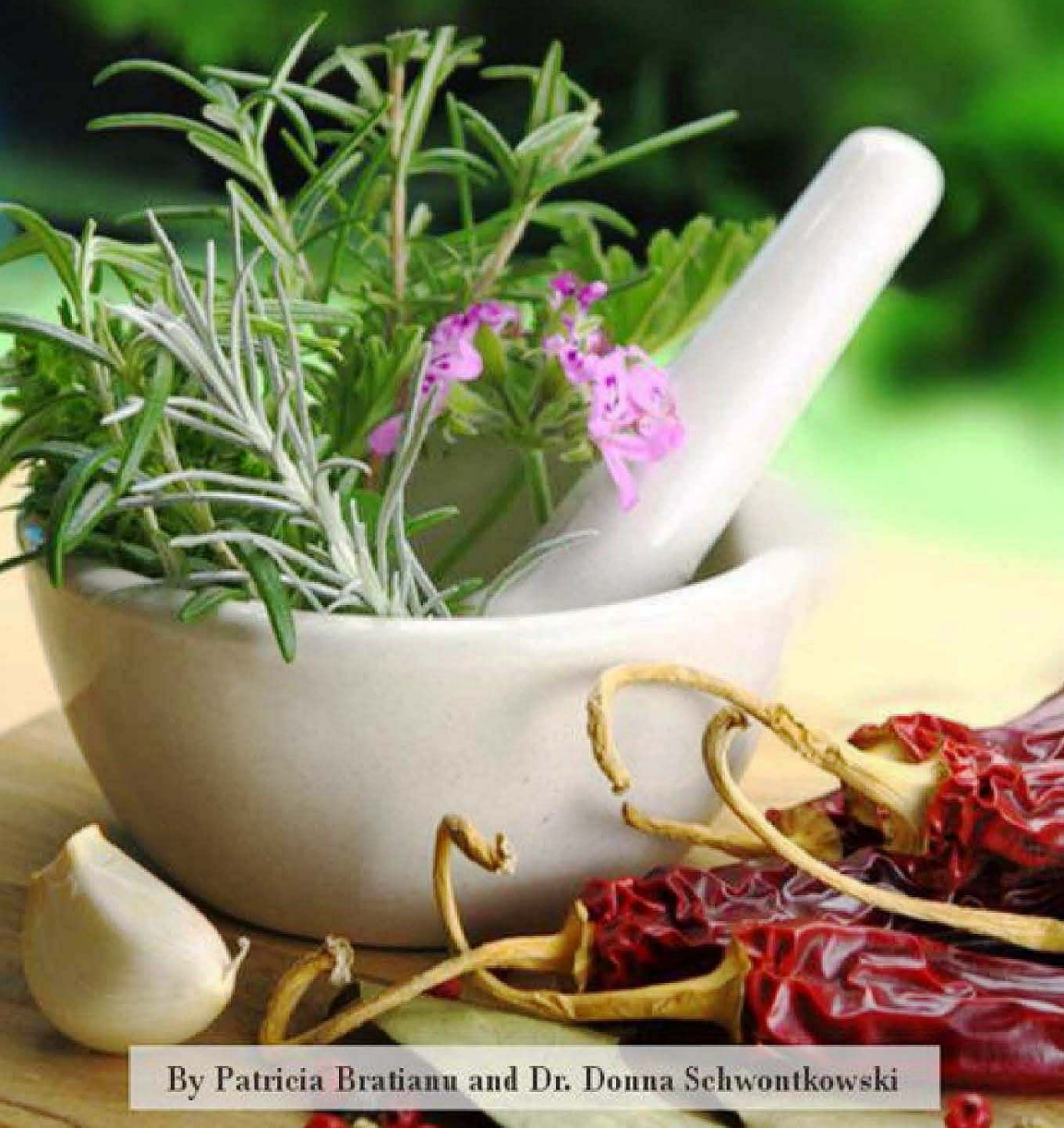


# How to Benefit from Everyday Herbs

A Beginner's Guide to Homemade Natural Herbal  
Remedies for Common Ailments & Good Health



By Patricia Bratianu and Dr. Donna Schwontkowski

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Disclaimer: This book is for informational purposes only. Both authors of this book are not practicing physicians and the information, recipes and remedies are not meant to be a substitute for medical advice. No claim is made to treat, cure, prevent or mitigate any disease.

## 8 Reasons Why You Should Read This Book

Herbs will change your life. This is a pretty big claim, I know—but it's true! This list is just a sample of the things you'll gain from reading this book.

1. You'll become proficient in creating fabulous foods and remedies that improve your health and the health of your loved ones.
2. You'll save money on your healthcare and in food costs, and become knowledgeable about selecting top-quality ingredients.
3. You'll learn when to seek expert help for health concerns, and when you can treat them on your own.
4. You'll learn about herb safety and administration for the very young and for the elderly.
5. You'll come to know your body better, and become attuned to what improves your health and how these remedies work.
6. You'll be able to say, "I made that, and it worked!"
7. You'll develop a great admiration and respect for the herb world.
8. You'll have lots of fun!

Ready to get started? Read on!

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## **Foreword by Pat Bratianu, Author**

I've been a Registered Nurse for almost forty years. Many years ago I noticed that, while modern medicine worked wonders in the emergency room, people were sick with chronic illnesses that didn't respond well to conventional treatment. Have you noticed the same thing?

### **Gaps in Medical Healing Meant Something Was Missing**

I saw many patients at the hospital with common illnesses that should have been treated at home—things like minor wounds, sore throats and the like. Seeing this, I concluded that something was lacking in our healthcare system; otherwise, we wouldn't be seeing these minor issues in our clinics and hospitals so often.

### **It's Time to Learn about Herbs**

Around the same time, my mother-in-law presented me with a beautifully illustrated herbal. After reading the book, I stepped into a brand new world of alternative healing. This herbal contained information that helped bridge the gap that I had witnessed in the medical world.

I started learning about using herbs that were already in my kitchen: parsley, basil, cinnamon, garlic and other ordinary foods and condiments that were readily available. My family loved my new recipes, and slowly, I noticed that some of the ordinary complaints we suffered from, such as indigestion, headaches, and lack of energy, were fewer. The relief we experienced from simple home remedies was evident—and I had made a difference with something simple and easily prepared. Could improving our health really be this easy?

### **My History Was Already Full of Little Herbal Lessons**

As a lifelong gardener, I've always been happiest playing in the dirt. Even as a small child, I made plantain poultices to put on mosquito bites because they cooled the itching. At the time, I had

no idea what I was doing. I just knew that if I chewed up a plantain leaf and put it on my itchy mosquito bite, I would feel better. Herbs became part of my garden soon, and this part of the garden quickly turned into my favorite place. I felt most comfortable when I was in my garden surrounded by herbs. I loved the textures, fragrances, and tastes they provided. They also seemed to attract all kinds of living things: birds, bees, butterflies, family pets, and even my children.

## **Illness as an Opportunity to Test Herbs**

Shortly thereafter, I became ill and modern medicine didn't manage to completely heal me. I started to invest more time and effort in growing and learning about herbs. Before long I was using herbs daily, including in my cooking, and my good health returned. It was during this difficult time that I realized what was missing in modern health care. We need our roots, literally, to maintain good health. I began teaching everyone what I knew about the magic that lay within the herbs in their kitchen cupboards.

As time went on, I craved more knowledge about what ordinary people could do to live happy, healthy, connected lives without spending a fortune. I pursued and obtained a Ph.D. in Natural Health. I became a Registered Herbalist as well. Today, I have clients who use homemade natural remedies to reduce high blood pressure; grow healthy children; make natural, chemical-free cosmetics; and more.

*After helping thousands of families to keep their family healthy naturally,* I believe that herbalism is medicine by and for all people. Anyone can easily practice herbalism and do it anywhere.

With this book, I want to empower you to improve your health and the health of those you love. I want to put your food, your medicine and your health in your own capable hands. And I want you to reap the rewards as never before!

— Patricia Bratianu, author

## **Foreword by Dr. Donna Schwontkowski (ret. D.C.), M.S., M.H., Author**

The greatest influences that got me started on the road to natural healing were my grandmother and her herb garden. Whenever we grandkids had a stomachache or a headache, Grandma had a remedy from her garden. She managed her own health and taught me the importance of using what God had already provided for us.

Grandma's raspberry tea remedy for PMS worked wonders during those early years. She took raspberry leaves directly from her garden and dropped them into a coffee cup. Next came boiling water, and her remedy was complete; using herbs couldn't be much simpler. It was lessons like this that showed me the power and the simplicity of herbal medicine.

### **Creating Comprehensive Knowledge**

Years later, on the path to becoming a dietitian, I could hardly wait to share all the new information I had learned about diet and nutrition with Grandma. Our discussions progressed to remedies and natural healing, and now, looking back on this time, I see that my grandmother was planting the seeds of what I was to become. It's because of my grandmother that I decided to become a doctor. However, there was a dilemma back then—doctors only administered prescription drugs. They ignored natural remedies and they ignored diet.

Years later, after I earned a bachelor's and master's degree in nutrition, a bachelor's degree in biology and a doctorate in chiropractic medicine, I still hadn't learned enough. Something was missing: formal education on herbs. I sought out this education, and it has made a great difference in the lives of my patients, my family and myself.

### **Experience Herbal Success and Your Life Will Change**

I'm sure you'll experience great success with herbs by using this book. When you do, it's a great idea to write your successes in a journal so you'll remember them later. You'll most likely have so many successes that they'll be easy to forget when new ones continue to occur!

I've run my own clinical research studies with patients in my practice and it's been very successful. Herbs work fast, and everyone has been happy with their results. Stubborn ulcers were healed. Immune system disorders, including HIV, were significantly improved. Infections cleared up in record time. Hot flashes disappeared. Old injuries healed, and range of motion was restored in a matter of a few weeks. Teeth that appeared to need a root canal healed within a day or two. Kidney stones were dissolved. These seemingly miraculous recoveries were standard and happened far too often to count.

### **It's Time for Your Success**

There are miracles waiting for you, too, when you use herbs. All you have to do is open the door inside your mind that says there's a cure to be found, and combine it with knowledge and faith.

May this book give you the courage you need to take that first step and every successive step in your life. And remember that God, the one who created it all, is with you, too. Allow Him to direct you.

—Dr. Donna Schwontkowski (“Dr. Donna”), author

# **The Fun Herbal Basics**

Welcome to the world of herbs!

## **Herbs are Safer than Most People Realize**

The use of plants for healing goes back to ancient times. Did you know that the oldest written herbals are over 500 years old?

The safety of herbal medicine has been proven by centuries of use. One of the most fascinating facts about herbs is that societies on opposite sides of the globe have found similar uses for the same herbs. That's more than just a coincidence! And it's clear evidence that proves that the herbs work.

Plants are resources that are available to everyone: they're easy to use, and they're safe. Herbal medicine has an outstanding safety record, including thousands of years of safe use in multiple herbal traditions all over the globe.

## **Herbs are Widely Available and at Your Fingertips**

One of the best parts of herbal medicine is that some of the most powerful herbs are already right in your kitchen cupboard. Throughout history, many culinary herbs were used for the preservation of foods. The herbal constituents that preserve food are the same antioxidants that benefit your health and prevent aging.

There's a huge amount of scientific literature that details the high costs of health care, medication side effects, and stress-related illnesses. Herbal remedies can be utilized to address all of these issues and more, and you probably already have the herbs you need in your kitchen.





Let's look at an example of how a simple intervention with herbs has far-reaching impacts.

If you're regularly including the right herbs in your diet, you'll help build up a strong, healthy immune system that will ward off illness, making the likelihood that you'll need any specific herbal remedies much smaller.

But suppose you get a minor infection. You reach for a remedy in your cupboard, and it helps get rid of the infection. You didn't have to expend the time, effort, or money to go to take time off of work, go to the doctor, and pay for prescription antibiotics.

### **An Economically Sound and Environmentally Friendly Decision**

Did you know that you reduce your carbon footprint when you use herbs? Because you don't need to make a trip to your

physician or drug store for treatment, you're doing your part in helping to save the planet. And your insurance co-pays will be nearly non-existent.

Another advantage of herbal medicine is that you're able to take a remedy early on in the course of the illness, because you have the herbs on hand. Taking a remedy at the beginning of an illness often shortens the duration, meaning you'll feel better fast and be less likely to spread it to others if it's contagious.

You'll also be saving money—your medical expenses will be the insignificant cost of a food item that you already have. And if you grow your own herbs, you'll be assured of having the freshest, highest quality medicine possible. If you're using organic commercial herbs, you're still using plants that have been grown without chemicals or pesticides that might harm the environment.

As you can see, the use of herbal interventions has profound effects on your health, the health of others around you, society, and the earth. The ideas and recipes within this book are simple, but have profound consequences. This book provides only a glimpse into the health benefits of herbs. Incorporating herbs into your healing repertoire has benefits for ecological systems, animals, and air quality, among other things. Using common herbs for medicine results in much more than healing and preventing sickness. You're helping make the entire planet healthier.

## **What Is An Herb?**

So what's an herb? The answer depends upon who you ask. A botanist will say it's a plant that grows aboveground that doesn't have a woody stem. A chef might say that it's a seasoning ingredient from a temperate climate, unlike a spice, which comes from a tropical climate.

For the purposes of this book, I'll refer to an herb as any useful plant that we use for healing. For example, dandelion is a useful plant for the gall bladder and the liver, so I'll call it an herb.



Usually, herbs are not the main ingredients of cuisine, but they're still important parts of the diet. Some powerful herbs, like maca, which is found in the Amazon rainforest, are eaten as standalone foods, but most herbs are used as seasonings.

The best herbs are picked fresh from your own organic garden. An herb garden might consist of a pot of herbs on a windowsill, or it could be a huge plot in your backyard. For those who choose not to grow their own herbs, we're fortunate that excellent quality herbs are now commercially available. I recommend using organic herbs in all cases if possible.

### **How to Select Herbs**

If you're going to be purchasing dried herbs, it's a good idea to learn to judge if they're fresh. They should look vibrant in color and smell fresh. Some herbs retain their color better than others; with practice you'll learn to recognize great quality.

Most herbs have a shelf life of about one year. Keep them in a cool dark place, such as a cabinet, not in a spice rack over the stove. Whole herbs retain their freshness longer than powdered

ones. I use whole dried herbs when they're available, but freeze-dried herbs retain their flavor and color well, too.

### ***Tools You'll Need to Get Started***

The recipes in this book don't require any special equipment—just ordinary kitchen tools.

#### **1. Coffee grinder**

You may use an electric coffee grinder to prepare herbs. Don't use it for coffee, though, since coffee has a strong aroma and can taint your herbs. Likewise, the herbs you grind in a coffee grinder could end up flavoring your coffee. Imagine peppermint-flavored coffee; it's not exactly a breakfast taste you would want, right?

Keep separate coffee grinders for coffee and herbs so that they'll both taste as they should.

#### **2. Garlic press**

This is another useful tool—in addition to pressing garlic, it's fabulous for crushing fresh gingerroot.

#### **3. Mortar and pestle**



If you use fresh herbs, these are very useful. Plus, it's satisfying to pound the herbs and inhale their aromas.

#### **4. Dark jars**

Collect and reuse jars in assorted sizes. They'll come in handy for some of your remedies. Be sure to label your products when you create them, lest you get them mixed up. The best jars are dark, because they keep light from oxidizing the herbs. Herbs stored in

clear jars won't last as long as those stored in dark jars.

## **5. An herb journal**

Keep a small notebook in your kitchen for detailing the herbs and herbal mixtures that you try. When you find one that's really successful, make a note of it so you can go back and find it when you need it again.



### ***How Herbs Are Consumed***

Herbs may be consumed in a variety of ways, including as pills, capsules, liquids and syrups. Many other forms are available as well.

Sometimes the method of administration is just as important as the effects that come from the plant. For example, suppose you had a harried day rushing around, doing too many tasks at once. The



best medicine in this example might be a relaxing herbal blend. It could be administered as a tablet or capsule, but it would be better to consume it as a tea, sitting in a comfy chair with your feet up.

### **The Standard Infusion**

Something that you'll see fairly often in this book is the phrase "standard infusion." To make a standard infusion, simply pour one cup boiling water over 1 teaspoon of dried herbs or 1 tablespoon of fresh herbs (just increase the amount of herbs and water proportionally if you want a larger batch). Cover and let sit for 20 minutes. After the 20 minutes is over, strain the herbs out and drink the resulting tea. That's it!



### **Making an Herbal Decoction**

A decoction is similar to a tea, except that it's simmered slowly in a pot for at least 20 minutes. This makes the herb more potent. Usually the root parts of the plants are decocted, as it takes time to extract all of the goodness out of them. The decoction recipe that follows is considered a decoction infusion, which is used to make a tea out of roots, seeds and berries.

To make a standard decoction, just simmer 1 teaspoon of dried herbs or 1 tablespoon of fresh herbs in 1 cup of water for 20 minutes. You can also make it stronger by adding more herbs. You might find that making up to a quart or two at a time is easier than a single cup.

## **How Herbs Heal You**

Herbs heal in many ways. Their aromas are healing. The beauty of the plants is comforting and sometimes breath-taking. Herbal medicine is best taken with awareness of the herbs themselves.

While some herbs work very quickly, many herbal medicines take time to work. Rather than suppressing a symptom, they work by strengthening the body. Herbal medicine can sometimes take longer than conventional remedies to work; however, they provide long-lasting benefits that conventional preparations do not.

One of the most common ways that people use herbs is in an infusion, as described above. Infusions are made with flowers, stems, and leaves. There are a variety of tea strainers on the market that you can use for this purpose. You may also purchase a tea ball to put the herbs in or make your own tea bags with self-closing commercial bags. Another alternative is to put the herbs in a coffee filter and tie with string to make little tea bags.



After making an infusion, you'll have some soaked herbs left over. I strongly recommend using the spent herbs for compost. By returning the used herbs to the earth, you're nourishing it as it nourishes you. Herbs are an excellent addition to compost piles, as they contain minerals, and many herbs also help to activate your compost pile to decompose hotter and faster.

### **Herbs are Multifaceted and Strengthen Multiple Body Systems**

Choosing the right herb depends to a certain degree on identifying a specific system of the body to strengthen. However, many herbs strengthen several systems simultaneously, so in a way, you can't go wrong once you have the basic knowledge down!

For example, let's say that you fall and end up with a wound on your knee. You'd ask yourself, "What systems of the body need

strengthening?” The answer would be the integumentary system (skin), the musculoskeletal system (muscles and bones), and the immune system (to prevent infection).

On the other hand, let’s say your daughter has the beginning signs of a urinary tract infection. You’d ask yourself, “What systems of the body should I strengthen?” This time, the answer would be the kidneys, urinary tract, and immune system. See how easy this is? You can make smart decisions based on this way of thinking. A lot of it is just based on common sense.

I’ll be discussing the different body systems, and the herbs that target each system, in the coming chapters.

This completes your introduction to herbs! See how easy it is?

### ***How This Book Is Set Up***

In the next sections, different herbs will be detailed from the standpoint of how they strengthen the body. Choosing an herbal remedy is often based on the system of the body that’s ailing. For example, if you have a cold, you wouldn’t choose an herb that predominantly works on the digestive system—you’d choose one for the respiratory system.

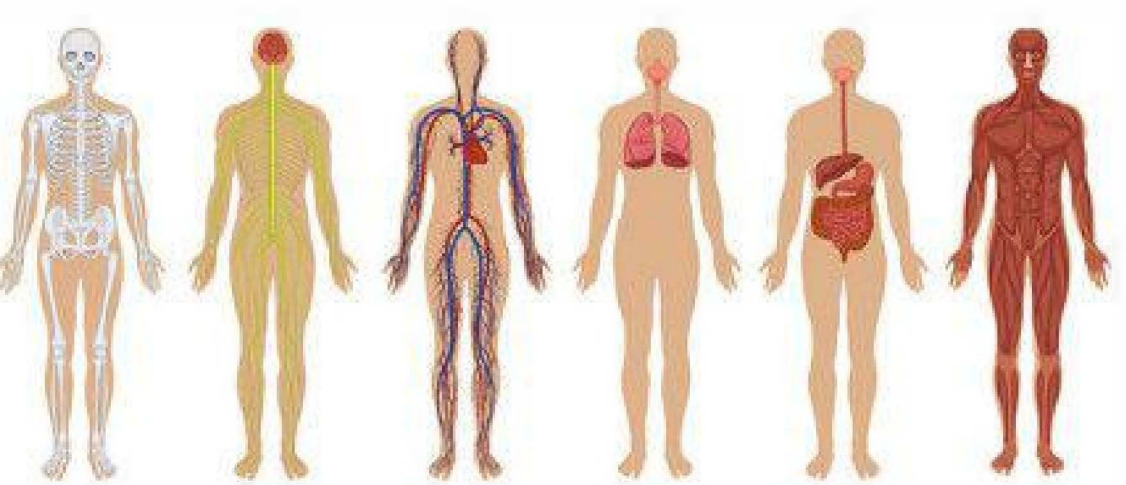
The different systems of the body are as follows:

1. Digestive system
2. Respiratory system
3. Nervous system
4. Integumentary system (skin)
5. Endocrine system (glands and hormones)
6. Musculoskeletal system
7. Immune system

8. Lymphatic system (part of the circulatory system)

9. Reproductive system

10. Kidneys and urinary tract



Each of these systems will be explained in more detail in the next chapters of this book, and we'll also discuss herbs and foods that strengthen each system.

