel blockers, 6

cancer

 and astragalus, 40

 and mouth lesions, 45

capillaries, and bilberry, 41, 42

capsaicin, 44

capsules, 31-32

cascara sagrada, 19

CASS, 2

castor oil seeds, toxicity, 19

cayenne, 17, 36, 44-45

centella (gotu kola), 52, 55-56

cereus, 66-67

chamomile, 46

chilblains, and butcher's broom rhizome, 44

childbirth

and black cohosh, 42

see also labor

chile peppers *see* cayenne

cholesterol

and apple pectin, 39

and diuretics, 5

and essential fats, 10

and ginseng, 53

and guggulow, 56

and herbal preparations, 73

and turmeric, 70

circulation

and alternating immersions, 38

and butcher's broom rhizome, 44

and cayenne, 36, 45

and comfrey, 34

and deep breathing, 15

and fomentations, 35

and garlic, 49-50

and ginger, 50-51

and ginkgo, 51

and gotu kola, 55

and hawthorn berries, 57

herbal preparations, 23-25, 27-28, 71-74

and pipsissewa, 68

and plasters, 34

and prickly ash bark, 68

and rosemary, 36

and turmeric, 70

clary sage, 16

cleavers, 46-47

coenzyme Q-10, 77

cold infusions, 26-27

colds, and cayenne, 45

coleus, 47

comfrey, 34

compresses, 35

congestion

- and cayenne, 45

- and fomentations, 35

- and plasters, 34

- see also* decongestants

congestive heart failure

- and coleus, 47

- and lily of the valley, 62

constipation, and flaxseed, 48

Coronary Artery Surgical Study, 2

coughs, and licorice root, 20

Coxsackie B virus, 40

crambark, 47-48

curcumin, 70

curry (turmeric), 70

cypress, 16

D

dairy products, and heart attack, 13

dandelion, 48

- and burdock root, 43

- and fluid retention, 27

deadly nightshade (belladonna), 19

decoctions, 27

decongestants, ephedra content, 34

dehydration, and hypertension, 13-14

demulcent herbs, 23

DHA, 9

diabetes

and apple pectin, 39

and burdock root, 43

and ginseng, 53-54

diarrhea

and cascara sagrada, 19

and stoneroot, 69

diet, 4, 6-9, 23

digestion, 7

and cayenne, 44-45

and chamomile, 46

and dandelion, 48

and exercise, 14

and ginger, 50

and licorice root, 20

and onion, 50

and stimulant herbs, 24-25

and turmeric, 70

digitalis, 18, 19

herbal substitutes, 63, 66-67

diuretic herbs, 24, 73

see also astragalus; dandelion; lily of the valley; onion;

pipsissewa; stoneroot

diuretics

and hypertension, 14

side effects, 5

see also fluid retention

docosahexaenoic acid, 9

dyeberry (bilberry), 41-42

E

eczema, and coleus, 47

edema *see* fluid retention

EFA's *see* essential fatty acids

eicosapentaenoic acid, 9

emotions, and stress, 15

EPA, 9

ephedra, and hypertension, 19, 34

ephedrine, 19

epilepsy, and skullcap, 68-69

epsom salts, 38

essential fatty acids, 9-10, 48, 49

see also oils

European mistletoe, 20

evening primrose oil, 49

exercise, 14-15, 23

[< previous page](#)

page_87

[next page >](#)

If you like this book, buy it!

F

fatigue, therapies, 74

fats *see* essential fatty acids; oils

fibromyalgia, and cayenne, 45

fish oils, 9, 10, 49

flavonoid glycosides, 51

flavonoids, in lily of the valley, 63

flaxseed, 48-49

flu, and cayenne, 45

fluid retention

 and cleavers, 46-47

 and ginger, 35-36, 51

 herbal preparations, 75

 and horsetail, 59

 and licorice root, 20

 and salt, 11

see also diuretic herbs; diuretics

fomentations, 35-36

food sensitivities, 13

forskolin, 47

foxglove, toxicity, 19

free radicals, 42

furosemide, 48

G

gallstones, and apple pectin, 39

gamma linolenic acid, 9

garden heliotrope (valerian root), 70-71

garlic, 49-50

gastrointestinal distress, and chamomile, 46

German Commission E, 21-22

ginger, 50-51

 fomentations, 35-36

in infusions, 27
ginkgo, 51-53
ginseng, 53-55
GLA, 9
gluten, sensitivity to, 13
glycerin, 30
glycoside linamarin, 48
glycyrrhizin, and fluid retention, 20
gobo (burdock root), 43
gotu kola, 52, 55-56
grapefruit seed extract, 37
guggulow, 56-57