Let's learn about the herbs you might use for the different systems right now. Are you ready?



# 1. The Nervous System

## *The Components of the Nervous System*

The nervous system is the master communication center of the body. For years it was believed to consist of the brain, spinal cord, and nerves, and it was thought to be an electrical system similar to telephone wires.

In the old view of the nervous system, a message could originate from any part of the body. It would then travel through the nerves to the brain, resulting in an action or thought. We now understand that the nervous system goes beyond this simple explanation. The nervous system consists of hundreds of chemical messengers throughout the body, all interacting and moderating each other in a very complicated system.



*How Do Herbs Improve Nervous System Functioning?*



Herbs are useful in promoting the health of the nervous system in a variety of ways. For example, they provide nourishment and protection for nerves. They also help ease migraine and sinus headaches, and they can help you focus when you're feeling a bit foggy.

Herbs that improve nervous system functioning fall into two groups: nervine, or calming, herbs and stimulant herbs, which enhance energy and give you a mental lift.

Let's take a look at some herbs that benefit the nervous system.

### ***Energizing and Relaxing Herbs***

**Chamomile (Matricaria recutita, Matricaria chamomilla, Anthemis nobilis)**



When you feel as if you need something to calm you down or help you relax, chamomile is a good choice.

Though it's always the flower of the plant that's used for creating remedies, there are different types of chamomile that herbalists

commonly use. For nervous system health, I like to use German chamomile, *Matricaria chamomilla*. It's an easy herb to grow, and it's great for children as well. German chamomile is an annual plant that likes full sun.

Chamomile may reduce stress and discomfort, and it's useful for digestive health. It's also soothing for teething and colicky babies.

A fun fact: chamomile is the tea that Peter Rabbit's mother gave him to drink.

### **Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*)**

# Basil



Basil is tasty and packed with health benefits! It aids concentration and relaxation. Did you know that basil has been used to relieve anxiety and headaches?

Basil actually benefits the whole body. It has anti-inflammatory actions similar to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen. This action could come in handy when, for example, your son has fallen and hurt his elbow and it's already inflamed and reddened by the time you see him. Or it could be useful when your grandmother is complaining about the aches and pains in her joints. There are many other examples of when anti-inflammatory herbs could be used.

Basil helps regulate blood sugar levels, can relieve spasms, and benefits the circulatory system, too. Besides adding great flavor to your food, basil is a rich source of vitamins A and C, and has abundant amounts of magnesium, iron and potassium.

Historically, this herb has been used as an aphrodisiac and an antidepressant. (This makes perfect sense, since someone who is depressed certainly isn't in a romantic mood!)

Basil is also quite aromatic, and there are different variations of it, such as cinnamon basil, lemon basil and Thai basil. Check out each one of these for some interesting flavors while cooking.

**Nutmeg (*Myristica fragrans*)**



Nutmeg is used for a lot more than eggnog. Did you know that nutmeg has been used since ancient times as a brain tonic? Whenever the Greeks or Romans felt a little mentally sluggish, they would use nutmeg to perk themselves up, both mentally and intellectually. They probably didn't know they were improving their nervous system functions, but they did know that they felt better after taking it.

Modern science has shown us that nutmeg possesses substances that may relieve stress and anxiety, and it's an effective sleep aid. It also has antibacterial and muscle relaxant effects.

Nutmeg should only be used in small amounts. Pregnant women may wish to avoid nutmeg, as it may be linked to miscarriage. Nutmeg contains copper, iron, potassium and magnesium.

**Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*)**



## Mint

Peppermint is a “cooling” plant. This means you’ll feel cooler when you drink a cup of peppermint tea or when you use it topically. The plant contains a substance called menthol that provides this cooling sensation.

Peppermint is in a family of plants with many others, including spearmint, apple mint, and pineapple mint, all of which have different flavors. I’ve even seen chocolate mint! (Dr. Donna grows chocolate mint in her herb garden.) Adding any variety of peppermint or its relatives to herbal mixtures is a delight.

My first choice of medicinal mint is always the original peppermint plant, although the others work also.

Peppermint is an example of an herbal stimulant. Drink a cup of chilled peppermint tea if you have a dreary task ahead of you, and it will wake you up and help you focus. Peppermint is also terrific for abdominal distress. Enteric-coated peppermint oil capsules sometimes provide relief for people suffering with irritable bowel syndrome. And if you ever have gas, it’s time to grab the peppermint. In a matter of minutes, the gas will be gone!

The advantage of herbal stimulants such as peppermint is that they're caffeine-free, so they don't give you that jittery feeling that sometimes occurs when you drink black or green teas or coffee. Too much caffeine can take a toll on the adrenal glands, as well.

## ***Illnesses and Remedies of the Nervous System***

### **Stress Headaches**

Stress headaches are characterized by the feeling of a band around the forehead and tight neck muscles. The pain is steady, and sometimes throbbing.

Treatment of stress headaches focuses on prevention and lifestyle changes. When you're stressed, you may unknowingly tighten the muscles of your body, including those in the forehead and neck. By paying attention to this feeling of tightness in your head, you can start treating a headache before it gets bad. This is an example of how to use prevention to positively affect your health.

One way that you can treat headaches is with essential oils. They're very concentrated essences of plants, and they hold a very high energy level. The energy level of the plant's essential oil is transferred into the person who uses it. Essential oils have many useful properties: they can be antibacterial, antiviral, relaxing, antifungal, detoxifying, and more.

Next time you have a stress headache, try one of these remedies:

### **Lavender Steaming**



# Lavender



One way to deal with stress headaches is to add a couple drops of essential oil of lavender or basil to a bath. You can also make a steam bath using the following instructions.

Add a few drops of lavender oil to a bowl of hot water. With a large bath towel, make a tent for yourself by covering your head and the bowl with the towel, and breathe in the steam from the bowl. Be careful not to knock over the bowl. Breathe in the steam for about five minutes. You'll feel instantly relaxed, and your face will look revitalized, too!

## **Lavender Tea Compress**

Lavender can also be made into a compress and applied to the neck or forehead to enhance your relaxation.

### *Ingredients*

1 tsp. lavender flowers

1 cup boiling water

1 hand towel

### *Instructions*

Cover the lavender flowers with the boiling water. Strain the liquid, and soak the hand towel in it. Wring out and apply warm or cool as desired to affected region.

## **Stress-Less Tea**

### *Ingredients*

1 tsp. chamomile flowers

1/2 tsp. lemon basil leaf

1/4 tsp. rose petals

1/8 tsp. orange peel

1 cup boiling water

### *Instructions*

Blend all ingredients together. Cover with boiling water. Cover and let steep 20 minutes. Strain the herbs from the tea, and drink warm or cold. I recommend drinking 3 to 4 cups daily when you're feeling stressed.

Note: did you notice how this tea uses two nervous-system-boosting herbs—chamomile and basil—together? You can combine herbs that work on one system of the body to achieve a greater effect.

## **The One-Hour Stress Buster**

*Eleutherococcus senticosus*, called “eleuthero” for short, is also known as Siberian ginseng. Recently, there's been a resurgence in its use as a stress-buster formula.

When you're under a lot of stress, large amounts of cortisol are produced by your adrenal glands. This is a normal response as your body tries to adapt to stress. However, if the stress continues for hours or days, high levels of cortisol can build up and damage the body. High cortisol is linked to the storage of abdominal fat,

and the chemical processes that your body undergoes in the presence of cortisol can make it hard to get rid of this extra roll of fat.

Eleuthero is an adaptogen, a type of herb that allows the body to come back to normal functioning. For example, an adaptogen that “reads” high cortisol in the body will help bring the cortisol levels down to normal. And research shows that eleuthero is quite good at this—levels of cortisol drop substantially within an hour.

### *Ingredients*

1 tsp. eleuthero

1 cup boiling water

### *Instructions*

Place the eleuthero in a coffee cup and add boiling water. Cover the cup with a plate and let steep for 5 minutes. Strain and drink the tea warm. Pay attention to how you feel in an hour—you might be surprised!

## **Aromatherapy for Lifting Your Mood**

### *Ingredients*

1 Tbsp. chai tea blend

2 qts. water

### *Instructions*

In a large pot, add chai tea to water. Simmer for a few hours. The simmering will release the volatile oils and fragrances into the air, and you’ll notice a big difference in how you feel within minutes. You can add additional water to the pot and keep the good feelings flowing all day long! However, be careful that the water doesn’t all boil off, as the herbs will burn in the pot.

## **Massage for Stress Headaches**

Massage may also help when it comes to stress headaches. According to many research studies on massage therapy, the benefits are practically endless. Massage stimulates the circulation and lymphatic flow, relaxes us, helps us sleep better, and strengthens the immune system.

### *Raindrop Massage Technique*

One massage therapy technique called the raindrop technique uses more types of essential oils on the body, including peppermint, basil, lavender, spruce, blue tansy, rosewood, spruce, frankincense, wintergreen, marjoram, and balsam. Each essential oil has its own healing properties. If you want to see a really interesting video on this therapy, go to <http://youtu.be/6O166gsiCdU>.

### **General Nutrition**

If you have stress headaches, I would encourage the use of foods and herbs that are rich in calcium, magnesium, and B vitamins. Good foods for these nutrients include raspberry leaf, nettle, whole grains, and a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, especially the deep-green leafy veggies.

### **Migraine Headaches**

Migraines are different from regular headaches in that they're often long-lasting, very intense, and one-sided. They can be associated with menses. Nausea and vomiting may also occur. The pain from a migraine can be throbbing or constant. Migraines sometimes run in families, so if one of your parents gets them, you may, too.

Food allergies or specific foods such as processed meats, red wine, chocolate, and some cheeses are common triggers for migraines. Try to identify which foods might be triggers for your headaches.



The most important step in prevention is to give these headaches some deep thought. What are the underlying imbalances, such as hormonal issues, that may need to be addressed? When you know the answer, you can decide appropriately what to do. Pay attention to what brings your migraines on and talk to a doctor about it, and you might discover certain triggers.

Research has shown that 500 mg magnesium is pretty effective in preventing migraines, and taking 2000 mg of vitamin C sometimes helps when taken immediately after the headache starts.

When it comes to herbal medicine, cold compresses of peppermint tea sometimes help. Dandelion leaf may be the herb of choice if you have migraines with fluid retention or edema; the dandelion leaf relieves the fluid retention and may help if the migraines are related to menses. Similarly, evening primrose, black current seed, or borage seed oils may help if taken on a regular basis when menses are involved.

## **Migraine Headache Reliever**

The following remedy is one of my favorites, and works very well for my family.

### *Ingredients*

1 qt. boiling water

1 cup chamomile flowers

2 soft hand towels

### *Instructions*

Cover chamomile flowers with boiling water. Cover and steep for 20 minutes. Strain out the flowers.

Have the headache sufferer lie face down on a comfortable surface in a darkened, quiet area. Dip one towel into the chamomile infusion, and place it on the back of the sufferer's neck and shoulders. Lay the dry towel over the moist one.

Encourage the person to take slow, deep breaths or perform progressive muscle relaxation while lying with the compress.

Note: progressive muscle relaxation involves tightening a muscle in the body, then willfully relaxing it before moving onto the next muscle. For example, you begin by squeezing your toe muscles, then relaxing them. Next, squeeze your foot muscles and relax them. Work your way all the way up to the neck, face, and head.

## **Sinus Headaches**

Sinus headaches are characterized by nasal stuffiness and a runny nose. Your sinuses are part of your respiratory tract and are considered by many to be part of your nervous system too, since they're so close to your brain.

You may experience tenderness in the sinus region or face, as well as earache and frontal headache. People with sinus headaches are likely to have a history of allergies. Sinus headaches are often seasonal in nature.

Try to determine the source of these headaches. Is it because of an infection? If so, your immune system is also involved, and you may need to speak to a healthcare professional.



Consider if the headaches are related to any food or environmental allergies that you may have. An elimination diet or rotation diet may be needed to determine whether you have food allergies.

If the cause is pollen, drink a standard infusion of nettle tea three times daily for three months prior to when the allergic reactions generally occur.

The supplement called CoQ 10 may also be taken daily and may be helpful with allergies. Consuming local honey or bee pollen

regularly and eating a healthy, balanced, Mediterranean diet may also help.

For acute episodes, an aromatherapy diffuser with eucalyptus oil could ease your pain. To use this method, just get out your diffuser, add a few drops of eucalyptus oil, and use the diffuser as you normally would.

### **Goldenrod Standard Infusion to Relieve Sinus Headache**

My favorite herb for relief of sinus headaches is goldenrod. Many people think that goldenrod causes hay fever, which results in sinus headaches, but it doesn't. The culprit is actually ragweed, which peaks at the same time that the goldenrod is blooming. Be sure to see a healthcare practitioner if you suspect a sinus infection.

I make this standard infusion and drink 3 to 4 cups hot every day that I have a sinus headache. It works extremely fast and well.

#### *Ingredients*

1 cup boiling water

1 tsp. goldenrod, dried

#### *Instructions*

Pour boiling water over goldenrod. Cover and let sit 20 minutes. Strain out the herbs. Drink the tea hot.

### **Rejuvenate, Revitalize and Refresh your Body**

Busy people sometimes turn to caffeine for a pick-me-up. Next time you're feeling a bit sluggish, rather than purchasing an unhealthy commercial product, you can try this natural caffeinated beverage. It has the health benefits of black and green teas as well as vitamin C and bioflavonoids.



For a variation, you can add carbonated water to this tea. It makes a nice punch, and I like to serve it when entertaining—guests feel at their mental best!

## **Energizing Tea**

### *Ingredients*

1 tsp. or teabag of black tea

1 tsp. or teabag green tea

1 tsp. Hibiscus sabdariffa flower (called “sorrel” when used as a beverage)

3 tsp. peppermint

2 tangerines

1-inch piece fresh peeled gingerroot, crushed

1 qt. boiling water

Honey to taste



## *Green tea*

### *Instructions*

Place the teas, hibiscus, peppermint, crushed ginger root, and zest of one tangerine into a large beverage container.

Cover with boiling water. Cover and let sit for 20 minutes. Strain the solids from the tea.

Juice the tangerines, and add the juice to the container. Add ice, and honey to taste. Makes 6 servings.

Note: a study in 2008 by the USDA showed that daily consumption of three cups of hibiscus tea lowered systolic blood pressure by 8 to 13 mmHg. The higher the subject's blood pressure was at the beginning of the study, the greater the

response to the tea.

## **Insomnia**

Low-quality sleep, including the inability to fall asleep and the inability to stay asleep, affects millions of people. If you're suffering from insomnia, try to determine what's preventing you from getting the rest you need. Avoid caffeine late in the day. Don't look at the television or your computer before you go to bed. While a television in your bedroom may seem desirable, it can be a real impediment to falling asleep soundly.

Stress and discomfort get in the way of a good night's sleep. Are your room and your bed conducive to sleep?

Relaxation before bed is important. Meditation may help you to unwind, and some people find that a hot bath or shower relaxes them before bed. Try to figure out the best way for you to let go of your daily stresses before bed time.

Try using some essential oils that have relaxing properties—jasmine, marjoram, and rose are my favorites. Adding a few drops to a warm footbath before bed will soothe you and help you sleep deeply.

Herbs can also promote sleep. Different people respond to different herbs: linden, red clover, passionflower, hops and chamomile are all common sleep aids. Play with different combinations, and write down your blends as you create them so that you can make them in the future when you find a winning combination.

## **Sweet Surrender Bedtime Beverage**

Here's an exotic recipe that may promote sweet dreams.

### *Ingredients*

2 cups very warm milk

1 Tbsp. maple syrup

1/4 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg

Sprinkle of cardamom

### *Instructions*

Combine the milk and maple syrup. Pour into two cups. Grate nutmeg on top. Sprinkle with cardamom. Serves 2.

### **Lemon Balm Calming Tea**

Lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*) is another herb that can calm down and relax adults and children. The herb has a lemony scent and sometimes you'll find it added to ice cream or pesto. Lemon balm has antiviral properties against Herpes simplex, the virus that causes cold sores. It also has antibacterial properties.



However, moms love lemon balm for its ability to sedate someone who is anxious or just can't relax. Scientists have found that the herb inhibits GABA transaminase, which is why anxiety flees with a cup of lemon balm tea. They've also found that a bad mood is easily turned to a good one with this herb.

And those with grandparents or parents with Alzheimer's disease will be happy to discover that the herb seems to make a difference in those with this form of dementia.

### *Ingredients*

1 tsp. lemon balm

1 cup boiling water

### *Instructions*

Place the herb in a coffee cup. Add the boiling water, cover, and let steep for 5 minutes. Strain the tea and drink.

## ***Healthy Recipes for Nervous System Health***

### **Grilled Salmon with Lemon Basil**

Have you heard it said that fish is brain food? Well, there's some truth to this.

Cold, deep-water, oily fish are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, an essential nutrient for the brain and nervous system. Wild-caught ocean fish pack more of this nutrient than farm-raised ones.

Try this easy summer treat to add fish to your diet. One of my sisters thinks it's the best way to cook her favorite fish!

### *Ingredients*

Sauce:

1/4 cup olive oil

4 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed

1 cup fresh basil

1 cup fresh lemon basil

1 Tbsp. fresh lemon thyme

Fish:

1 Tbsp. lemon juice

1 Tbsp. olive oil

4 (6-oz.) salmon steaks



*Instructions*

To prepare the sauce, blend the first five ingredients in a blender or food processor until the herbs are finely chopped. Set aside. You may need to add a little extra oil during the process.

Mix the lemon juice and 1 tablespoon olive oil together in a small bowl. Using a brush, coat the salmon with the lemon oil blend.

Grill salmon over medium coals for 5 minutes (you can also broil it, if you don't have access to a grill). Turn over. Brush with herb blend. Grill 3 to 5 minutes longer or until fish flakes easily with a fork. Serve immediately, adding sauce to the fish. Serves 4.

### **Hot Mulled Apple Cider**

This is a great recipe for cooler weather. I make it every Thanksgiving, and my daughter-in-law keeps a pot of this cider on the back of the stove when the weather gets cold. The entire house smells wonderful!

Not only does this cider create a very welcoming aroma, but it also contains kitchen spices that are rich in antioxidants and minerals that support the health of the brain.

#### *Ingredients*

1 gallon apple cider, preferably local, minimally processed

1/2 cup maple syrup

4 3-inch cinnamon sticks

1 tsp. dried ginger

2 tsp. whole cloves

2 tsp. allspice

1/4 tsp. nutmeg

1/4 tsp. cardamom



### *Instructions*

Stir all ingredients together in a crockpot. Heat on low for 2 hours, and serve. Serves 12 to 16.

### **Chamomile Jelly**

The following recipe is a wonderful treat on toast, and it's a good way to get children to consume chamomile for healing purposes. In addition to being relaxing, chamomile is also a terrific remedy for children's coughs and colds. This jelly is a bestseller when I prepare it for the local farmer's market.

### *Ingredients*

1 cup fresh chamomile flowers

4 cups water

1 box powdered dry pectin

4 cups sugar

### *Instructions*

Simmer flowers and water for 10 minutes, covered. Strain resulting tea through three layers of cheesecloth.

Measure out 3 cups of tea. Combine tea and pectin together in a large saucepan. Bring to a hard boil. Add sugar.

Boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Pour into hot, sterilized jars. Cover. Store in a cool dark place. Refrigerate after opening.

## **2. The Circulatory System**

### ***Overview of the Circulatory System***

The circulatory system consists of the heart and blood vessels. Circulatory disease is the leading cause of death in America and most Western societies. Fortunately, heart and blood vessel health has been studied extensively, and circulatory health can be improved greatly by lifestyle and nutritional choices. Several herbs and complementary therapies have well-documented studies that prove their efficacy.

### **Heart Anatomy**

The heart is a muscle composed of four chambers: the two atria (right and left) are the receiving chambers, while the two ventricles propel blood away from the heart. The right ventricle pumps blood to the lungs so that the blood can become rich with oxygen, and the left ventricle pumps the oxygenated blood throughout the body. Between the chambers are valves that ensure the blood goes to the right places at the proper times.



Your heartbeat is based on electrical impulses that originate in various nodes within the heart. When an electrical signal is received, your atria and ventricles contract, sending moving blood through the heart and about the body.

### **Arteries, Veins, and Capillaries**

Blood travels through arteries away from the heart to the rest of the body, where it enters tiny vessels called capillaries that allow blood to perfuse into all the tissues of our bodies. Blood is returned to the heart via veins. Unlike arteries, veins may have valves to aid in the blood return to the heart.

The circulation to and from the lungs, called pulmonary circulation, is a specialized process. There are also specialized vessels that provide circulation to the heart itself.

### ***Requirements and Risk Factors for Circulatory Health***

For blood to flow freely, the heart must be a strong pump and the electrical system must be functioning properly for the heartbeat to be rhythmic and effective. The heart needs to beat a proper rate to allow filling and emptying of the four chambers. In addition, blood vessels need to be strong, flexible, smooth, and unobstructed in order for blood to flow properly.

The circulatory system is closely linked with every other system of the body, especially the renal system. Circulatory health is based upon several factors, many of which can be modified so that you can improve your health.

#### **Risk Factor 1: Diet**

Diets rich in saturated fats, processed foods, and salt wreak havoc with the circulatory system. Fortunately, this is an area that herbs and other nutritional choices can be implemented for improving your health.



## **Risk Factor 2: Stress**

Relieving stress through meditation, spiritual support, and healthy relationships all benefit cardiac and circulatory health. People with type-A personalities are at higher risk for circulatory disease. Fortunately, coping skills can be learned at any age.

### **Risk Factor 3: Exercise**

Inactivity increases the risk of heart and circulatory problems. Regular exercise helps prevent obesity, which is another risk factor for heart disease. In addition, regular exercise helps the body to utilize insulin and blood glucose more efficiently. Diabetics have a higher risk of developing circulation problems. Thus, the control of diabetes is essential for good cardiac health. Herbs are an important part of any health program to reverse diabetes.

### **Risk Factor 4: Genetics**

Heredity is a risk factor that cannot be changed. It's a very important factor, but keep in mind that it's only one of several.

### **Risk Factor 5: Smoking**

Smoking stresses the blood vessels. Nicotine constricts the arteries, causing an increase in blood pressure. Carbon monoxide from smoking decreases the amount of essential oxygen in the blood. And then there are all the carcinogens found in tobacco smoke and cigarettes. It's mind-boggling to know that with every puff, you're exposing your body's cells to hundreds of them at one time!

### **Risk Factor 6: Age**

Aging increases the accumulation of wear and tear that our body has sustained. It's a factor that we cannot control; we can, however, control how well we age, no matter what the date is on our birth certificate. By controlling the oxidation rate in the body, you can slow aging (in fact, there's a test for oxidative stress you can have performed that tells you how well you're aging). When you lower your body's oxidative stress level with antioxidants, you can slow aging. Thus, herbs high in antioxidants are helpful in this regard.

## **Risk Factor 7: Gender**

Heart attacks and circulatory disease used to be more prevalent in males, but in recent years the disparity of circulatory problems between the sexes has become more balanced. Due to a drop in certain hormones, women are more prone to experience heart attacks after menopause than before.

Fortunately, there is much known about circulatory health and illnesses. We live at a time when we can choose some very effective strategies to improve and maintain excellent circulatory health.

## **Cholesterol and Triglycerides**

Cholesterol is produced naturally in the body and is essential for health. Diet adds to the body's production through the consumption of animal fats. Plant fats do not contain cholesterol.

Cholesterol is used to form hormones and to utilize vitamin D. It's also involved in mood regulation. Some studies have shown that people with cancer sometimes have low levels of cholesterol, but problems may also result if we have too much cholesterol. It can build up in our blood vessels if it's oxidized, and this contributes to hardening of the arteries, high blood pressure, blood clots, heart attack, and stroke. When these conditions are present, blood flow to the brain or throughout the body may be compromised.

The culprit is oxidized low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, also known as LDL cholesterol. It's a sticky substance that builds up on the walls of your blood vessels. Fortunately, we also have HDL, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, which is cardio-protective. HDL has anti-inflammatory properties and helps stabilize the unhealthy LDL. The important number to consider when cholesterol levels are documented is the ratio of HDL to LDL (you want this ratio to be high).



Genetics play an important role in cholesterol management, but fortunately, herbal and dietary interventions can be as beneficial as medications used to reduce cholesterol without the side effects that pharmaceuticals can precipitate.

Triglycerides are blood fats. Elevated triglycerides are actually more indicative of risk of circulatory damage than cholesterol levels. Elevated blood sugar levels cause triglyceride levels to increase, so diabetics are at increased risk of circulatory problems for this reason as well.

### ***Heart-Healthy Eating***

A heart-healthy diet provides health benefits for the entire body. The Mediterranean diet, which is rich in vegetables and healthy fats, has been studied extensively and offers many delicious nutritious ideas. But don't forget that you still need protein in your diet!

Foods high in fiber help to reduce cholesterol. Examples include whole grains, such as bran cereals or oatmeal. Nuts and legumes, like edamame, are also excellent choices.

Plant-based fats, such as those found in olive and coconut oils, are great additions to your diet. Cold-water fish like tuna, mackerel, and salmon contain healthy fats, while nut and seed oils, including corn oil, soy oil, sesame oil, cottonseed oil, and vegetable oils, are high in unhealthy fats that cause inflammation in the body. These fats are highly unstable and may be oxidized in the body, raising cholesterol levels and contributing to plaque in the arteries. New research is finding, surprisingly, that saturated fats, which were previously considered to be the unhealthiest, are much more stable than these unsaturated fats.

Small amounts of red wine or pure grape juice are beneficial to the heart, as are shitake mushrooms, which can help to lower cholesterol. Include seaweeds in your diet, as they are rich in trace minerals and feed the circulatory system.

One of the best heart-healthy strategies is to eat a colorful variety of vitamin-rich fruits and vegetables to take advantage of the multiple benefits of phytonutrients. Include several raw portions daily.



Cooked tomatoes are rich in lycopene, which is cardio-protective. Be aware that tomatoes are some of the most chemically treated vegetables, so opt for organic and try to get the heirloom variety. The allium family, which includes garlic and onions, also contains numerous heart healthy components.

Another heart-healthy strategy is to include a rich variety of herbs and spices in your diet. These are rich sources of antioxidants. In addition, by flavoring your foods with herbs and spices, you can prepare varied delicious dishes that don't rely on large amounts of salt for flavor. A heart-healthy diet is not high in sodium from salt.

### **Choosing Healthy Dietary Fats**

Fats are important nutrients. They provide our most concentrated sources of energy, and they're essential for all bodily functions. Fats are especially important for the health of the circulatory and nervous systems.

Fats rich in essential fatty acids improve healthy cholesterol levels and improve the HDL: LDL ratio. They also reduce inflammation, which reduces the likelihood of stroke and heart attacks. Unfortunately, consumption of the wrong kind of fats or too many fats leads to serious health issues. Heart disease, several cancers, obesity, high blood pressure, and multiple other threats to health may result from high fat intake.

### **Saturated Fats: Not As Bad as We Thought**

There are three types of fats. Saturated fats are stable and hard at room temperature. These fats are found in things like butter, lard, and vegetable shortening. Naturally saturated fats are stable in their natural forms, such as in butter and lard. Coconut oil is a healthy saturated fat, and butter contains some components that are chemo-protective.

However, vegetable shortening, a manmade fat, is very unhealthy. Similarly, foods with trans-fats and margarines are also very unhealthy. These foods block the absorption of essential fats in the body.

### **Unsaturated Fats: Linked to High LDL Levels**

Polyunsaturated fats include some brands of margarine and the vegetable and seed/grain oils such as corn oil, soy oil, sesame seed oil, walnut oil, almond oil, cottonseed oil, and vegetable oil. These are the types of fats that aren't stable, and they've been linked to the production of free radicals, also known as oxidants. They are harmful toxic molecules that our bodies produce when they break down food. However, on the other hand, some polyunsaturated fats, such as the omega-3 fats DHA and EPA, are heart-healthy.

Monosaturated fats are plant-based fats that are liquid at room temperature. Olive oil is a monounsaturated type of fat, as is peanut oil.

## **Selecting Fats to Consume**

Fortunately, we have many options to consider when selecting fats to include in our diets. Purchase the best quality, minimally processed, cold-pressed oils that you can afford.

Some oil manufacturers put recommendations on their labels for cooking temperatures, as any fat that is overheated may become rancid. Do not reuse fats that have been used for cooking. Avocados are a food source of heart healthy fats but they are unsaturated fats so never cook them in any dish you make.

Our bodies need essential fatty acids, so going on a low-fat diet is not heart-healthy. Your hormones are created from fats and you can end up with hormone disorders if you're on a low-fat diet for long periods of time.

## **What Are Essential Fats?**

Essential fatty acids (EFA) are not manufactured by our bodies and must be ingested. EFAs are important for many body processes, and they protect the body from cancer and reduce inflammation. Inflammation is considered the root of multiple illnesses, including heart attacks and other circulatory diseases.

Excellent sources of essential fats include coldwater fatty fish, dark green leafy vegetables, nuts, and flax seed. However, don't expect to get your omega-3 fats solely from flax seeds or nuts. These foods contain much higher levels of omega-6 fats than omega-3s, and the omega-6s contribute to inflammation in the body. Also, your body only can use up to a maximum of 15% of the plant sources of omega-3 essential fats. This means that your best sources are coldwater fish or supplements from those fish.

Most people consume an excess of omega-6 and omega-9 fats. The omega fats are all polyunsaturated and unstable fats. Omega-3s are often lacking in the diet. Flax seeds and flax oils are fine suppliers of omega-3 fatty acids, but remember that only

15% of them will be absorbed in the body and that they come with omega-6 fats, too.

Fish oil or krill oil supplements are healthy options.

Ever Heard of Omega-7 Fats?

Macadamia nuts are delicious and contain the hard-to-find omega-7 fatty acids. Sea buckthorn, an herb, has the highest concentration of omega-7.

### ***Heart-Healthy Means Variety***

Including a variety of foods in your diet is the secret to a heart-healthy diet. Avoid processed foods, as they contain less healthy fats and can increase inflammation. Consider supplementation if you don't consistently eat a healthy diet or are having health concerns. And really, that includes every one of us! Who can possibly eat a healthy diet every day of their life?

Let's take a look at some simple but highly effective herbal interventions that you can incorporate at home to ensure a healthy heart and circulatory system.

### ***Heart-Healthy Herbs***

There are many herbs that benefit the heart and circulatory system, including many of the herbs listed in other chapters. For now, we'll focus on three herbs. All are right in your own kitchen. Garlic, cayenne, and ginger are inexpensive and easily obtained seasonings packed with heart-healthy nutrients.

#### **Garlic (*Allium sativa*)**



Scientists have extensively studied garlic over the last four decades. It lowers the risk of heart disease, helps to reduce LDL cholesterol, and to increase HDL cholesterol. Garlic can also help to reduce triglycerides. Did you know that garlic reduces blood pressure and is helpful in the prevention of the hardening of the arteries called atherosclerosis?

Garlic helps keep the blood flowing freely throughout the peripheral circulatory system. Some people have leg cramps due to poor circulation in the legs, and garlic can be helpful in preventing this painful condition.

A clove of garlic daily is beneficial for heart health. Garlic provides multiple health benefits, including mood-regulating functions, improving the flow of bile, and hormone production. It can also help to expel pinworms. Because it's metabolized

partially by the respiratory system, garlic is especially beneficial for respiratory ills. It's rich in antioxidants, iodine, and sulfur.

Blood clots can cause a lot of problems in the body. For example, when a blood clot lodges in the brain, a stroke can occur. When blood clots lodge in the heart, a heart attack can result. Yet, if you consume a substance such as garlic on a regular basis, then you're preventing the formation of these blood clots. Can you see how this lowly herb can be a powerful medicine?

Garlic's relatives, such as onions, shallots, leeks, and chives, all contain similar constituents, but to a lesser degree. Garlic has been a popular folk medicine for centuries. In some societies, garlic was worn around the neck to fight off evil and disease. In fact, the disease part of the tradition actually worked! One of the keys to this is allicin, a natural antibiotic that's found in garlic.

Garlic is best used fresh or lightly cooked. For people who don't like to eat garlic, try putting the garlic pieces between your toes overnight with the help of a sock. The healing properties of garlic are quickly absorbed through the skin. You'll be able to tell that it's working because the person will exhale garlic breath.

If you're afraid of having garlic breath, you can find commercially available odor-free supplements. Check with your health care provider before you start increasing your intake of garlic if you're on blood thinners or a surgery is planned, as garlic possesses anticoagulant characteristics.

## **Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)**





Ginger is one of my favorite herbs. Who knew that gingerbread cookies could be healthy when real ginger is used?

Fresh ginger and dried ginger both have medicinal properties; however, fresh ginger is the most potent. If you aren't going to use fresh ginger in great quantities, keep it in the freezer.

Have you ever had candied ginger? It's available for purchase at health food stores. When I was a nurse at a student health center, I used to keep some in a jar—the students would stop by and eat some if they had upset stomachs or stuffed-up heads. It's very tasty.

Ginger is considered a stimulating herb: it gets the blood flowing. This prevents blood clots from forming and aids the functioning of the heart. This action also reduces high blood pressure.

Ginger is also a warming herb. It's been studied for use with nausea associated with pregnancy and chemotherapy, and it works for any sort of nausea and motion sickness.

Ginger benefits the entire body, but it has particular affinity for the circulatory, respiratory, reproductive, and digestive systems. It can relieve cramps, and it's even been used to treat osteoarthritis.

I use ginger in many blends. Ginger and other stimulant herbs serve to activate and potentiate the healing effects of the other herbs that they are blended with. Ginger is especially useful because of its flavor, which can mask the taste of less palatable herbs.

You can grow a ginger plant in a pot by covering a 1-1/2-inch piece of a root of ginger with soil and watering well.

**Cayenne (*Capsicum frutescens*, *Capsicum annuum*, and others)**



Fiery cayenne pepper is the ultimate warming herb. It increases the strength of the heart's contraction without increasing blood pressure. It may help prevent heart attacks, and it lowers

cholesterol. It also has antispasmodic, antibacterial, and astringent properties. Cayenne prevents platelets from clumping and causing harmful blood clots.

Cayenne has been used externally and internally to relieve cluster headaches, nerve pain, and joint pain. It's also used as an antiseptic wash.

Cayenne is a rich source of vitamin C, which benefits digestion. You can use it topically to treat nerve pain. You should feel a warmth in the joints after applying the topical cayenne, but it might take a couple weeks for long-term benefit, so give it some time.

Cayenne can relieve pain associated with herpes infections, including shingles. It has also been used to treat psoriasis, osteoarthritis, and diabetic neuropathy.

Use cayenne with care, as it is very hot. Opt for the lower strength cayenne peppers at first, and only proceed to the higher strength formulas after you're used to these lower strength formulas. For example, start out with the 25,000 HU (heat units) or BTU (British Thermal Units) strength and then proceed to increase it to 45,000.

You really don't have to worry about burns if you use the lower strength formulas unless you use cayenne topically on open skin. Using cayenne on an open wound wouldn't be too smart. However, use common sense. Do you have ulcers? Then don't use it—it's too powerful for you!

Do you have hemorrhoids? What goes in hot comes out hot, and there can be some pain with hemorrhoids when you take cayenne. However, is it harming you? No. In fact, it's probably healing up the condition. It's just easier on the body to use a more soothing herb for something like hemorrhoids.

People with digestive ills should consult with their health care provider before employing therapeutic amounts of cayenne. You

should also speak with a health professional if you are taking MAOI (monoamine oxidase inhibitor) medications or ACE (angiotensin-converting enzyme) inhibitors.

**Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna, Crataegus mexicana, Crataegus laevigata, Crataegus pinnatifida, and others) and dandelion (Taraxacum officinale and Taraxacum erythrospermum)**



*Hawthorn berries*

Hawthorn berry is an herb that can be obtained from an herb shop, or you may gather the berries in the fall if they grow in your area. These berries are rich in antioxidants, and help your body regulate blood pressure. It relaxes the coronary arteries, which supply blood to the heart itself, and dilates major blood vessels.

Hawthorn berry is generally a very safe herb. Always check with your health care provider before using it if you take digoxin or any other medications, as any herb can potentiate the effects of a drug. It takes about two weeks for the benefits of consuming hawthorn for blood pressure reduction to be seen.

Dandelion leaf is a wonderful herb that's rich in nutrients. It has diuretic properties but, unlike diuretic drugs, it doesn't deplete the body of potassium. Dandelion is a rich source of the mineral.

## ***Illnesses and Remedies***

### **High Blood Pressure**

This condition affects millions of people, and puts them at increased risk for things like heart disease and stroke. Use this tea to help bring your blood pressure down and reduce your risk.

### **Low Blood Pressure Tea**

This remedy contains herbs that have traditionally been used to lower high blood pressure. The blend is rich in vitamins and antioxidants, and improves circulation throughout the entire body. It uses ginger for its health benefits and to improve the flavor of the blend.

### ***Ingredients***

1 tsp. hawthorn berries, dried

1 tsp. blueberries, dried

1 tsp. dandelion leaf, dried

1 tsp. ginger root, freshly peeled and grated

2 cups water

### ***Instructions***

Place the berries in a pot. Cover with water. Bring to a boil. Cover and let simmer for 20 minutes.

Remove from heat. Add remaining ingredients. Cover. Let sit for 20 minutes. Strain and drink. Makes 2 cups of tea.

### **Hardening of the Arteries**

Circulation becomes impaired when deposits build up inside the arteries and narrow blood vessels. This is when the blood vessels can become stiff and inflexible. Sometimes people with blood vessel issues complain of having cold hands and feet; can you see why this happens?

### **Circulation Spice Tea**

The herbs in this blend improve blood vessel health and promote warmth.

#### *Ingredients*

- 4 tsp. green tea
- 3 tsp. ginger, dried
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. cardamom
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. allspice
- 1 cup boiling water

#### *Instructions*

Combine herbs. Pour boiling water over 2 teaspoons of the herb blend. Let sit 20 minutes.

Strain. Makes 1 cup of tea. Drink hot or warm. Sweeten if desired. Recipe makes 5 servings.

## **High Cholesterol**

LDL cholesterol builds up in blood vessels and creates high blood pressure and hardening of the arteries, as well as increasing the risk for serious heart diseases. Using the proper herbs is a great way to improve your HDL:LDL ratio.

### **Artichoke Tea**

The artichoke herb (*Cynara cardunculus* and *Cynara scolymus*), also known as Chinese artichoke or knotroot, is known to improve the body's digestive ability as well as enhance liver and gall bladder functioning. It's also one of the few herbs that can raise HDL cholesterol levels and lower LDL cholesterol levels at the same time. While the herb is working on cholesterol, it has a dual function that helps lower blood pressure, too. What an herb!



### *Ingredients*

1 tsp. artichoke leaves, dried

1 cup boiling water

### *Instructions*

Add herb to a coffee cup and pour in boiling water. Cover. Let steep for 5 minutes. Then strain and drink the tea.

### *Healthy Recipes for Your Heart*



## **Cholesterol-Lowering Toast**

Try this easy food remedy to keep cholesterol levels in check. It is also prevents infections.

### *Ingredients*

1 slice whole grain bread

1 tsp. olive oil

2 cloves garlic, crushed or finely minced

### *Instructions*

Preheat broiler to low. Brush bread with olive oil. Sprinkle garlic on bread. Toast bread under broiler until light brown. Do not overcook, or garlic will be bitter and some of its healing properties will be diminished. Serves 1.

Enjoy daily for optimal benefits if using to reduce cholesterol. If being used for infections, enjoy several times daily.

## **Macadamia Walnut Salad**

This heart-healthy salad is a rich source of omega-3 and omega-7 fatty acids, and the chickpeas are a good source of fiber. Dried cherries, ginger, and garlic have multiple health benefits for the circulatory and immune systems.

### *Ingredients*

Vinaigrette:

1 clove garlic, crushed

1/2-inch piece ginger, freshly peeled and finely chopped

1/2 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

2 tablespoons macadamia nut oil

Salad:

4 cups romaine lettuce, torn into large pieces

1 can low-sodium chickpeas, rinsed and drained

1/4 cup cherries, dried

1/4 cup celery, chopped

1/4 cup walnuts, chopped



### *Instructions*

Combine vinaigrette ingredients in a small bowl. Set aside.

Place lettuce in a large bowl. Combine remaining salad ingredients and toss with lettuce.

Stir vinaigrette dressing and pour over salad immediately before serving. Serves 4 to 6.

### **Nutty Snack Mix**

This recipe is rich in fiber, antioxidants, and heart-healthy fats, including the less-common omega-7 fats.

### *Ingredients*

1 cup walnuts  
1 cup macadamia nuts  
1 cup peanuts  
1 Tbsp. dried rosemary  
1 tsp. garlic, dried  
2 tablespoons parmesan cheese  
1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper  
4 cups popcorn, popped

### *Instructions*

Toast the nuts in an ungreased frying pan over medium heat. Stir frequently. Add rosemary, garlic, and cayenne pepper when nuts are toasted. Stir to combine ingredients. Remove from heat. Add popcorn. Mix ingredients lightly with a large spoon. Add parmesan cheese. Mix again and serve. Makes 7 cups.

## **Spicy Nuts and Fruit**

These are rich in healthy fats and spices that stimulate circulatory health.

### *Ingredients*

1 tsp. macadamia nut oil  
1 cup macadamia nuts

1 cup walnuts

1 tsp. cinnamon, ground

1/2 tsp. ginger, powdered

1/4 tsp. nutmeg, ground

1/8 tsp. cloves, ground

1 cup apricots, dried

1 cup cranberries, dried

1 cup cherries, dried

### *Instructions*

Coat a frying pan with macadamia oil. Turn stovetop heat to medium. Add nuts. Stirring frequently, cook until toasted lightly. Stir in spices. Remove from heat. Cool slightly. Add dried fruits and combine. Makes 5 cups.