H

hawthorn berries, 57-59
hay fever, and beta-blockers, 5
heart attack, 1
 and calcium channel blockers, 6
 and dairy products, 13
 and guggulow, 56-57
 and hawthorn berries, 58

heart disease

 and diet, 4
 and emotions, 15-16
 and ephedra, 19
 and exercise, 14
 and garlic, 49-50
 and herbal preparations, 18, 20, 23-25, 72, 75
 prevention, 6-19
 statistics, 1

heartburn

 and licorice root, 20
 see also digestion

hemorrhaging, and cayenne, 45

hemorrhoids

and butcher's broom rhizome, 44

and cayenne, 45

and stoneroot, 69

Herb Research Foundation, 22

herbal baths, 37-38

herbal preparations, 18, 25-38, 71-74

dosages, 32-33, 74-75

forms of, 25

sweetening of, 28, 30

see also herbs

herbal wines, 30-31

herbs

allergic reactions, 22-23

categories of, 23-25

GRAS list, 22

potency, 33

research, 20-23

safety of, 19-23

see also herbal preparations

high blood pressure

and cleavers, 46-47

and coleus, 47

and crampbark, 47-48

and dairy products, 13

and deep breathing, 15

and dehydration, 13-14

and diuretics, 14

and ephedra, 34

and ginseng, 55

herbal preparations, 72-73, 75

and lime flower, 63

and mistletoe, 64-65

and olive leaf, 67

pharmaceuticals, 5

and salt, 11

and valerian root, 70-71

horse balm (stoneroot), 69-70

horse chestnut, 59

horsetail, 59

huckleberry (bilberry), 41-42

hydrotherapy, 37-38

hypertension *see* high blood pressure

I

immune system, and astragalus, 40

impotence, and ginkgo, 53

Indian pennywort (gotu kola), 52, 55-56

indigestion *see* digestion

infection

and kelp, 61

[< previous page](#)

page_88

[next page >](#)

If you like this book, buy it!

and poultices, 33-34

inflammation

and butcher's broom rhizome, 44

and chamomile, 46

and cleavers, 46-47

and poultices, 33-34

see also hemorrhoids

infusions, 26, 36-37

insomnia, and skullcap, 68-69

iodine, in kelp, 62

K

kava kava, 59-61

kelp, 61-62

kidney function, and burdock root, 43

kidney stones, and stoneroot, 69

L

l-carnitine, 77

labor, and crampbark, 47

lactose intolerance, and blood pressure, 13

laser endarterectomy, 4

lavender, 16, 36

laxative herbs, 19

lecithin, 77

leg ulcers

and comfrey, 34

and horse chestnut, 59

licorice root, 20

lily of the valley, 20, 62-63

lime flower, 63-64

linoleic acid, 48

linolenic acid, 48

low blood pressure, herbal preparations, 74, 75

lymph system

and cleavers, 46-47

and exercise, 14

M

Ma huang *see* ephedra

magnesium sulfate, 38

maidenhair tree (ginkgo), 51-53

maypop, 67

meditation, 16

memory

and cayenne, 45

and ginkgo, 52

and gotu kola, 56

menopause, and black cohosh, 42

menstruation

and black cohosh, 42

and crampbark, 47

and motherwort, 66

metabolism, and guggulow, 56-57

minerals, 12-13, 76-77

mistletoe, European, 20, 64-66

motherwort, 66

mouth lesions, and cayenne, 45

mucilaginous fibers, 39, 48

muscle tension

and coleus, 47

and crampbark, 47

and salt, 37-38

mustard plaster, and congestion, 34

N

nervine herbs, 11-12, 24

and stress management, 46

see also chamomile; kava kava; mistletoe, European;