### 3. The Digestive System

#### *Overview of the Digestive System*

The digestive system breaks down foods into usable forms of energy for the body, and it's also involved in the elimination of wastes. The digestive system includes the mouth and teeth, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, colon and rectum.

While not part of the digestive system, the liver, gall bladder and pancreas help digestion to take place, so they form a kind of “peripheral” digestive system.

#### **When Does Digestion Start?**

Digestion begins when you ingest food into your mouth. Chewing breaks the food into smaller particles that are more easily swallowed and digested.

Much of the work of the digestive system involves the enzymes. Your salivary glands secrete amylase, an enzyme that begins to break down carbohydrates.

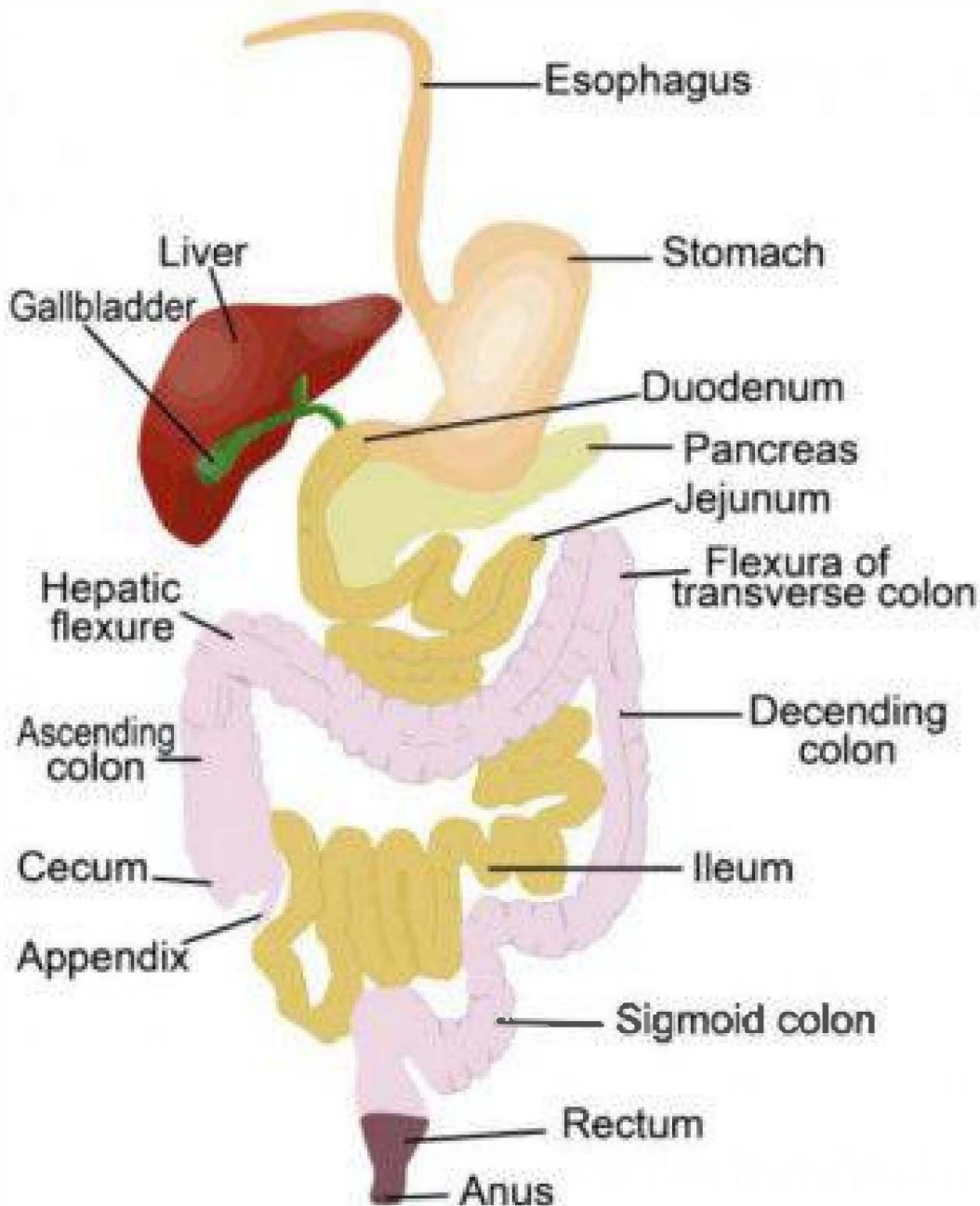
From the mouth, food travels through the back of the throat, called the pharynx, down the esophagus, and to the stomach. The stomach stores food and partially digests it. After two to six hours, the food slowly passes into the first part of the intestine, called the small intestine.

The small intestine is where the main part of digestion occurs and where absorption of nutrients happens. Most of the digestion happens in the beginning of the small intestine, called the duodenum. Different enzymes work to aid digestion as the food travels along. Each enzyme works to break down a respective macronutrient—fat, protein or carbohydrates. Each of those nutrients is metabolized differently during the digestive process.

The small intestine is over 20 feet long. The interior of the small intestine is covered with a special lining of fingerlike projections called villi. These increase the body's ability to absorb nutrients. Fatty acids are absorbed directly into the bloodstream or the lymphatic system.

After the nutrients are removed from the food, the remainder travels through the large intestine. The large intestine compacts the waste for elimination through the rectum and anus.

# DIGESTIVE SYSTEM



## **The Liver, Gall Bladder and Pancreas**

The hepatic system consists of the liver and gall bladder. It aids digestion, transportation, and storage of nutrients. The gall bladder is like a holding tank for bile; it controls the release of bile in response to the need for metabolism of fats. The liver stores glycogen, a carbohydrate, until the body needs energy. The pancreas releases pancreatic enzymes needed for metabolizing nutrients.

## **What about Fiber?**

People often think about the benefits of fiber for the digestive system. But did you know that fiber benefits both the circulatory and digestive systems, and many other bodily functions, as well?

There are two main types of fiber: soluble and insoluble. Soluble fiber absorbs water and improves bowel motility. It lowers cholesterol levels and removes excess estrogen from the body. It is found in psyllium seed, flax, oats, sesame seeds, bananas, apples, grapes, potatoes and beans.

Insoluble fiber can be found in wheat bran, apples, pears, tomatoes, carrots, strawberries, peas, whole grains, beets, eggplant, and potatoes. Insoluble fiber speeds up the elimination process. It absorbs very little water.

All fiber improves elimination and helps to maintain healthy intestinal flora.

## **How to Get Your Daily Fiber Requirement**

Try to get a minimum of 25 to 30 grams of fiber in your diet daily to optimize digestive health and general body wellness. If you're a female and short in stature, your goal is 25 grams. If you're average or tall in stature, your goal is 30 grams fiber daily.



Dr. Donna reports that this is an easy goal to obtain when you consider that a half-cup of beans usually provides 6 to 7.5 grams fiber. A serving of asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, or cabbage provides another 2.5 grams, and an apple provides about 3.7 grams.

What she tells her patients to do is to fill a 2-quart bowl with broccoli and cauliflower pieces and leave it on their desk while working during the day. Munch on the broccoli and cauliflower when you want to chew something. This will provide at least 10 grams fiber. Then eat two apples sometime during the day and for one meal include a half-cup beans. This will give you a total of about 25 grams fiber.

### **\*\*\* *Good to Know - Ethical Wildcrafting of Herbs* \*\*\***

Wildcrafting means collecting wild plants in the environment for personal or commercial use. Wildcrafting is what our primitive ancestors did whenever they went foraging for plants for their vegetables, nuts and berries.

Wildcrafting can be done in a way where plants are taken and the following year, none are left for collecting—or where you have plenty of plants left to cultivate for every successive year. The later way is called “ethical harvesting.”

Here are nine guidelines that will help you ethically harvest herbs.

#### **1. The Herb Must Be Correct**

First, you'll have to make sure you have the right plant. With an herb like the dandelion, identification is pretty straightforward, but some herbs have very close lookalikes that can be deadly. This is why it's important for you to find someone in your area who offers classes that involve herb identification. Take the class at different times of the year, since herbs look different in the spring, summer, fall, and winter.

#### **2. Don't Be a Thief**

When you do collect the correct herb from the field, make sure you have enough of the herbs you need, but don't rob the whole field. Always leave many more plants in the field than you harvest. Many herbalists reseed as they pick.

### **3. Be Knowledgeable about Plant Conservation**

Become familiar with what plants are considered threatened or endangered. Leave those alone in the wild. You may want to organically grow your own. An excellent organization that focuses on medicinal plant conservation is United Plant Savers.

### **4. Don't Be a Trespasser**

Be sure that you have permission to harvest on any land that you don't own.

### **5. Know the Dangerous Spots**

Learn the history of the land, as you don't want to harvest your medicine from toxic soil. Stay away from military bases, chemical plants, paper making companies, well-traveled roads, and landfills, which traditionally are quite toxic.

### **6. Stay Away from Endangered Plants**

Some plants that once were common have become endangered due to their popularity. Focus on collecting common plants that have similar actions to the ones in short supply.

### **7. Be Smart about Basic Herb Principles**

Generally speaking, roots are harvested in the spring and fall. Leaves and flowers are harvested in the late mornings after the dew has evaporated. Harvest leaves and flowers just as the young

leaf and flower buds are opening. Seeds and fruits are harvested when they are ripe.

## **8. Be Aware of Chemtrails in the Environment**

Herbs may be dried by hanging them in attics or outside or by placing the herbs on a screen in warm dark dry place. However, be smart. If you see chemtrails in the sky, guard your herbs from the chemicals and do not dry them outside.

One herbalist friend of Dr. Donna's noticed that her herbs were shinier than usual; the aluminum from the chemtrails had landed on her herbs as they were drying. This rendered the herbs totally useless. For more info, see <http://youtu.be/Ppr9D3STmwo> and <http://youtu.be/jf0khstYDLA>

## **9. Be Savvy about Drying Times**

Remember that drying times always vary depending upon the plant's water content and drying conditions.

**\*\*\* The End \*\*\***

## ***Herbs for Digestive Health***

Many herbs support the various actions of the digestive system. Lemon balm, chamomile, peppermint, and ginger help to relieve nausea. Burdock, dandelion, milk thistle, red clover, artichoke, and yellow dock aid liver function. Chamomile, slippery elm, aloe, and marshmallow root soothe the GI tract.

Digestive enzymes benefit from the addition of papaya and pineapple. Dandelion root, senna, burdock, and psyllium work as laxatives.

Herbs that benefit the liver promote the wellness of the entire person. Liver tonic herbs, such as dandelion, are also beneficial for healing disorders of the skin when taken internally.

## **Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)**



The little old dandelion is one of my favorite flowers. The month of May reminds me of gathering the bright yellow tops and playing games with them. Now I have the opportunity to do this with my grandchildren.

People who like lawns that look like golf courses unfortunately don't care for these beauties and don't know what they're missing. If only they knew how powerful the leaves and roots are for their health! The roots are primarily a digestive tonic, while the leaves aid the urinary system. You can gather your own in pristine locations. Dandelion greens are sometimes sold in grocery stores in the spring. They're some of the most nutrient-dense foods on earth.

Dandelions are considered bitters. They tone the digestive tract and help to improve the flow of bile, which aids liver function. Dandelions are rich sources of vitamins A and C. They also contain, iron, potassium and calcium.

In addition to helping the liver stay healthy, dandelions are mild laxatives and excellent diuretics. They also stimulate the appetite. The roots may be roasted and used to make a coffee substitution drink, though the medicinal benefits will be less than with the unroasted root.

If you want to include dandelion greens in your diet, pick them young (before flowering) or they will taste very bitter. The leaves are prepared as an infusion, while the roots are decocted.

### **Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*)**



Flaxseed and flaxseed oil could have been included in almost every chapter of this book. They're very versatile and possess incredible health benefits. As we discovered in the chapter on cardiovascular health, flax seeds are rich in healthy omega fatty acids, although only 15% of plant omega-3 fats are absorbed into the body.

Flaxseed oil should never be heated, as the health-promoting properties are destroyed by heat. I include the seeds in baked

goods, as the seeds still provide fiber, but for maximum effectiveness they should be unheated. Dr. Donna uses the ground seeds in smoothies.

Flax needs to be ground to release its goodness. Store ground flax in the refrigerator and grind it as needed. Flax is a very safe herb for all ages. Because of its demulcent properties, it should not be taken at the same times as medications.

Flaxseed has been scientifically researched and found effective in the treatment of constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, diverticulitis, and gastritis. Studies indicate that flaxseed is beneficial in the treatment of breast cancer, and it has been shown to slow metastatic disease.

Flax can decrease the development of atherosclerosis, a hardening of the arteries. Flaxseed can also help reduce high levels of cholesterol and triglycerides, and it's beneficial in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.

The therapeutic dosage is one tablespoon of flaxseed three times daily. You can purchase flaxseeds at your local grocery store.

### **Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*)**



Fennel is a lovely garden plant. It has fine-cut, fernlike foliage. It is also a delicious vegetable. The seeds are considered the most active medicinal parts.

I grow fennel in a large pot and nibbles on the fronds when my stomach feels bad from overeating or consuming an excess of rich foods. Fennel is antispasmodic and relieves gas. It's a great herb for children to take, as it has an appealing anise flavor. It can also be used for colicky babies.

Dr. Donna recommends the herb to nursing moms frequently, as it can increase the flow of breast milk. If a mother consumes an herb, such as anise, while nursing, the medicinal effects of the herb can be transferred to the child without having to administer the herb directly. Fennel relieves cramping of the stomach and the intestines, and can also calm a cough.

### ***Illnesses and Remedies***

#### **Indigestion**

Indigestion can feel like a burning sensation in the stomach, and it can be accompanied by a feeling of fullness, bloating, and gas. The cause of indigestion is overeating, consuming alcohol, or rich foods. Stress can also aggravate indigestion.

### **Fennel Seed Decoction for Indigestion**

Here's a tasty fennel seed tea for helping relieve your indigestion. It can be used to relieve colic or increase the flow of breast milk, also. Fennel tea is a tasty after-dinner beverage, as well.

#### *Instructions*

To use fennel seed medicinally, make a standard decoction by boiling 1 cup of water and 1 teaspoon of fennel seed for 20 minutes in a covered pot. Strain and drink 3 to 4 cups daily.

### **Flax Sock to Soothe Abdominal Discomfort**

#### *Instructions*

Place 1 to 2 cups of flaxseed in a clean sock and heat it in the microwave for a minute or longer. Use it as a hot pack on discomfort areas, but never put it directly on the skin. Always protect yourself from burns by placing a few towels on the skin and placing the sock on top of the towels. This allows the heat to slowly enter the skin.

The sock retains heat nicely. Save the entire sock (including the herb) in a bag and reuse it whenever anyone needs a hot pack.

You can also use this method for helping someone who's having difficulty relaxing or falling asleep. Try holding a warm pack on top of towels placed on your abdomen or chest. It can be very soothing. To increase relaxation benefits, add a bit of dried hops and lavender to the pack.

Of course, hot packs should not be applied to the very young, the very old, or anyone who has any difficulty sensing too much heat.



## **Constipation**

Constipation is a common malady that responds very well to herbal remedies. Herbal remedies for constipation are reliable and often better tolerated than their pharmaceutical alternatives. Constipation may be caused by a diet low in fiber, dehydration, or not enough exercise. Drinking water and avoiding foods which are binding such as banana, dairy products such as milk and cheese, and low fiber foods are helpful, too.

### **Dried Fruit Mover**

Fruit pastes can be great ways to consume herbs for ongoing health conditions. They disguise the bitter taste that some herbs possess. In addition, you can make a sizable batch, as they store well. Fruit pastes are especially good as a method to administer herbs to children. This fruit paste will help relieve constipation.

#### *Ingredients*

2-1/2 cups water

2 oz. dandelion root

2 oz. senna herb

2 lb. prunes

1 lb. dried apricots

1 cup molasses

1 cup lemon juice



*Dried apricots*

### *Instructions*

Place dandelion root and water in a saucepan. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat. Simmer, covered, for 20 minutes. Remove from heat.

Add senna. Cover. Let sit 20 minutes. Strain out the herbs and compost them.

Add the fruit to the saucepan. Simmer for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add molasses and lemon juice. Cool.

Start by eating 1 tablespoon daily. Adjust amount higher or lower depending upon consistency and regularity of your bowel movements. You may consume it plain or on whole grain toast, and it freezes well. If you don't have senna, try increasing the dandelion root to 6 ounces.

### **Fill 'er Up Easy Kitchen Weight Loss Aid**

High-fiber foods are excellent choices when trying to lose weight, as they are filling. One cup of cooked dried beans, split peas, or lentils or 1/2 cup raw oats or wheat bran are good sources of fiber. You'll gain muscle-building protein and lose fat by incorporating these foods into your diet.

## *Healthy Recipes for Digestive Health*

### **Super Duper Green Drink**

The following is a fabulous vitamin-, antioxidant-, fiber-packed smoothie to start your day. Change the yogurt and fruit as desired.

Good health doesn't get easier than this. Peel the bananas before blending. (This is a great way to use up overripe bananas!)

#### *Ingredients*

6 oz. low-fat Greek yogurt, plain or flavored

1 cup fresh berries

1 Tbsp. flax seed oil

1 cup greens (preferably dandelion or kale)

1/2 bananas

2 Tbsp. flaxseed

1/4 tsp. turmeric

1/4 tsp. fresh local honey

Milk of your choice

#### *Instructions*

Blend ingredients together using the high-speed setting of a blender. If you want to get extra antioxidant power, add 1 teaspoon cinnamon or culinary spices of your choice. Add milk to adjust the consistency to your liking.

### **Roasted Aromatic Vegetables**

I love roasting vegetables. They're so easy to make, especially if you're roasting an entrée in the oven. The root vegetables in this recipe are packed with phytonutrients and fiber. Like with most of the recipes in this book, use your imagination and substitute foods and herbs that are adjusted for your needs.

To add some variety, consider tossing in some nuts when you add the herbs, or try adding some sea salt or a vinaigrette dressing. You can also sprinkle the vegetables with herbs or cheese, such as blue or Parmesan.

This one recipe can be varied so much that you can have a different dish every night.

### *Ingredients*

Baby carrots

Fennel bulb, cut in 2-inch chunks

Red onion, cut in eighths

Parsnips, cut in 2-inch chunks

Rosemary or thyme, fresh or dried

Garlic

Olive oil

Freshly ground black pepper or mixed peppercorns

### *Instructions*

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Chunk vegetables. Toss together with enough olive oil to coat vegetables lightly.

Place vegetables on a cookie sheet or broiler pan. During the last 10 minutes of cooking, add garlic, herbs, and pepper. Roast until tender, stirring frequently.

## **Wok Vegetables with Fennel Bulb**

### *Ingredients*

- 1 lb. grass-fed beef, sliced in chunks
- 3 cloves garlic, diced
- 1 red sweet onion, sliced
- 4 ribs celery, cut diagonally
- 1 fennel bulb, diced
- 3 carrots, cut diagonally
- 1/4 head green cabbage, sliced
- 1 tsp. savory
- 1/2 tsp. sea salt, preferably Himalayan sea salt
- 1/4 cup pineapple juice concentrate, diluted with 1/3 cup water
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil

### *Instructions*

In a large sauté pan, cook beef chunks with olive oil, garlic, and onions until almost fully cooked. You may want to add 1/4 to 1/2 cup water to prevent burning.

Add the rest of the cut vegetables, salt, savory, and pineapple juice concentrate diluted with water. Cover and cook over low flame until done, about 10 minutes.

Serve with wild or brown basmati rice.

## 4. The Integumentary System

### *Overview of the Integumentary System*

The integumentary system consists of the skin, hair, and nails. Our skin is the interface of our body with the outside world. It's our largest organ. Did you know that the weight of your skin represents 15% of your total body weight?

Skin is comprised of epithelial cells and other specialized tissues. Sensory receptors, sweat glands, and oil glands are all part of this flexible body covering. If your skin wasn't flexible, you would have limited movement. Skin works closely with the nervous system and muscles to provide protection to our bodies. Skin is a two-way barrier with the world and your body.

### **Your Skin is a Form of Protection**

Healthy skin protects us from infection by bacteria, viruses, and other microorganisms. It keeps harmful substances out, and it protects against solar radiation that would burn the body. Skin also keeps water and nutrients inside the body, where they can be used.

### **Regulatory and Sensory Functions of the Skin**

Our skin helps to maintain the body at a correct temperature. It also provides us with sensory pleasure, such as the feeling of a touch of a loved one's hand. Those same sensory nerves in the skin protect us from danger, such as when a finger is placed on a hot surface. The nerves in the skin quickly cause the muscles and skeleton to withdraw from painful sensations. Skin cells regenerate every few days.

Beyond the protective actions that our integumentary system provides us with, it also provides us with beauty. Glowing, supple skin and hair is a sign of vitality and youth. Our hair and skin are often the first things new acquaintances notice about us. The

enormous cosmetics industry is a testament to how important hair and skin are to interpersonal relationships.



## **How to Have Fabulous Skin**

As we age, our skin becomes less supple due to many factors that we can control. Here are some ideas to keep your skin healthy, prevent dryness, and inhibit wrinkle formation.

### **Healthy Skin Care Tips**

1. Healthy skin is moist skin. Drinking plenty of water helps hydrate your skin from the inside out. Alcohol and caffeinated beverages dehydrate your skin, so limit them.
2. Protect your skin from the sun and wind, which can have aging effects. Keep your skin covered during very hot or cold weather. The sun harms your skin due to radiation exposure, and all harsh weather dries the skin out.

3. Protect your skin by eating foods rich in omega-3 and omega-7 fatty acids, which give your skin the tools it needs to repair itself. Try eating nuts, fish, whole grains, or flax seeds on a regular basis. Only about a handful of nuts a day is all that's needed for your skin to develop a nice texture and be flexible. Borage seed, black current seed, fish, evening primrose and sea buckthorn oil supplements may also be beneficial.
4. Eat colorful fruits and vegetables rich in antioxidants and bioflavonoids. These can help with skin repair and hydration and provide protection from the elements. The vitamins in fruits and vegetables help repair cuts, burns, and scars.
5. Use antioxidant-rich skin care products on the outside of your body for an extra layer of protection. Green and red teas help prevent aging and sagging.
6. Feed your skin from the outside as well as the inside. What we put on our skin is as important as the foods we eat. If you "feed" you skin with moisturizers and cleansers that contain toxins and preservatives, your skin will absorb them. Opt for plant-based skin care products. Apricot kernel oil is a wonderful, fragrant oil that benefits dry, sensitive skin. Jojoba oil nourishes mature skin. There are several plant oils on the market, too. Try various ones and see which one feels and works best on your skin.

### ***Herbs for the Skin and Hair***

When I teach herb courses, this section is the most fun. It's rich in scents and soothing oils. Why not get some friends together and have a skin medicine-making party? Your skin will feel amazing, and you'll share more laughs than you can imagine. The products you make will save you a bundle of money and be better for you than store-bought cosmetics. And did I mention that it's easy?



Before we get creative, I want to tell you about some of my favorite herbs for skin care. There are many. If you like the results of the products you make now, you may want to consider purchasing a book about herbal skin care. Several are available; just start reading.

Many of the herbs used for skin care work via the liver. That may sound odd until you consider what the liver and skin do. The liver is a major organ of elimination, as is the skin. The liver detoxifies harmful substances.

If chemicals are eliminated without being detoxified first, those substances cause inflammation and irritation. Toxic substances which have not been broken down by the liver may cause redness, irritation, itching, and breakouts if eliminated via the skin. A healthy liver makes healthy skin.

Herbs that help the liver help the skin. Many liver tonics are roots, which reach down deep into the earth, extracting nourishment and healing energies more than any other plant parts. My favorite root for skin care is burdock root.

### **Burdock Root (*Arctium lappa*)**



Burdock is a weedy plant with deep roots. As a child, I remember getting its round seed heads tangled in my hair—it seemed like my family were always cutting them out of my collie's tail!. I liked the big leaves, even though they tasted bitter. (I always tasted plants as a child. By the way, that's not a very smart thing to do unless you know what you're tasting, and we don't recommend it.)

Burdock seeds and roots are both used medicinally. I have never used the seeds, but always uses the root. Burdock is available as a weed throughout the northern hemisphere or as a vegetable called gobo. If your local grocery store doesn't have it, try an Oriental market; the herb is used in Japanese cooking. I toss it in stews with carrots, parsnips and other winter vegetables.

Burdock root is considered an alterative. Alteratives are nourishing herbs, suitable for long-term use. I keep the dried root in my kitchen cupboard for flavor, nourishment, and to ease skin irritations. The root is prepared as a decoction, like most other roots. Burdock is rich in inulin, a carbohydrate. It's also a good source of minerals. Burdock has a mild, astringent flavor. It's rather bland and mixes well with other herbs.

For skin problems, make a burdock decoction using the instructions for a standard decoction. Drink three to four cups daily. It may take a month or two for you to see results, as alterative herbs like burdock often work slowly. They are powerful but gentle toners. Some people find that burdock increases the frequency of bowel movements, as it's a mild laxative. If you find that you're going to the bathroom too frequently, reduce the number of cups of burdock tea you drink.

I use burdock root to relieve all of the following conditions: skin inflammations (including psoriasis), boils and canker sores. It's considered a blood cleanser. Burdock may relieve joint discomfort and stimulate urination. Burdock tea can be made into a hot compress to relieve hemorrhoids and other areas of inflammation.

## **Chickweed (*Stellaria media*)**



Chickweed is found in temperate climates. As its name indicates, it's a common weed commonly found in lawns. It should be gathered and used fresh during spring and summer months.

Chickweed is a mucilaginous herb. It soothes the entire body, removes inflammation, and reduces LDL-cholesterol levels. It is nourishing with a good amount of vitamins and minerals, and rich in emollients. Its cooling leaves may be added to a salad.

This little creeping plant benefits the whole body, especially the liver, when eaten, and the skin when applied topically. Chickweed is a safe herb that has been used for thousands of years. It may help reduce the buildup of plaque in arteries, and it's effective in relieving rashes, eczema, and psoriasis.

## **Rose (Rosa varieties)**



Don't you just love roses? Every garden I have ever planted has had several varieties of roses. My favorites are the ever-blooming and repeat-blooming varieties. The key to growing roses easily and well is to choose roses that are right for your climate. They're adaptable—roses live in hot and cold climates. Some can even tolerate the salty air near the seashore.

Many of the old roses, like wild roses, dog roses, and rugosas, provide the most amazing scents of any roses. They also have the most medicinal properties.

Besides looking and smelling incredible, roses are amazing medicine. The hips contain as much as 50 times the amount of vitamin C that is contained in an equivalent weight of an orange. Dr. Donna collects rose hips every fall. She dries them, grinds them, and gives them to her dogs, since dogs benefit from a little extra vitamin C in their diet.

Roses are extremely gentle when used in skin care products.

### ***Illnesses and Remedies***

#### **Acne**

Acne is a source of embarrassment for many teens and adults. It is especially prevalent during the teen years, as hormonal and other changes occur during the transition from childhood to adulthood. Keeping the skin clean, engaging in exercise, getting enough sleep, and eating a healthy diet can all reduce acne flare-ups. Drinking herbal teas provides deep healing to the body, reducing outbreaks as well.

### **Pimples-Away Honey**

Burdock is an excellent remedy during the teen years when pimples are a nuisance. Since a teen may not find drinking tea convenient, try this sweet recipe.

Your teen will need to take 1 tablespoon each morning and evening for a month or so before he or she notices clearer skin. It works very well. If it's too sweet, add the remedy to a cup of iced black or green tea or juice.

Local honey is a nourishing sweet that contains trace nutrients and local pollen. Consuming local honey may help reduce sensitivity to pollens and enhance the function of your immune system, providing an extra benefit to this acne fix.

#### *Ingredients*

1 lb. fresh burdock root or 4 oz. dried burdock root

1 qt. water

1 cup honey, preferably local

#### *Instructions*

Simmer burdock and water, covered, for 45 minutes over low heat. Strain out the roots and compost them.

Measure remaining tea. Boil uncovered until approximately two cups of tea remains. Add honey. Heat again, but do not boil.

Pour into sterilized jars. No refrigeration needed. Makes 3 cups.

## **Healthy Skin for Life**

Healthy skin is possible at any age. Maintaining a proper pH balance, ensuring cleanliness, and using gentle moisturizing are actions you can take to keep skin supple and promote a healthy glow. Humectants, such as glycerin, pull moisture from the air and prevent the skin from drying out.

### **Rosewater Skin Cleanser**

Purchase rosewater in a grocery store, natural foods store, or pharmacy. It's used in Middle Eastern cooking and in pastries. It has a perfect pH for keeping skin healthy, and it's gentle and soothing. Rosewater makes skin care products smell amazing, too!

Glycerin is obtained from pharmacies or natural food stores. It's excellent for skin care and for making herbal medicines for children. This recipe is my favorite face cleanser—it's very gentle and smells expensive. It's the next best thing to awakening in a garden.

#### *Ingredients*

1 cup rosewater

1/2 cup vegetable glycerin

#### *Instructions*

Gently heat rosewater and glycerin in a saucepan until very hot but not yet simmering.

Pour into a sterilized bottle with a narrow neck. Let cool. Apply cork or lid.

Use as an extra gentle skin cleaner for all types of skin. Rinse face after using. Make up a large batch and pour into fancy bottles with a decorative bow for gifts that are joyfully received!

## **Healthy Hair and Scalp**

Many commercial hair care products are expensive and full of chemicals. Natural cleansers can reduce itching caused by a dry scalp.

## **Cool Chamomile Shampoo**

Check the label before you buy any herbal shampoo. Chances are good that the amount of nourishing herbs is minimal. Instead, make your own herbal shampoo that has enough herbal power to improve the condition of your hair. This recipe makes a shampoo that soothes your scalp and brings out your natural highlights.

### *Ingredients*

1 cup distilled water

1 oz. dried chamomile flowers

3 oz. liquid castile soap

1/8 tsp. sesame seed oil (non-toasted) or olive oil

1/4 tsp. tea tree oil

### *Instructions*

Combine the water and chamomile in a saucepan. Cover. Simmer for 20 minutes. Strain the chamomile from the tea. Compost the used chamomile.

Pour the remaining ingredients into the tea. Stir gently. Pour into a recycled or purchased shampoo bottle.

Gently shake the ingredients in the bottle before applying to wet hair when shampooing. This is a low-suds, easy-to-rinse formula. If you want to use it for children, substitute a no-tears baby shampoo for the castile soap.

## **Rashes and Skin Irritations**

Skin can itch and develop rashes for a multitude of reasons. Dryness, allergies, harsh cleansers, and hormonal changes are just a few origins of the torments that bring about rashes and skin irritations.

This salve is gentle enough for babies, but it can be used for any skin irritations. The herbal oil and beeswax are healing and serve as a moisture barrier for inflamed skin.

## **Chickweed Salve**

This effective salve can be used to relieve rashes, eczema, and psoriasis.

### *Ingredients*

Chickweed leaves and flowers, freshly picked

Olive oil

1/4 cup beeswax

### *Instructions*

Pick chickweed between 10:00 a.m. and noon for maximum potency of the herb. Place on a screen or towel for a couple hours or until the leaves are limp, then place in a glass jar. Cover with olive oil. Pack herbs down and be sure that oil covers them by approximately 1 inch. Place lid on jar.



Keep jar in a sunny location, such as a window, for at least two weeks. Shake at least once daily. Be sure that herbs remain covered with oil.

After two weeks, strain herbs through several layers of cheesecloth. Squeeze the cloth tightly to get all the healing properties of the chickweed. Pour the oil into the top of a double boiler.

Add beeswax. Gently heat until beeswax is melted. Pour salve into small covered containers that have been sterilized by boiling. Be sure the jars are completely dry prior to pouring in the salve to prevent mold. The oil will thicken into a nice barrier cream.

Store at room temperature. Apply to clean skin as needed.

### ***Healthy Recipes for Skin and Hair***

Healthy skin depends on healthy nourishment. Eating foods that keep you hydrated and foods that benefit digestion and optimize nutrient absorption will contribute to skin health. Healthy fats reduce inflammation and provide needed nutrients for your skin to be elastic and young-looking.

### **Mediterranean Hummus**

Hummus is a great spread for crusty bread or as a dip for fresh raw vegetables. This hummus is rich in tahini, which is made from nutrient-dense sesame seeds. It provides fiber and healthy fats, and the olive oil reduces inflammation. Garlic contains allicin, which prevents free radical damage from sun exposure and pollutants. Basil is a rich source of antioxidants. Yogurt may reduce acne flare-ups.

#### ***Ingredients***

1 15-oz. can chick peas, drained and rinsed

1/4 cup tahini

1/8 cup low-fat plain Greek yogurt

2 Tbsp. olive oil

4 cloves garlic, peeled

2 Tbsp. basil leaves, fresh

Sea salt and pepper to taste

### *Instructions*

Puree all ingredients together with a food processor or blender. Add sea salt and pepper if desired. Refrigerate before serving.

## **Cooling Fruit Salad**

Combine your favorite fresh herbs and seasonal fruit for this photochemical-rich fruit plate. It's a terrific source of flavonoids, vitamins and antioxidants. These have anti-aging benefits for your skin and entire body. Serve this cooling dish as a salad or dessert. It's perfect on a hot summer's day.

### *Ingredients*

1 cup fresh raspberries

1 cup sliced nectarines

1 cup blueberries

1 cup honey dew melon, cut in 1/2-inch pieces

1/4 cup mint leaves, fresh

1/4 cup water

1/4 cup honey

### *Instructions*

Combine fruit in a medium-sized bowl. Place in refrigerator until serving time.

Bruise mint leaves by pounding with a mortar and pestle or with the back of a spoon.

Place mint, water, and honey in a small saucepan. Bring to a simmer, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Let mixture sit for 15 minutes. Strain out mint leaves. (They won't harm you if you eat them, though.)

Chill syrup in refrigerator. At serving time, pour syrup over chilled fruit.

### **Dr. Donna's Juice for Clear Skin**

Dr. Donna started using this recipe when she had her own television show on health in California in 1999. She has used it as one of the recipes in her juicing class, and many students have given her testimonials on how well it works. The students received comments from people they knew the very next day after the class!

### *Ingredients*

1 cucumber

4 carrots

1 parsnip

1 red bell pepper

1 green bell pepper

2 tomatoes

### *Instructions*

Juice all ingredients and mix the juice together. Drink this juice every day for three days before a big event to make your skin look beautiful.

## 5. The Respiratory System

### *Overview of the Respiratory System*

We need oxygen to survive. Our breath brings this vital element into our bodies and, in exchange, eliminates carbon dioxide, a waste product that the body constantly produces.

Air comes in through the nose and mouth, where potentially harmful particles are filtered out. The air is warmed and travels down the trachea until it reaches a place in the chest where it divides into two bronchi. The bronchi divide into tinier and tinier vessels within the lungs. The lungs are the location where the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide takes place within balloon-like sacs called alveoli.

Our respiratory tract automatically brings in the elements we need and discards those we don't, every second of our lives. We don't even need to think about it. Most of the time, we aren't even aware that we're breathing.



## **What You're Breathing is Affecting Every Cell in Your Body**

However, what we do have to worry about is what is now in the air that wasn't there before. Chemtrails, formed by a process called aerosol spraying, have deposited high amounts of aluminum, barium, strontium, and vanadium in the environment, and scientists have documented this. Pristine lakes and streams, and even beautiful places like Hawaii, are not pristine any more; they are contaminated with these heavy metals.

Aluminum interferes with neurological functioning, and if too much aluminum is in the body, then the cells will eventually shut down. Barium interferes with calcium absorption in the body. Strontium in high doses destroys the bones. And high vanadium,

according to Dr. Donna's research in her book, *The Toxic Element that Causes Diabetes*, causes insulin-dependent diabetes.

All these heavy elements interfere with plant life and development. Plants that accumulate aluminum, for example, will change the pH of the soils and this is toxic to plant and insect life, unless they've been genetically engineered and designed to not die from high levels of aluminum.

Unless you detoxify your body on a regular basis, your health is eventually doomed. There are herbs that will detoxify and support the functioning of every organ. A lung cleanse is essential for your health; do these cleanses every year for at least six weeks.

The only way you can know what your levels of heavy metals are is to do a hair analysis.

### ***Herbs for Respiratory Health***

Respiratory ailments are some of the most common illnesses in the world and they're rising. Colds, sore throats, flu, allergies and sinus infections are rampant. Serious lung ailments such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD) and lung cancer are among the leading causes of death in many nations. Lung cancer is one of the top 10 most common cancers. Fortunately, herbs that improve respiratory health are abundant, inexpensive, and readily available.

Many of our common kitchen herbs contain potent natural chemicals that strengthen the respiratory system, fight infections, soothe sore throats, and relieve coughs. Nibbling on a fresh leaf of parsley, dill, or fennel freshens breath. Oregano, thyme, and basil are antioxidant powerhouses that fight infections. Pungent garlic, ginger, onions, cayenne, and horseradish clear stuffy heads and calm ear infections. Sage relieves sore throats.

Let's take a look at three kitchen herbs you could use the next time a family member gets an upper respiratory illness.

## Chinese Star Anise (*Illicium verum*)



Chinese star anise has a very interesting history. Recently, 90% of the available herb on the market was purchased by one major drug manufacturer. The herb was used to produce a product called Tamiflu. Tamiflu is used to limit the intensity and duration of influenza, including avian flu (also known as H1N1 flu). This purchase created a lack of Chinese star anise, as it takes about eight years for a Chinese star anise bush to produce the useful star-shaped herb. For a while, an unhealthy Japanese star anise was substituted, causing health issues.

Be careful to make sure that the star anise you purchase is true Chinese star anise. True Chinese star anise is fragrant and has no more than six or eight of the little points coming out from the center.



Chinese star anise is used in several types of foods, such as fruit compotes, pork and other meat dishes, and sweet recipes. It is also an ingredient in some liquors and Chinese five-spice powder, which is used in Oriental cooking.

I also include it in potpourris as it smells lovely and adds decorative interest.

Medicinally, Chinese star anise has been used for centuries in Asian cultures. It's used by some cultures to prepare gripe water for babies with colic. Chinese star anise is considered a warming herb. It's also an antispasmodic; these herbs soothe coughs and relieve cramping and pain of the digestive system.

Chinese star anise has expectorant properties. The herb is used whenever a spasmodic cough with thick mucus is a problem. It warms and thins the mucus, making it easier to get rid of. It quiets coughs so that a person can get needed rest to heal. It may be prepared alone as a standard decoction or combined with other herbs for respiratory health.

This herb is useful when children are sick, as it has a sweet, pleasant taste that they generally like.

Teas taken for respiratory illnesses should be taken hot, because the heat will help relieve congestion. Local honey added to medicinal teas with lemon or other citrus fruits provides additional healing benefits.

### **Horseradish (*Armoracia rusticana*)**



The Latin name for horseradish, *Armoracia rusticana*, sounds a lot like “rustic armor.” That is exactly what horseradish is. It is an old-fashioned, coarse-looking, powerfully protective herb. If you live in a temperate zone, it is easy to grow. Just beware that it spreads vigorously. If you grow your own, be prepared to work hard harvesting, as the roots grow quite deep.

For remedies, you may use either a fresh root or ground, bottled horseradish found in the refrigerated section of your local grocery store.

Most people know horseradish as an ingredient in seafood cocktail sauce, Bloody Marys, or as a side for roast beef. While those uses are tasty, it’s also a powerful herbal medicine. If you have a stuffy nose and head, just sit and grate a horseradish root. By the time you’re finished, your nose and head will be clear!

Horseradish has been recorded in herbals that are hundreds of years old. I use it in blends for the respiratory, urinary, and immune systems. A warming herb, horseradish is a rich source of vitamin C and several minerals. It promotes healthy digestion and

circulation, and it's rich in antioxidants that help detoxify the entire body.

Horseradish contains elements that may relieve depression and fight cancer. It's an expectorant and decongestant, and it contains antibacterial principles. It works great to relieve respiratory and urinary tract infections. Horseradish also promotes sweating, which helps to reduce fever.

Because horseradish is such a strong medicine, medicinal use is not recommended for children under age four or for people with stomach ulcers or those who are pregnant or nursing. It may be consumed as desired for dietary reasons.

If a person has a fever, upper respiratory infection, or congestion, horseradish may provide rapid relief.

### **Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)**



Sage is terrific in stuffing for the Thanksgiving turkey, and it makes fine medicine, too. A research study found that a spray made of sage and the herb echinacea was as effective in relieving sore throat as some commercial medications that contain an anesthetic drug.

Sage is a great herb for the respiratory system and for health in general. It's antibacterial and brings benefits to the entire body.

In addition to people suffering from respiratory conditions, I often recommend that women experiencing hot flashes try consuming one to two leaves or a quart of tea made as a standard infusion. It may take a couple of weeks to work, but many women find that sage relieves the hot flashes very well. If you drink the tea for hot flashes, consume it cold or at room temperature. Not everyone cares for the taste. If you don't, try making the tea as a soup using a chicken concentrate or bouillon instead of just plain water.

Another option is to make herbal capsules. You can purchase manual capsule-making machines and empty capsules at natural food stores, herb shops or online. They're inexpensive and great for preparing custom blends or herbs for people who prefer capsules to other forms of medicine.

Sage has been used for centuries in several cultures across the globe as an herb for longevity. It gently warms the body. I frequently, but not always, use warming herbs for respiratory illnesses, as many respiratory conditions are the result of fluids becoming stagnant. Tissues essentially become "waterlogged" and do not drain, causing discomfort and illness. Sage, along with other warming herbs, gets fluids moving and healing.

The Latin word *salvere*, from which sage derives its name, translates to the phrase, "to be well." Sage can make you well if you have a sore throat, laryngitis, or are congested. It reduces spasms of the chest and digestive tract. Sage soothes by reducing inflammation and swelling. It is one of the most valuable herbs that I know of!