passionflower; rosemary; skullcap; valerian root

night vision, and bilberry, 41, 42

night-blooming cereus, 66-67

nightshade family, 45

nutrients *see* minerals; vitamins

nutrition *see* diet

O

oleic acid, in flaxseed, 48

oils, 10

- essential, 16

- flaxseed, 48-49

- infusions, 36-37

- see also* borage seed oil; essentials fatty acids; evening

- primrose oil; fish oils; olive oil

olive leaf, 67

olive oil

- and cholesterol, 9

- and garlic, 50

onion, and garlic, 50

P

pain

- and cayenne, 45

- and valerian root, 70-71

passionflower, 67

peanut oil, and cholesterol, 9

peppers, 44

- see also* cayenne

phlebitis

- and butcher's broom rhizome, 44

- and horse chestnut, 59

phytomedicinals *see* herbal preparations

pipsissewa, 68

plasters, 34

post-thrombotic syndrome, and butcher's broom rhizome, 44

poultices, 33-34

pregnancy

and black cohosh, 42

and herbal preparations, 23

prickly ash bark, 68

prince's pine, 68

prostaglandins, 9

protein, in flaxseed, 48

protein assimilation, and alterative herbs, 23

[< previous page](#)

page_89

[next page >](#)

If you like this book, buy it!

pseudoephedra, 19

psoriasis, and coleus, 47

Q

Quinn, Dick, 17-19, 62, 63

R

recommended daily allowances, 12-13

respiratory disorders *see* congestion

rheumatism

 and dandelion, 48

 and nightshade family, 45

rock salt, 11

rosemary, 36, 68

rosemary wine, 30-31

rosmarinic acid, 69

roughage fibers, 39

rubefacient herbs, 24

see also cayenne; ginger; rosemary

S

salt, 10-11, 23, 37-38

salves, 37

sea salt, 11, 23, 38

seaweed *see* kelp

skin care, and chamomile, 46

skullcap, 68-69

smoking, 5, 11-12

sodium bicarbonate, 38

solar infusions, 36-37

stevia, 28

stimulant herbs, 24-25

see also cayenne; ginger; prickly ash bark; rosemary

stoneroot, 69-70

stress, 14-17

- and astragalus, 40
- and blood pressure, 5
- and chamomile, 46
- and hawthorn berries, 58
- and kava kava, 60
- and lavender, 36
- and motherwort, 66
- and nervine herbs, 24, 46
- and passionflower, 67
- and skullcap, 68-69
- and valerian root, 70-71

stroke, and gotu kola, 56

T

tannins, 24

tea tree oil, 37

teas, 26-27

- cardiac tonic, 63-64

- diet, 19

- ginger, 50-51

- hawthorn berry, 58

- mistletoe, 65

tension *see* stress

tinctures, 28-30

tonic herbs, 25, 69, 73

- see also* cayenne; hawthorn berry; herbal preparations; motherwort

toxic shock, and ginkgo, 51

toxins, excretion of, 39-40

triglycerides, 10

turmeric, 70

U

ulcers

- and butcher's broom rhizome, 44

- and cayenne, 45

- and licorice root, 20

see also leg ulcers

urinary system, and cleavers, 46-47

V

valerian root, 70-71

varicose veins

and bilberry, 41

and butcher's broom rhizome, 44

and cayenne, 45

herbal preparations, 36

and horse chestnut, 59

and prickly ash bark, 68

and stoneroot, 69

vasoconstrictives, 44

vegetable glycerin, 30

vegetable oils, 10

venous tonic, 69

vermifuge herbs, 23-24

Veterans Administration Cooperative Study, 2

vitamin C

and cayenne, 45

and hawthorn berries, 58

vitamins, 12-13, 76

W

walking, 14

water, 13-14, 23

weight loss, and essential fats, 10

"white coat" blood pressure, 5

whole body tonics, 73

whortleberry (bilberry), 41-42

wines, 30-31

wound healing, and cayenne, 45

Y

yoga, 15

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