### **\*\*\* Herbs Have Qualities, Too \*\*\***

You are learning about several powerful herbs for health while reading this book, trying some remedies, and cooking healthy foods. Our ultimate hope is that you will use this book as a stepping stone to learn more about herbs and start forming your own herbal medicine chest and recipes.

One way that you can start preparing yourself for this task is to start noticing the qualities of the herbs.

Chinese star anise, horseradish, and sage are all considered to be warming herbs. In many healing traditions, the herbal qualities are well-defined. If you know the qualities of an herb or of a health condition, you can choose remedies based upon what you have available.

The best way to determine the qualities an herb possesses is to thoroughly chew a small amount of the fresh or dried herb. You may also make a tea from the herb and let it cool to room temperature, swishing it around in your mouth to see what its actions are. Most herbs have multiple qualities.

Here is a chart that gives examples of some different herbal qualities. The examples are strongly representative of each quality. The characteristics of most herbs are much more subtle. With practice, you will become quite skilled at recognizing herbal qualities. You will then be able to customize your herbal blends to treat symptoms that are unique to the person in your household who feels ill.

#### **Examples of Herbal Qualities**

<b>Quality</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Useful for</b>
Warming	Cayenne	Improving circulation, reducing congestion
Cooling	Peppermint	Reducing inflammation and irritability
Moistening	Marshmallow root	Relieving dry, irritated conditions
Astringent	Lemon	Relieving swelling, improving tone
Bitter	Dark green leafy vegetables	Cooling, detoxifying
Pungent	Garlic	Removing stagnation, thinning secretions

Using the above chart as an example, if a person suffered from a dry throat, frequent dry cough, and fever without congestion, you might make an herbal tea that contained a cooling, moistening blend to soothe them. A good choice would be a peppermint and marshmallow root tea. If you didn't have marshmallow root, you could add honey to the peppermint tea, as honey is also moistening and cooling.

Initially, learning herbal qualities may seem difficult. But with practice and experimentation, it will soon become second nature and you'll be able to create very effective herbal remedies.

\*\*\* *The End* \*\*\*

***Respiratory Ailments and Herbal Remedies to Relieve Them***

Colds, allergies, flu, and sinus infections have some symptoms that are similar. This chart may help you to diagnose them.

	Cold	Allergy	Influenza	Sinus infection
Fever	none or low grade	no	yes; may be high	none or low grade
Cough	yes	sometimes	may be harsh and frequent	sometimes
Sore Throat	mild	occasionally	often	sometimes
Nasal symptoms	clear mucus	clear mucus	clear mucus	thick yellow green mucus
Muscle aches	mild	no	severe	no
Headache	sometimes	sometimes	yes	often
Fatigue	none	mild or none	severe	sometimes
Onset	slow	varies; recurrent seasonally	rapid	slow
Contagious	yes	no	yes	not usually

## **Sore Throat**

Sore throats can result from colds, allergies, flu, or sinus infections. They can also result from fatigue due to talking or singing. Cigarette smokers frequently experience sore throats. Sore throats can be the result of more serious conditions as well. For a simple sore throat, try the following soothing remedy.

### **Sore Throat Remedy**

This wonderful remedy is based on a recipe created by Rosemary Gladstar, an amazing herbalist who has done much to revive traditional herbal wisdom. Even those who are reluctant to try herbal remedies are amazed by the immediate relief from this recipe.

If you have echinacea or barberry root available, add 1 tablespoon of either or both to the recipe to make tea. It's best used warm. Unlike a typical gargle, with this recipe, you keep gargling until thick phlegm is no longer being expectorated. This may mean that you use a cup or more with each use. You will be surprised at how much mucus is expectorated. It clears the throat first. As that clears, mucus from the sinuses flows down and you will expectorate that also.

This remedy is one I give frequently to adults and teens. Younger children will not like the taste and may have difficulty gargling. The remedy may be used for any sore throat or nasal congestion that is thick or copious.

It may seem odd to put cayenne on a sore throat; it feels warm, but has a numbing action as well.

#### *Ingredients*

2 Tbsp. dried sage

1 Tbsp. dried rosemary

1/2 tsp. dried oregano

1/2 tsp. dried thyme

Dash cayenne pepper

1-1/2 cup water

1 cup apple cider vinegar

3 tsp. salt

### *Instructions*

Bring water to a full boil. Pour over herbs. Let sit, covered, for at least 20 minutes. Strain the herbs out and compost them. Stir salt and vinegar into herbal infusion. Reheat to warm, not hot, if needed. Gargle and spit out as needed.

## **Chest Soreness and Congestion**

Frequent coughing and congestion due to respiratory illness is not uncommon. Muscles ache. The chest feels full. Sleep is disturbed. While these symptoms can indicate more serious problems for which you need to consult with your healthcare provider, topical natural remedies can provide soothing relief.

### **Horseradish Poultice**

A horseradish poultice is helpful when chest congestion or soreness from coughing occurs, such as during episodes of bronchitis or flu. It also helps to diminish coughing and open up the sinus passages.

You may have heard of a mustard plaster being used back in the old days. Horseradish contains sulfur and other compounds that the mustard family possesses. These warm the chest or back. In addition, horseradish has antibacterial, expectorant properties that the person passively inhales while the poultice is in place.



Use caution. Another person should monitor the sick individual, as horseradish poultice must be removed when the skin feels very warm or else burns may occur.

This is a very old recipe. It should only be used on teens or adults. I do not recommend it for use on the elderly, pregnant women, or children.

Any soft cloth may be used. Old timers used to recommend red flannel.

### *Ingredients*

1 horseradish root



### *Instructions*

Hand grate or finely grate horseradish in a food processor.

Have patient lie down in a warm room. Apply soft cloth to upper chest or back. Spread horseradish over cloth. Cover with a second cloth. Remove when skin feels warm.

### **Herbal Steam Baths**

Herbal steam baths, or herbal steams, are effective for clearing stuffed up heads, delivering antibacterial herbal properties, and relieving headaches caused by sinus pressure buildup.

While doing the treatment, phlegm will thin and be able to be expectorated. The end result is that you will have less phlegm. While your nose will run during the steam, afterwards your nose will run less or stop running for quite a while. Herbal steams have a great side effect, too—they tone the skin while you take your remedy!

### **Steam Cleaner**

This recipe is great for when you feel stuffy, whether from sinus congestion, flu, a cold, or allergies.

#### *Ingredients*

1 Tbsp. sage

1 Tbsp. thyme

1 Tbsp. rosemary

1 Tbsp. oregano

Boiling water

#### *Instructions*

Place a towel on a table. Place a large bowl on the towel. Combine herbs in bowl. Pour boiling water over herbs. Have patient sit facing bowl.

Drape a large bath towel over the patient's head and the bowl. Encourage the person to take long, deep breaths through the nostrils.

The steam bath procedure should last 10 to 20 minutes. The person may need to remove the towel occasionally for comfort. Repeat as frequently as desired for comfort.

## **Coughs**

Coughing serves to protect you. It helps to prevent bacteria, allergens, and viruses from lodging deep within the body. Still, there are times when quieting a cough is necessary, such as at night to ensure rest or to prevent throat irritation.

## **Mullein Tea**

Mullein is a common roadside weed. The leaves, flowers, and roots have medicinal properties. Licorice soothes the throat and works with the mullein to lessen coughs. This tea relieves coughs from any cause, including colds, flu, sinus infections, and throat irritations.

### *Ingredients*

4 tsp. licorice root (image below)

4 tsp. mullein leaf

1 qt. water



### *Instructions*

Simmer licorice root in 1 quart of water for 20 minutes. Keep pan covered while simmering.

Remove from heat. Add mullein leaf. Let pot sit covered for 20 minutes. Strain out and compost herbs. Drink up to 4 cups of tea daily. Makes 4 cups.

### *Healthy Recipes for Respiratory Wellness*

#### **Country Sauerkraut for Healthy Lungs**

Fermented foods have been included in people's diets for thousands of years. Initially used as a preservation method, fermenting offers multiple health benefits as well as providing great extra taste-bud pleasures to meals.

Fermented foods replenish healthy microorganisms, which benefit the body in ways similar to the ways that active cultures in yogurt aid the entire body. Homemade sauerkraut is nothing like the stuff from a can. Just one taste enlivens a whole meal!

Here is an easy recipe that contains horseradish to keep the lungs clear.

### *Ingredients*

- 1 medium-sized red cabbage
- 1 Tbsp. sea salt
- 1 tart apple
- 1 large carrot
- 2 Tbsp. fresh or prepared horseradish
- 1 tsp. fresh dill weed or 1/2 tsp. dill seed
- 1/2 tsp. caraway seed

### *Instructions*

Remove outer leaves of cabbage. Set aside. Remove core from cabbage. Slice cabbage thinly by hand or with food processor. With hands, blend salt into cabbage until leaves start to wilt. Set aside.

Peel and core apple. Peel carrot. Finely chop apple and carrot. Combine with cabbage mixture. Stir well. Add remaining ingredients. Mix well.

Pack mixture into a 1-quart canning jar, a little at a time. Press ingredients firmly with a spoon as you pack the canning jar to about 1 inch below the top. A brine will form as you pack the jar. If it does not cover the vegetables and fruit, let the mixture sit out at room temperature until there is enough brine. Pressing firmly and having fresh, juicy ingredients will expedite the process.

When an inch of brine covers the mixture, place one of the remaining outer leaves in the jar. Submerge it in the brine as well.

Place a lid loosely on the jar. Let it ferment for one week. It is then ready to eat.

Store finished sauerkraut in the refrigerator. Enjoy!

## **Ultimate Stir-Fry Sauce**

Stir-frying is a fast easy way to prepare meals. Vegetables, meat, and meat alternatives all taste delicious stir-fried. If time is short, you can slice stir-fry ingredients ahead of time, and the sauce may be prepared in advance as well. Be sure to invest in a good knife and cutting board. You may decide to use a large chef's knife for chopping, a small paring knife for smaller tasks, and a bamboo cutting board.

Mucus-forming foods, such as dairy products, may aggravate allergies and other respiratory conditions. This sauce makes non-mucus forming, nutrient-dense ingredients delicious. It can help to tone the respiratory system and reduce congestion.

The sauce recipe makes enough sauce for 7 cups of other ingredients. Prepare the sauce in advance if you like. When you're ready to make a meal, sauté your vegetables and other ingredients. When they're done, pour the sauce over them.

This is a very tasty base recipe that works well with many foods. Try different meats, vegetables, and stocks for many different flavors.

If you like, serve your meal over cooked rice or other whole grains. It's a very versatile recipe.

### *Ingredients*

1-1/2 cup vegetable, chicken, or beef stock (separated into 1 cup and one 1/2 cup)

1/4 cup teriyaki sauce

2 Tbsp. rice or white wine vinegar  
1 Tbsp. orange juice  
1 Tbsp. maple syrup  
3 tsp. toasted sesame oil  
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped or pressed  
1 tsp. fresh ginger, finely chopped or pressed  
1 Tbsp. white wine  
1/8 tsp. cayenne  
2 Chinese star anise “stars”  
2 Tbsp. cornstarch  
1 Tbsp. horseradish, freshly grated or commercially prepared

### *Instructions*

Combine 1 cup stock and the following four ingredients in a small bowl. Set aside. In a saucepan, heat oil over medium heat.

Add garlic and ginger, stirring constantly. Sauté until golden.

Add wine, cayenne, and star anise. Sauté about 30 seconds.

Add liquids that were combined previously. Bring to boil.

Meanwhile, combine cornstarch and the remaining 1/2 cup stock. Remove Chinese star anise from pan. Discard. Stir cornstarch slurry into pan.

Stir until thickened. Remove from heat. Add horseradish.

## **6. The Immune System**

### ***Overview of the Immune System***

While each system of the body requires communication with other systems for optimum health, the immune system communicates at levels unlike any other system. It works closely with neurotransmitters and the circulatory system.

### **Immunology is Still a Relatively New Field**

The study of the immune system is a newer field than the study of the other body systems. The development of vaccines, the occurrence of HIV, and an increase in autoimmune diseases have prompted experts to examine this vital system closely.

The immune response reminds me of a futuristic invasion by space aliens or something similar—it's very complex, and yet simple, simultaneously. There's still so much to learn about this amazing system.

### ***Components of the Immune System***

The immune system is the internal defense system of the body. It's comprised of the spleen, thymus, and lymphatic tissue. Fluids and components of lymphatic fluid include chemical substances called interferon and complement. White blood cells, the lining of the human gut, and bone marrow are all diverse parts of the immune system.

Unlike blood traveling within vessels or the digestive tract working within a clearly defined system, lymphatic fluids and immune messengers flow and interact directly with the entire body.

### **What Affects Your Immunity?**



Immune health is impacted by any kind of stress. Stress isn't just mental—it can result from exposure to toxins, poor diet, exposure to illness, lack of sleep, and more. On the other hand, several studies prove that eating healthy food optimizes immune function. What else affects immune function positively? Try laughing, positive imagery, and other behaviors that reduce stress.

The immune system's job is to protect the body and ward off disease. It works within milliseconds of recognizing danger. No matter what type of threat is identified, the system responds in a similar way, without regard to the offending problem or the part of the body affected. The trigger may be a toxin not properly eliminated by the body, or a foreign germ. It may be many things. The immune system recognizes the substance as foreign and identifies it as hazardous. Immediately, the immune system isolates the substance to prevent it from affecting the rest of the body.

## **Your Immune System's Responses**

There are two types of responses that the immune system makes. A specific response is when the immune system recognizes the invader, such as a response when a person has been immunized previously against tetanus. A powerful antigen/antibody response ensues. A nonspecific response is more general in nature, such as an increased susceptibility to get sick during periods of elevated stress or exposure to unhealthy air.

The lymphatic system supplies nutrients and fights infection. Lymph nodes filter out disease with the help of white blood cells. Lymph nodes are located throughout the body. Lymph nodes in the neck protect the head. Underarm, neck, and groin nodes are easily palpable. Enlarged glands indicate that the body is attempting to heal itself.

Interferon provides the first line of defense inside the body. It protects non-infected cells from viruses. Here's a breakdown of how interferon works:

- A virus attacks a cell.
- The virus releases protein.
- Interferon makes contact with nearby cells that are still carrying on normal activity.
- Nearby cells become less susceptible to the virus.
- Interferon helps the nearby cells by preventing the ability of the virus to replicate in those cells.
- Interferon provides short-term help while waiting for the other components of the immune system to kick in.

White blood cells (WBCs) are the main defenders within the body. They rid the body of old and sick cells. Humans have about 500 red blood cells for each white blood cell. There are different types of WBCs; each type is identified based on its shape, function, and location it is formed. White blood cells are called lymphocytes.

Initially, white blood cells are called stem cells. They are formed in bone marrow. Some are converted in the thymus gland into T cells. Others turn into B cells. Other types exist as well.

The job of the T cell is to kill viruses, certain bacteria, and fungi. There is a specialized type of T cell, called a natural killer cell, that destroys cells that are infected with a virus or cancer.

T cells stimulate formation of a type of white blood cell called a macrophage, which produces interferon.

Interferon is needed for antibodies to be made. Antibodies are the immune system's most effective killers—they actually digest offending organisms.

Antibodies clone themselves to fight against the same type of offender once the offender comes into contact with the body in the

future. Cloning takes about 14 days to be fully functional. By then, the rest of the immune system has inactivated the offending substance completely. This is how immunization works—the antibodies formed will recognize the offending substance if it reappears and be able to destroy it rapidly.

### ***Herbs for the Immune System***

Ensuring immune health is an area where herbal medicine outshines many other approaches to healing and prevention of illness. Herbal medicine affects the immune system on many levels. There are herbs, such as echinacea and myrrh, that help if a person has an infection. Echinacea also helps bone marrow become healthy. As you recall, bone marrow is where the white blood cells are formed.

Herbal adaptogens are those ancient, slow tonic herbs that ensure a healthy response by the entire body. The herb eleuthero, formerly known as Siberian ginseng, is one of the best. Licorice root and medicinal mushrooms are amazing tonics.

Several theorists believe that much disease is caused by a stagnation of lymphatic fluid circulating as a result of inactivity, inflammation, or other processes. They believe that the location of the impaired flow is where a disease may develop. Some offer this as an explanation for cancers and some autoimmune diseases.

Further research is required, but there may be some merit to these theories. Herbs may be used to promote lymphatic drainage; common wild plants like red clover and cleavers, as well as the citrus fruit lemon, are effective at stimulating lymphatic movement.

The spleen contains white blood cells as well as an emergency blood supply for the body. Herbs such as goldenseal and barberry root aid the spleen.

### **Echinacea Species (“Coneflower”)**



Echinacea is one of the most commonly used herbs for immune system health. Studies abound regarding its immune-enhancing effects.

Echinacea increases the ability of the natural killer cells, T cells, and interferon to work well. Herbalists disagree whether the entire plant or the roots are most useful. I find that the roots are the most active parts. Various species are used to aid immune function, but the most common are *Echinacea angustifolia* and *Echinacea purpurea*. Both may be used together.

The pretty purple coneflower is useful to treat infection. It should be used at the onset of an illness for maximum effectiveness; if you use it early in effective amounts, the duration and intensity of an upper respiratory tract infection will be reduced. Be sure to use only field-grown organic plants, as echinacea has been overharvested.

Echinacea resists and destroys both bacterial and viral infections. It strengthens all cells of the body and makes them disease-resistant. Some people recommend taking echinacea as a preventative measure, but I use it only for short-term use. People

who are immune compromised, such as those undergoing chemotherapy or those with an autoimmune disease should check with their health care provider prior to using echinacea.

People who are allergic to ray flowers, which are flowers shaped like daisies, should not use echinacea, as it may cause an allergic reaction. While some medicinal components of echinacea may be extracted in water or glycerin, to obtain full benefit, alcohol is most effective.

### **Shitake Mushroom (*Lentinula edodes*)**



These delicious mushrooms, used fresh or dried, are packed with immune enhancement effects. In traditional Chinese medicine, shitakes are used to reduce cholesterol, triglycerides, and other fats. They enhance urinary tract health and relieve stomach irritation. They're also used to treat hepatitis and cancer, and for general wellness.

Shitake mushrooms have been shown to shrink cancerous tumors, and an extract of shitake was used to increase survival of patients with some cancers by a couple of years.

These mushrooms activate the immune response and increase cellular immune health of all cells in the body. An extract of shitake has been shown to fight virus activity better than some potent antibiotics. Unless a person is allergic to them, shitakes may be eaten on a regular basis. They're tasty medicine!

### **Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)**



This is the yellow spice of curries. Widely used in Ayurvedic medicine of India and traditional Chinese medicine, the healing benefits of turmeric have been reaped for millennia. Turmeric may be used internally as well as externally to relieve pain and

inflammation. The herb has been employed to treat ringworm, hepatitis, arthritis, gas, and chest pain.

Turmeric protects the liver. It's rich in antioxidants and prevents tumors from growing, which is why it's used in the treatment of cancer. It prevents blood clots, and may prevent the progression of multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's disease. It stops the growth and spread of disease at many levels. Turmeric possesses these incredible healing abilities and it's safe for all.

**\*\*\* *Herbal Remedies for Immune Function—Notes From Pat***

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I'm always awed by the wonders of herbs, but when I think about the incredible healing properties of the adaptogenic herbs like turmeric and shiitake, I am simply amazed. How seemingly ordinary foods and spices can have profound effects on general wellness and very serious illnesses astounds me.

Several years ago, I had breast cancer. I firmly believe that every health system has its strengths and limitations. I combined "regular" medicine, such as surgery and chemotherapy, with herbal medicine, aromatherapy, mind-body approaches, and nature therapies. The adaptogenic herbs were a huge part of my healing protocol and will be forever.

**Always discuss the use of multiple therapies with a qualified health care provider if you are experiencing a serious illness.**

Some herbs should not be used at the same time as chemotherapeutic drugs, as they may interfere with or potentiate the effects of the drugs. Alternatively, drug doses could be lowered if some herbal therapies are used. This requires expert coordination, which may only be provided by very few highly skilled people at this time.

**\*\*\* *The End* \*\*\***

***Illnesses and Remedies***

## **Decreased Immune Function**

Immune health needs to be top-notch to keep you healthy. Try the following remedy to maintain or improve the health of your immune system.

### **Immune-Boosting Root Tea**

This tea is very earthy in flavor. It's powerful, but not as tasty as some of the other tea blends. This blend stimulates various parts of the immune system to work at their optimum level of functioning.

#### *Ingredients*

4 Tbsp. dried shitake mushrooms, chopped small

2 Tbsp. dandelion root

2 Tbsp. burdock root

2 Tbsp. ginger

1 Tbsp. orange peel

1 tsp. turmeric

#### *Instructions*

Combine all ingredients. To make 1 cup of tea, simmer 1 teaspoon of the herb blend in 1 cup of water. Keep covered. After 20 minutes, remove from heat. Strain and compost the herbs. Tea can be diluted with additional water if the taste is too strong. Makes 30 servings.

### ***Healthy Recipes for Immune System Health***

#### **Kyo's Immune Soup (Pat's Special Recipe)**



When I had cancer, a friend and her husband used to make me a medicinal soup. They prepared it and froze the soup into ice cubes. Each day, my husband melted and heated two soup cubes for me to eat. This recipe is a less potent version of that soup for everyday immune health.

### *Ingredients*

2 lbs. organic beef shanks  
2 qts. beef or vegetable stock  
2 Tbsp. olive oil  
1 cup onions, coarsely chopped  
6 cloves garlic, pressed or chopped  
1/2 cup celery, chopped  
2 tsp. oregano, dried  
1/2 tsp. black pepper  
1 bay leaf  
1 cup carrots, cut into 1/2-inch slices  
1 cup burdock root or parsnip root, cut into 1/2-inch slices  
15 oz. diced tomatoes, canned or fresh  
1/2 cup barley

### *Instructions*

Brown meat in oil. Add onions, garlic, and celery. Sauté until lightly browned. Add stock, oregano, pepper, and bay leaf. Simmer covered for 45 minutes.

Remove meat and bay leaf from pan. Add barley to soup. Cook for 20 minutes.

Cut meat from bones and return meat to pot. Add remaining ingredients. Simmer until vegetables are tender, approximately 25 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

## **Curried Shitakes**

Shitake mushrooms, turmeric, and the other spices in this recipe enhance the health of the immune system by activating cells that heal and prevent illness.

### *Ingredients*

2 Tbsp. olive or untoasted sesame oil

2 Tbsp. teriyaki sauce

2 cups leeks, chopped

4 cloves garlic, crushed

1-inch piece ginger root, pressed or finely chopped

1 cup celery, chopped

1 lb. fresh shitake mushrooms

1 tsp. ground cumin

3/4 tsp. cinnamon

1 tsp. turmeric

1/2 tsp. dry mustard

1/4 tsp. allspice, ground

1/4 tsp. cloves, ground

1/8 tsp. cayenne

1/4 tsp. black pepper

1/2 cup vegetable broth

2 apples, peeled and chopped

15 oz. canned or freshly chopped tomatoes

1/4 cup unsweetened shredded coconut

1/2 cup toasted almonds, sliced

### *Instructions*

Heat oil over medium-high heat in a large frying pan. Add teriyaki sauce, leeks, ginger, garlic, celery, shiitakes, and spices.

Sauté until leeks are golden. Add broth, apples, and tomatoes. Simmer over low heat for 5 minutes.

Serve over cooked brown rice, quinoa, or grain of your choice. Garnish with coconut and almonds. Serves 4 to 6.

## **Beef Broccoli Ginger**

Broccoli and ginger root both are great to stimulate the immune system. A good source of high-quality protein such as beef, chicken, or lamb provides the body with resources to create antibodies needed to fight infections.

This tasty entrée is one that could become one of your favorites whenever you need an immune system boost.

### *Ingredients*

1 lb. grass-fed beef chunks

1 lb. raw ginger root, sliced thinly

1-1/2 lb. broccoli, cut into bite-size pieces

3 Tbsp. olive oil

Juice of 1 lemon



## *Ginger root*

### *Instructions*

Cook ginger root in pot with just enough water to cover, about 7 minutes.

In large sauté pan or wok, add oil, beef, broccoli, and ginger root. Stir over medium-high heat until cooked thoroughly. Squeeze lemon over entire dish before serving.

Serve with baked yam or sweet potatoes.

## **7. The Kidneys and Urinary System**

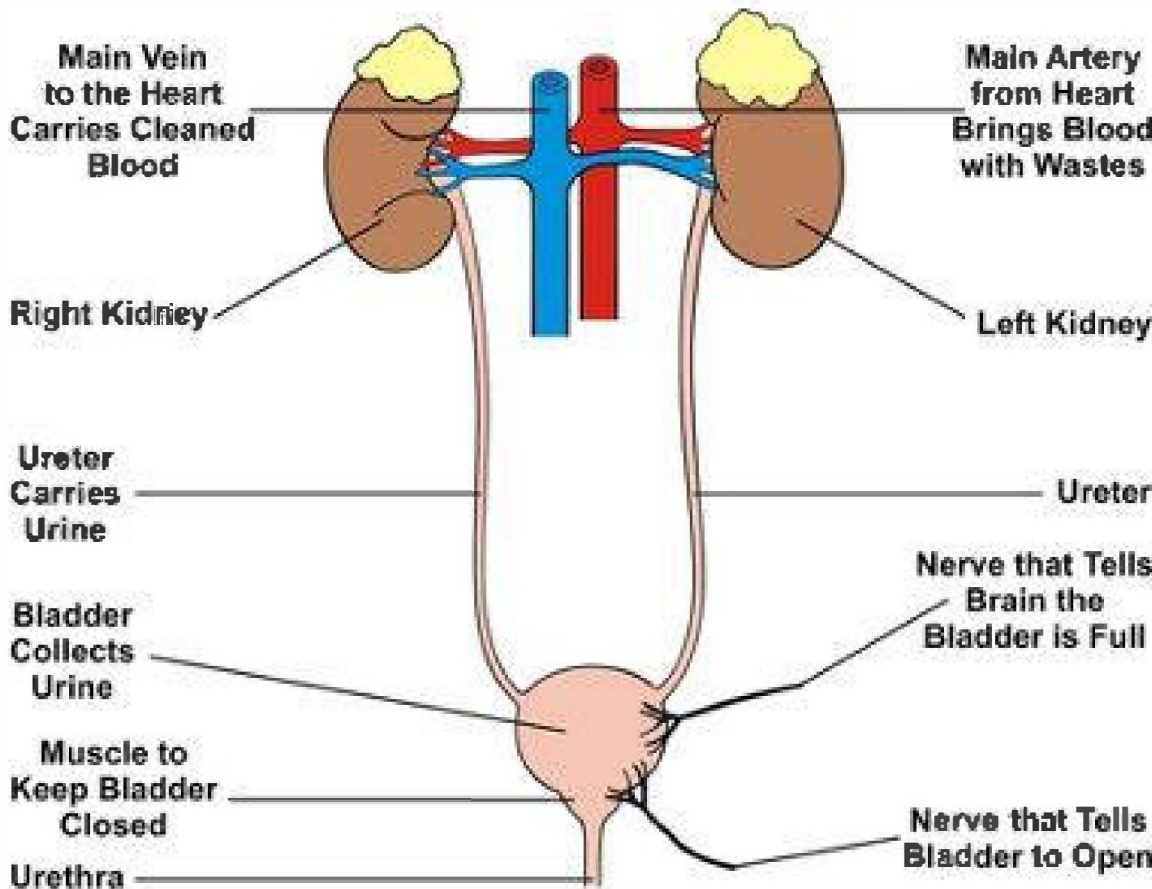
### ***Overview of the Kidneys and Urinary System***

The urinary tract is responsible for removing wastes from your body. It also manages fluid and electrolyte balance. A precise balance of salt within our tissues is needed to maintain health, and your kidneys help maintain the balance. Your kidneys also work closely with the circulatory system to maintain blood pressure, and they secrete the hormone aldosterone which helps maintain proper fluid balance.

### ***Components of the System***

The kidneys, bladder, ureters, and urethra make up the urinary tract. The kidneys are where the actual filtration takes place. They remove wastes and eliminate excess water. They also reabsorb needed water and elements.

# URINARY SYSTEM



## *How the Kidneys Work*

The work of the kidneys takes place in tiny structures called nephrons. The kidneys eliminate wastes produced by the body and environmental toxins. The kidneys also detoxify many drugs.

You must have at least one functional kidney to survive; otherwise, the jobs of the kidneys must be done artificially by renal or peritoneal dialysis. Neither of these methods is a comparable substitute for the intricate work that our kidneys

perform for us. A renal transplant can replace a diseased kidney with a healthy one, allowing someone with a non-functional kidney to avoid dialysis.

After urine is produced in the kidneys, it travels to the bladder through tubes called ureters. There is one ureter connected to each kidney. Muscular contractions stimulate the flow of urine to the bladder. The bladder is a hollow muscle that holds about one quart of urine. It has special cells called stretch receptors that notify you when it's getting full, signaling the urge to urinate.

Urine leaves the body via the urethra. Men have a urethra about six inches long, while women's urethras are only about an inch long. The structural differences of the male and female urethra explain why women are more prone to urinary tract infections.

## **What Happens When Kidneys are Damaged**

Kidneys are highly vascular organs. Diseases of circulation that increase blood pressure or cause narrowing of the microscopic blood vessels that carry out filtration may affect kidney function.

Diabetics with elevated blood sugar levels are especially at risk due to circulatory problems. Blood glucose molecules are large and can damage the tiny vessels within the kidneys, possibly contributing to renal failure, the condition that results when the kidneys are unable to do their jobs. Some types of renal failure are chronic, while others may develop suddenly.

Kidney stones, which are collections of calcium or uric acid, sometimes develop in the hollow center of the kidneys called the renal pelvis. Some people have a tendency to get kidney stones, while others never experience them.

Kidney stones travel down the urethra to the bladder. Sometimes they get stuck, causing severe pain. Urine may back up behind the stones, causing infection or damage to the affected kidney. Stones may be excreted naturally or may require surgery or a procedure called lithotripsy, which breaks up the stones using shock waves.



Urinary infections are common, painful disorders characterized by burning upon urination, urgency, and voiding in frequent small amounts. Prompt treatment is needed to prevent the infection from spreading to the kidneys. Kidney involvement may be signaled by fever or back pain.

Bladder control issues may occur as a result of prostate enlargement, prostate surgery, injury to the pelvic floor, lack of muscle tone, or sensory deficits. Treatment for each of the causes is different. Check with your health care provider for guidance if you are experiencing issues with bladder control.

### ***Herbs for a Healthy Urinary System***

Herbs are very effective at preventing and relieving urinary tract problems. Blueberries and cranberries prevent and soothe urinary tract infections. Corn silk, marshmallow root, and chickweed soothe an inflamed urinary tract. Gravel root and hydrangea relieve and prevent kidney stones. Juniper, parsley, and dandelion leaf work as diuretics, which increase excretion of excess fluid from the body.

### ***Cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon* and other varieties)***



Many people know that cranberries are supposed to prevent urinary tract infections. Do you know how cranberries do this? They do it in three ways. Cranberries and blueberries have a property that prevents bacteria from clinging to the cells in the bladder. Essentially, the bacteria are left floating, and are easily excreted by urine, as opposed to becoming lodged on the inner walls of the bladder where they can grow. Even more fascinating is that researchers are finding that this property, called anti-adhesion, may actually prevent cancer cells and bacteria which cause stomach ulcers from lodging in the body too.

Another way that cranberries prevent urinary tract infections is by making the urine more acidic. Urine that is slightly more acidic is less conducive to bacterial growth.

The third way that cranberries fight urinary infections is by their antimicrobial actions.

Cranberries are also used to treat some types of kidney stones. The vast majority of kidney stones are comprised of calcium. These types of stones are much less likely to grow if cranberry juice is consumed.

Stones formed of uric acid and other types of stones do not respond favorably to the use of cranberry. People who have a history of kidney stones should ask their health care provider what kind of stones they have before employing cranberry juice to prevent kidney stones, as some stone formation may be hastened with frequent consumption of cranberry juice.

It's important to use unsweetened cranberry juice or unsweetened cranberries for healing purposes, as sweetened cranberry juice does not afford the same benefits. Juice sweetened with artificial sweeteners may actually aggravate the condition. I have found cranberry tablets effective in the treatment of urinary tract infections.

### **Corn silk (*Zea mays*)**

Ordinary corn silk, preferably from organic local corn is one of my favorite herbs. It's incredibly soothing for an irritated urinary tract. Relief is just a cup of tea away.

Use the sticky, light colored part of the silk to make tea. It can also be tinctured, so that it's available when corn is not readily available. I think the tea works best.

The tea tastes a lot like corn. I haven't tried to freeze the fresh silk, but I think that this may work also. Corn silk tea is a very effective tea with no harmful side effects.

### **Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*)**

# Parsley



Both Dr. Donna and I always have several parsley plants growing in large pots in our gardens. Flat-leafed parsley has the best flavor and is medicinally the most useful, but curled leaf is prettier. I also like to add parsley to fresh bouquets of herbs and flowers.

Chewing on a piece of parsley after a meal will freshen your breath and settle your stomach if you have over-indulged. Records documenting parsley's healing effects are available from ancient records dating back to ancient Rome!

Parsley has diuretic properties, and helps increase urinary flow. This can be beneficial whenever there is congestion of fluids in tissues or if you have high blood pressure. Parsley can aid in the prevention and expulsion of kidney stones.

I always use fresh leaves, though the root and seeds are effective as well. I believe that most dried parsley is useless for medicine and for flavoring. If parsley is not a fresh, bright green color when dried, I will toss it in the compost pile. Freeze-dried parsley has a bit more staying power, but I believe that fresh is unsurpassed.

## ***Herbal Remedies for Urinary Health***

### **Urinary Tract Infections**

UTIs are painful and irritating things to deal with—fortunately, herbs can help you clear up the infection quickly, and even reduce your chances of getting one.

#### **Cranberry Juice**

For preventative purposes, drink 1/2 cup to 1 quart of unsweetened cranberry juice daily. If a urinary tract infection is present, at least 2 cups daily should be consumed.

Consult with your health care provider if relief does not occur within 24 hours or if you develop fever, back pain, or blood in the urine. If you suffer from frequent urinary tract infections, check with your health care provider as well, as an underlying disorder may be present.

#### **Corn Silk Tea**

This tea will relieve pain in the urinary tract very fast.

##### *Ingredients*

2 cups corn silk (yes, it's the silky stuff on the corn plant)

4 cups boiling water

##### *Instructions*

Pack two cups of corn silk into a bowl. Cover with boiling water. Let sit covered for at least one half hour. (I leave it overnight sometimes)

Drink one cup at room temperature at least four times daily.

## **Kidney Stones**

Kidney stones can be immensely painful, and if they're severe enough, can warrant surgery. Get rid of them using this fantastic tea!

### **Stone Breaker Tea**

The herb used in this recipe comes all the way from the Amazon Rainforest and has even been reported by urologists in their journals to break up kidney stones. Here's the best part: the stones are broken within 48 to 72 hours if the herb is effective in the particular type of kidney stone the patient has.

One case Dr. Donna had years ago was a man in his 40s who went to the doctor because of excruciating pain in the area of his kidneys. An x-ray turned up multiple kidney stones that were blocking the ureter. His doctor sent him home, telling him that the stones might pass on their own and to come back in three days. However, the man couldn't urinate, and the purpose of urine is to remove waste products from the body.

He began drinking the stone breaker tea, one 1/2 cup every hour to two hours. By the nighttime, 10 hours later, he started urinating in a little trickle. Within the next 24 hours, his urine stream was back to normal. His pain was quickly disappearing.

When he went back to the doctor on the third day, a new x-ray revealed the kidney stones were all gone.

#### *Ingredients*

3 Tbsp. Quebra pedra herb

2 qts. distilled water

#### *Instructions*

Place the distilled water in a 2-quart stainless steel pot (not aluminum). Add the herb to the pot. Cover and cook at very low heat.

Your goal is to simmer the herb until the water has been reduced to half its original volume. This is how you make it very potent.

Turn off the burner at the end of the cooking time. Remove 1/2 cup of the decocted tea and place into a coffee cup. Let it cool, then drink. Repeat the process every 1 to 2 hours until kidney stone is dissolved and urination returns.

### ***Healthy Recipes for Urinary Tract Health***

#### **Parsleyed Chicken Pasta**

This recipe is a terrific base recipe. Try using seafood, tofu, or different meats instead of the chicken. Change the vegetables with the seasons. Create totally different flavors by using cilantro, basil, or sorrel instead of the parsley. I like pastas made of whole grain white wheat or rice-based ones. These give the benefit of whole grains with a light, traditional pasta flavor and texture. You could also use spinach pasta in this recipe.

#### *Ingredients*

8 oz. fettuccine or pasta of choice

2 Tbsp. olive oil

4 cloves garlic, pressed

1/2 lb. chicken breast tenderloin

1/4 lb. shitake mushrooms

1/8 cup dry white wine

Juice of 1/2 lemon

4 cups baby spinach or other tender greens

2 cups flat leaf parsley, chopped

1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, shaved

1 tsp. lemon zest

### *Instructions*

Boil pasta, following label directions. Drain and set aside.

Sauté chicken, garlic, and mushrooms in olive oil until all are lightly browned and chicken is cooked through. Add wine and lemon juice.

Add spinach and parsley. Toss constantly until spinach and parsley are tender and bright green.

Add pasta. Add additional wine if needed for moisture. Heat thoroughly.

Remove from heat. Toss with lemon zest and Parmesan cheese. Serves 4.

## **Very Berry Chocolate**

This recipe is a special treat. It's rich in antioxidants and berries that benefit urinary tract health, and chocolate is a good source of magnesium. If you have to eat chocolate (who doesn't?), at least you're getting healthy nutrients along with your fix! If you can keep your family away from it, this recipe will keep in the refrigerator for about three weeks.

### *Ingredients*

1/4 cup cranberries, dried

1/4 cup blueberries, dried



1/4 cup cherries, dried

1/4 cup walnuts

7 oz. dark, organic, ethically harvested chocolate (65-75% cocoa solids)

1 Tbsp. coffee brandy

### *Instructions*

Combine fruit and nuts. Melt chocolate in a double boiler. Add coffee brandy.

Stir 1/2 of fruit and nut mixture into melted chocolate. Pour into a 9"x 11" pan lined with heavy-duty aluminum foil. Spread to edges.

Sprinkle remaining fruit and nut mixture over the chocolate. Refrigerate 30 minutes or until hard. Break into serving-sized pieces.

## **8. The Male Reproductive System**

### ***Overview of the Male Reproductive System***

At its most basic, the purpose of the male reproductive system is to produce sperm and transport it to a women's body for reproductive purposes. Sexual pleasure biologically enhances that process.

### ***Components of the Male Reproductive System***

Sperm are produced in the testes. Unlike females, who have all of their eggs formed prior to birth, men form hundreds of millions of sperm daily. These develop in tiny tubules within the testes.

If those tubules were unrolled end to end, a man would have 750 feet of tubules! The testes reside outside of the rest of the body in the scrotal sac, as the sperm need to remain at a lower temperature than the rest of the body. Sperm production begins at puberty and takes about two months to mature.

### **How Sperm Work**

After sperm are produced, they remain in a long, coiled tube called the epididymis for 1 to 18 days. They mature and become capable of penetrating a female egg.

During ejaculation, the sperm travel via a connecting tube called the vas deferens. The vas deferens loops over the bladder and joins the urethra within the penis. If sperm are not ejaculated, the body reabsorbs them to allow for more sperm production.

Hormone production regulates sperm formation and development. Sperm travel in a fluid called semen. Semen contains seminal fluid, which is produced by the seminal vesicles. Seminal fluid is rich in glucose, which provides energy and nutrients for the sperm.

The prostate gland also provides fluid to the semen. Sperm are unable to swim in an acidic environment, such as the female vagina, so prostatic fluid neutralizes the acidity. The prostate gland surrounds the base of the urethra, and is the size of a chestnut.

The penis is made of spongy tissue, which houses the urethra. During sexual stimulation, the spongy tissue becomes engorged with blood. During lovemaking, muscles at the base of the penis and the urethra repeatedly contract and the sperm are ejaculated.

### ***Herbs for Male Reproductive Health***

Rumors, legends, and lore have been prevalent for centuries about herbs and substances said to enhance virility and sexual prowess. There are several herbs that are safe and at the same time nourish the male reproductive system. Asian ginseng, Siberian ginseng, ashwagandha, horny goat weed, and tribulus are useful herbs. Wild yam, maca, sarsaparilla, saw palmetto, and milky oats are also beneficial.

Herbs for the reproductive system work in a variety of ways. They provide nourishment, enhance relaxation, improve circulation, and relieve inflammation.

In addition to the herbs mentioned above, there are several common herbs that are very beneficial for nourishing the reproductive tract that will be discussed here.

#### ***Nettle (*Urtica dioica*)***



Nettle is one of the most valuable herbs on the planet. Fortunately, they are abundant and easy to grow. Most people know them as a stinging weed of wet places. They are that, but they're also one of the most nutrient-dense foods that we have.

When I started my first herb garden, I planted a raised bed full of nettles. One day my husband came in looking quite pleased with himself. He said "I just weeded your garden. It was all full of nettles, but I got most of them out!" Needless to say, I gave him a lesson in herbal medicine that day.

Nettles improve hormone balance and can help relieve symptoms of an enlarged prostate gland, such as the need to get up at night to urinate and decreased urinary flow. Nettles have a positive impact on sex hormone development, which protects against the development of prostate cancer. Prostate cancer is the second

leading cause of cancer deaths in men. Nettles are rich in vitamin C, which is crucial for producing healthy sperm.

Sexual health and sexual desire are linked closely to the physical and emotional health of the whole body. Nettle is an herb that serves as a tonic for the whole body.

Nettles are rich in calcium, iron, protein, and fiber. Some nutrients contained in nettles include magnesium, potassium, and vitamins A and K.

Nettles are great for allergy sufferers. I recommend that people who have seasonal allergies start taking nettles for two or three months prior to, and continuing throughout, the season during which they suffer. The nettles can be consumed in any form. Nettles are also used to relieve arthritis, eczema, and any kind of minor bleeding.

When using nettles, they should be steamed, pickled, cooked or dried first. Harvest fresh nettle tops in the spring, when young. The root is frequently used for treatment of enlarged prostate. That can be gathered in spring or fall. I use the entire plant. Wear gloves and long sleeves when harvesting.

### **Chocolate (*Theobroma cacao*)**



Chocolate, like coffee and tea, is actually an herb. The word *Theobroma*, found in the Latin name for chocolate, means “food for the Gods.”

Chocolate contains nutrients needed for healthy sperm development. Chocolate is another herb that enhances the health of the whole body, and a healthy body makes for a healthy reproductive tract. It also improves circulation throughout the body, including the male sexual organs.

So what does this delectable herb do in addition to helping make potent sperm and people’s eyes light up at the simple mention of the word? It makes us happier. Chocolate boosts serotonin, dopamine, and endorphin levels, which are responsible for making us feel happy.

Chocolate is an aphrodisiac, and has a chemical component that boosts feelings of love. Now you see why chocolate got to be associated with giving St. Valentine’s Day candy to a beloved one!

Chocolate reduces inflammation and benefits heart health in multiple ways. It can also help your body to burn fat efficiently, and it's rich in flavonoids that help you stay feeling young. It even fights the formation of dental cavities.

The best chocolate is dark chocolate. About 1 ounce per day is good for you. Be sure to purchase it from reputable companies that are not destroying endangered rain forests or exploiting the people in the region where it's harvested.

Milk combined with chocolate negates some of the benefits, and it's a good idea to avoid chocolate heavily prepared with unhealthy fats or sugars (most of the time, anyway).

### **Pumpkin Seeds (*Cucurbita pepo*)**



When I was a child, I always scooped pumpkin seeds out of the pumpkin shell when my family was making Halloween jack-o-lanterns. My family washed and dried them to make a seasonal crunchy treat. They didn't know that they were healthy; only that

they meant it was autumn. Now it's known that pumpkin seeds are rich in protein and healthy fatty acids.

Dr. Donna uses pumpkin seeds as a way to eliminate parasites in her animals. She juices the rest of the pumpkin to help decrease inflammation in the body and make skin look very smooth and beautiful.

Pumpkin seeds can effectively prevent and reduce symptoms of mild to moderate benign prostate enlargement.

When the prostate gland swells, it surrounds the urethra and inhibits the passage of urine. The bladder does not empty completely, and urgency, frequency, and dribbling occur. Pumpkin seeds alleviate these problems and, indirectly, improve sleep patterns because men don't have to get up as often at night to urinate.

Pumpkin seeds also help to modulate male sex hormones. They're a very rich source of zinc, which is needed for proper male sexual organ functioning. Two grams of pumpkin seeds eaten daily is effective at providing health benefits.

## ***Illnesses and Remedies***

### **Decreased Sexual Potency**

As men age, or due to underlying disorders, they may have trouble performing as they would like. Use this herbal mixture to help increase their potency.

### **Amazonian Sex Potential**

These two herbs are from the Amazon Rainforest, so they aren't very common. However, when Dr. Donna used them together in a small research study around 2002, she had to agree that the legend about Amazonians having a sex life into their 90s is indeed possible.



### *Ingredients*

1 tsp. muira puama herb

1 tsp. catuaba herb

### *Instructions*

Place the two herbs in a coffee cup and fill with boiling water. Then let the tea cool down before drinking. Drink 2 cups daily. It takes about a month for men to notice a difference in their male potency in the bedroom, but women will see a difference in their husbands within about two weeks.

## ***Healthy Recipes for Male Health***

### **Lean and Smooth Smoothie for Men**

This recipe is packed with nutrients that men need. It's a delicious, fast recipe that can be consumed once or twice daily. Women like it too! This can be used as a remedy for prostate health or as a tonic for general wellness.

Coconut milk is a tasty milk substitute which doesn't interfere with the health benefits of chocolate. Bananas are rich in fiber and micronutrients that men need, and pumpkin seeds, nettle, and chocolate are tonics for the reproductive tract that increase potency and relieve symptoms of an enlarged prostate. They also optimize hormone formation and glandular balance. Vitamin E ensures glandular function and aids sperm formation. And vanilla is an aphrodisiac. Enjoy!

### *Ingredients*

1 peeled banana, frozen

1 cup light coconut milk

3 Tbsp unsalted pumpkin seeds

2 tsp. nettle herb, dried

1/2 tsp. liquid natural vitamin E

1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract

2 Tbsp. dark cocoa, powdered (not Dutch processed)

3 ice cubes

Stevia to taste

### *Instructions*

Blend all ingredients together. Adjust the amount of coconut milk for personal preference of thickness of the smoothie. Add stevia as desired for sweetness. By the way, did you know that stevia is an herb from the Amazon rainforest?

## **Spaghetti Sauce**

Many men like to make spaghetti sauce. The lycopene in tomatoes is a phytochemical with many health benefits, including cancer prevention. Lycopene is particularly important in preventing prostate, lung, and stomach cancers.

### *Ingredients*

4 Tbsp. olive oil

2 lbs tomatoes

2 stems fresh rosemary

1 medium onion

3 cloves garlic, crushed

1 small carrot, diced

1 Cubanelle sweet pepper, diced and seeded  
1 stick celery, diced  
8 oz. shitake mushrooms, diced  
1 tsp. oregano, dried  
1 bay leaf  
1/4 tsp. thyme, dried  
1/4 cup dry red wine  
1 Tbsp. tomato paste  
1/4 cup tightly packed fresh basil leaf, chopped  
Parmesan cheese

### *Instructions*

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Wash and dry tomatoes. Core and remove stem end of tomatoes.

Cut two 1-inch slits through the tomatoes' skin at bottom. Toss with 2 tablespoons olive oil and rosemary.

Place on broiler pan and bake for approximately 30 minutes or until tomatoes are very soft.

Remove from oven. Cool until cool enough to handle. Remove peels from tomatoes and hard stems of rosemary. Compost them. Chop tomatoes into small pieces with a knife or blender. Set tomatoes aside.

Using a Dutch oven, add remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Heat to medium-high on stovetop.

Add onion, garlic, carrot, pepper, celery, mushrooms, oregano, bay leaf, and thyme. Cook until vegetables are browned, stirring frequently. Add wine. Stir.

Add reserved tomatoes and tomato paste. Let simmer for one hour.

Add additional wine if too thick. Five minutes prior to removing from heat, add fresh basil. Remove bay leaf. Stir.

Serve over pasta with Parmesan cheese. Serves 4 to 6.

### **Seared Steak and Spring Vegetables**

Men love steak! Here's a way to prepare it that's fast, tasty, and full of fresh vegetable goodness. This recipe is packed with colorful vitamin- and fiber-rich vegetables.

Use young, tender nettle tops and leaves. If nettles are unavailable, choose your favorite leafy green vegetable as a substitute.

The pumpkin seed garnish adds crunch and extra nutrients for men's wellness. This is a nutrient-packed meal that all people enjoy, not just men.

This recipe is packed with protein, fiber, and a wide array of health-promoting phytonutrients. It supports the entire body.

#### *Ingredients*

2 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil

1/4 cup pumpkin seeds, coarsely chopped

1/4 tsp. garlic salt

Juice of 1 lime

1/2 tsp. lime zest

2 Tbsp. apple juice

1 Tbsp. rice vinegar

1 Tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce

8 oz. boneless rib eye steak, cut into 1/4-inch strips

8 oz. shitake or other mushrooms, sliced

1/4 cup sweet red pepper, diced

2 cups sugar snap peas

1 cup asparagus, cut into 1-inch pieces

2 cups nettle leaf

1/4 cup sweet red pepper, diced

3/4 cup basil, chopped

1 cup green onion, white and green parts, sliced

### *Instructions*

Toast pumpkin seeds in a small frying pan over low heat with garlic salt until golden. Stir frequently while heating.

Remove from heat. Set aside. Combine lime juice, zest, apple juice, and vinegar in a small bowl. Set aside.

Using a wok or large frying pan, over high heat, sauté meat with 1 tablespoon oil until browned on outside but still rare inside. Remove meat from pan.

Toss with soy sauce. Return wok to stove. Over medium high heat, stir fry vegetables, adding in the order listed. Cook until tender crisp.

Return meat to wok. Add lime, vinegar, and juice; then mix. Heat briefly until all ingredients are hot.

Remove from heat. Add basil. Toss.

Serve over quinoa, rice, or another grain. Garnish with green onion and pumpkin seeds.

## 9. The Female Reproductive System

### *Overview of the Female Reproductive System*

Immature eggs develop within the ovaries of a woman prior to her birth. At puberty, hormonal signals trigger maturation of the female reproductive system. Beginning at puberty, one egg matures and is released from the ovaries monthly. It has the potential, if fertilized, to become a new baby.

### **How Pregnancy Becomes a Reality**

After the egg is released, it travels through the fallopian tubes to reach the uterus. The uterus has a lining which changes during the menstrual cycle. The lining builds up in preparation to receive and nourish a fertilized egg. Fertilization with sperm normally occurs within the uterus.

If pregnancy occurs, the thick, vascular lining of the uterus nourishes the developing baby initially, until a separate organ, called the placenta, is formed. If no pregnancy occurs, the lining sloughs off during menstruation.

The cervix is the bottom of the pear-shaped uterus. It has an opening in the center which changes during the menstrual cycle. It widens to allow the baby to exit the uterus at birth.

The birth canal is called the vagina. It is a muscular, ridged, hollow-shaped organ, which receives semen during sexual intercourse. The external genitalia consist of the labia, or lips, and the clitoris, a small area of highly sensitive tissue, which becomes aroused during sexual activity.

Breasts develop at puberty as well in order to provide nourishment for future babies. At menopause, hormones shift again as they decrease and the menstrual cycle stops.

## **Hormones Control the Whole Process of Fertility**

A carefully orchestrated hormonal dance repeats monthly. The primary female hormones are estrogen and progesterone, and the levels of these fluctuate during the month. Other hormones are involved as well. If pregnancy occurs, the hormonal pattern changes throughout the pregnancy. Hormones initiate the beginning and ending of a woman's child-bearing years.

## **What Happens When Hormones Are Out of Balance**

Progesterone works with estrogen to ensure the health of the female reproductive system.

Imbalances of progesterone increase the risk of breast cancer, cause breast tenderness, and create hormonal imbalances, which disrupt ovarian function.

Balanced estrogen levels ensure maturation at puberty and help the uterine lining develop to support pregnancy.

Estrogen protects against heart disease and osteoporosis. It also enhances sexual desire, provides lubrication to the vagina, and ensures that breast milk is produced.

Imbalances of estrogen may result in infertility, cancer, uterine fibroids, and other detrimental conditions. Hot flashes, lack of menses, and irregular, excessive menses all occur due to imbalances of estrogen. Estrogen imbalance is a major contributor to breast and other hormone-dependent cancers.

## ***Did You Know the Environment Contains Estrogens?***

Women make three types of estrogen. They must be in balance with each other to prevent distress and disease. Current research indicates that we are exposed to too much estrogen, which causes havoc in women's bodies. Girls are maturing earlier. This means that their bodies will be exposed to higher estrogen levels for a



longer period of time, both from their own bodies and the environment. Environmental estrogen comes from several sources.

- Our environment exposes us to chemicals in the form of plastics, pesticides, and other chemicals. These contain very unhealthy estrogens and they interfere with the body's receptors for natural estrogen.
- We get healthy estrogens, which protect our bodies, from many plants. Common sources include turmeric, soy, legumes, licorice root, thyme, and sorrel.
- Synthetic pharmaceutical drugs such as birth control pills and medications to relieve menopausal symptoms, which affect estrogen, are risky for several reasons, including increased risk of blood clots.
- We obtain estrogens when we eat meat and dairy. Estrogens are sometimes used to promote milk production in dairy cows and to promote growth. These cows are also often exposed to pesticides, which are contained in their flesh when we eat them. Fish and fowl contain abnormal estrogens also, sometimes due to pollution.
- We eat diets low in fiber. Fiber helps the body rid itself of unhealthy estrogens and excess estrogen.

### ***Herbs for a Women's Reproductive System***

There are many effective herbs that women use to nourish their reproductive tracts. Here is a chart that lists several of them and their uses. Some are phytoestrogens that protect against cancer and help with hormone balance, while others tone and nourish the reproductive and other body systems. Several are used to relieve common discomforts related to the reproductive system.

Herb	Uses
Nettle	Tonic, hydrates vaginal tissues
Wild yam	Hormone regulation
Sage	Eases hot flashes
Red Clover	Relaxant, nourishing, phytoestrogen source, prevents cancer
Motherwort	Calming, soothes menopausal difficulties
Black cohosh	Relieves menstrual pain and hot flashes, balances hormones
Dong Quai	Relieves spasms, improves circulation of the genital organs
Vitex	Used to treat fibroids, regulates ovarian and hormone function
Cramp bark	Relieves menstrual cramps
Ginger	Improves circulation of the pelvic area, relieves menstrual cramps
Licorice root	Improves hormonal actions, useful in the treatment of infertility

Some of my favorite herbs for women's reproductive health are foods that are rich in phytochemicals.

### **Seaweed (*various*)**

There are many kinds of seaweeds; kelp, wakame, nori, and dulse are just a few of the many different varieties that are available. Seaweeds may be eaten as a vegetable or used as a condiment. They're safe to consume regularly, except if you have hyperthyroidism.

Seaweeds are tonic herbs that nourish the reproductive system. They may be used as part of a healthy supplement for the entire body. They prevent osteoporosis and relieve the discomfort of vaginal dryness.

Seaweeds enhance the circulation and relieve hot flashes. They also protect the body from hormone disruption and other ill effects

due to toxins in the environment, and they provide trace minerals that benefit the entire body.

### **Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*)**



Don't you love everything about raspberries? Both I and Dr. Donna do! Raspberry leaves make a terrific herbal infusion. The delicate fresh berries are beyond comparison when it comes to flavor.

Some of my favorite memories involve raspberries. I have always loved summer, when my godmother, Aunt Edna, would invite me over to pick raspberries. Her family would eat bunch and make raspberry jam or have them on cereal during an early morning breakfast on the lawn.

Aunt Edna would make a vanilla cake; split the layers in half horizontally and filled them with whipped cream with raspberries folded in. She covered the entire cake with cream and heaped fresh berries on top. Everyone had seconds of this cake!

A few years ago, I picked raspberries with my grandson. He didn't even wait to pick the berries from the canes—he just bent over and bit the berries right off of the bush!

What's so fabulous about raspberries, other than their delicious beauty? They're one of the gentlest, yet most potent, herbs. All berries are rich in powerful phytochemicals that ensure health and resist disease.

Often, women who suffer from heavy menstrual periods become anemic. Raspberry leaf contains rich sources of easily absorbed and well-tolerated iron. This improves energy levels as a result, because iron is one of the nutrients that keeps your energy levels high.

Manganese and other trace minerals are abundant in raspberries; these minerals ensure healthy bones and connective tissue. The leaves relieve diarrhea, while the berries are rich sources of fiber, which aid elimination.

Raspberry is gentle enough to use during pregnancy and for children.

## **Soy**



Soy has been studied extensively for its many health benefits. It's rich in phytoestrogens, which work by binding to estrogen receptor sites that excess or harmful forms of estrogen would otherwise occupy.

Harmful or excess estrogens are eliminated when you consume soy, rather than lodging within the body, where they could create hot flashes, aid in fibroid tumor growth, or promote the development of breast cancer.

Soy benefits heart health and is a rich source of protein. Natural food sources are most effective; unfortunately, soy supplements, such as capsule or pills, do not offer the same benefits. The best soy products are edamame, soy milk, and tofu. Soy hot dogs, candy bars, and hamburgers are much less healthy. And forget about eating soy ice cream; it's usually very high on the glycemic index—well over 100!

**\*\*\* *Warning on GMO Foods and Farm-Raised Fish* \*\*\***

If you eat soy, always make sure that the soy you purchase is non-genetically modified soy. Soy products created from genetically modified organisms (GMOs) may possibly cause depressed immunity many years later because of the genetic changes in the soy. Foods are always more wholesome if they are consumed in their most natural form. The most natural forms of foods are non-GMO, heirloom varieties of plants that have not been grown with the aid of pesticides and chemicals.

Remember that GMO foods have been created to withstand the high amounts of aluminum and other heavy metals now polluting the atmosphere, but this doesn't mean they're good for us. (On a side note, this warning on GMO foods extends to farm-raised fish as well.)

As an investigative journalist for over 14 years for a health magazine in California, Dr. Donna once wrote a story on the Salmon Festival that occurred in Sacramento, CA every year. The festival was located close to a waterway where salmon spawned, and the festival grounds were owned by the government and often used to perform research in the area.

She attended many different lectures given by scientists at the festival about salmon, and was shocked to find out that the government officials who ran the research were admitting the truth about farm-raised salmon: the farming practices cause the destruction of the immune system of the fish. The scientists had huge fish tanks of salmon that were farm-raised and others that were not. The difference in the fish was very visible; the farm-raised fish were sickly and weakened by viruses and bacteria.

The same thing is true of GMO foods—there's a link to a weakened immune system.

Meats and dairy products that are antibiotic-free, hormone free, unprocessed (such as raw meats which you can cook yourself as

opposed to processed meats), and from animals that were the original genetic stock the pilgrims brought to America. If you live in another country, try to locate farmers who have animals with genes that have not been tampered with. Do not eat animal products that are from cloned animals. Cloned animals will be one of the next food disasters!

Free-range and grass-fed beef, buffalo, and lamb make a big improvement in your food choices over the usual commercial, store-bought varieties. Poultry should be free-range, antibiotic-free, and hormone-free. Poultry that are fed commercial feed may be contaminated with high levels of arsenic.

**\*\*\* *The End* \*\*\***

## ***Illnesses and Remedies***

### **Hot Flashes**

Due to changing hormones, menopausal women often suffer hot flashes, which can be very uncomfortable. Use one (or both!) of these teas to help cool you down.

### **Cool It Tea**

Many women suffer from hot flashes during menopause. Sage can be very helpful in relieving the discomfort of these hot flashes; a strong infusion of sage is effective, but doesn't taste good. Some women grow their own sage and eat one or two leaves daily to relieve night sweats and hot flashes.

Try this tastier cooling blend for relief, and increase the sage if needed.

### ***Ingredients***

1 cup raspberry leaf, dried

1/2 cup lemon balm leaf, dried

1/2 cup nettle leaf, dried

1 cup peppermint leaf, dried

1/2 cup sage leaf, dried

1/8 cup orange peel, dried

### *Instructions*

Combine herbs and store in a dark container. To use, add 1 to 2 teaspoons tea blend to a cup of water and serve over ice. Add fresh raspberries or fruit slices as a garnish. Drink about 4 cups per day.

### **Cool It Tea #2**

The Amazon Rainforest herb suma (*Pfaffia paniculata*) is also called Brazilian ginseng. For women, this herb may be very useful in relieving hot flashes.

Suma is an adaptogenic herb and has been found to work on temperature regulation in the brain. When a woman has hot flashes, the temperature regulation center in the brain is trying to readjust itself. This one is Dr. Donna's recipe for women with hot flashes.

### *Ingredients*

1 tsp. suma

1 cup boiling water, preferably distilled

### *Instructions*

Place herb in coffee cup and add boiling water. Cover and let cool for about 5 minutes. Then strain and drink the cup of tea. Dosage is 1 to 2 cups tea daily.



## **PMS and Pregnancy**

Both of these can cause a lot of discomfort. Fortunately, you can use these easy recipes to make you feel better.

### **Cramp Bark Capsules**

This capsule recipe contains strong herbs that relieve menstrual cramps and excess menstrual bleeding. The herbs don't taste good, so they're encapsulated. This recipe could also be used as a tincture recipe.

#### *Ingredients*

2 Tbsp. cramp bark, powdered

2 Tbsp. black cohosh root

1 Tbsp. yarrow, powdered

1 Tbsp. ginger, powdered

Size 00 vegetable capsules

#### *Instructions*

Combine herbs. Encapsulate the herbs, using instructions that come with the capsule maker. Take 2 capsules if cramps are present. Take 1 capsule every 2 hours until cramps are gone.

### **Lady in Waiting Tea**

This tea is excellent to drink during pregnancy or after giving birth, but women at all stages of life can benefit from its nutritive, calming effects.

Raspberry is a wonderful herb that tones the uterus and provides nutrients. Lemon balm is tasty and relaxing, and it can help to stabilize mood swings during pregnancy.

Oat straw is a fabulous source of calcium and is also relaxing. Mint is vitamin-rich and tasty. Fennel soothes queasiness and prepares your body to produce rich milk to nourish your baby.

### *Ingredients*

1/4 cup raspberry leaf

2 Tbsp. lemon balm

2 Tbsp. oat straw

2 Tbsp. mint

1-1/2 tsp. fennel seed

### *Instructions*

Combine herbs. Pour 1 cup boiling water over 1 heaping teaspoon of herb blend. Let sit, covered, for 20 minutes. Strain out the herbs and compost them.

Drink tea hot or cool. While you are enjoying your tea, elevate your legs to help your circulation. Enjoy.

Makes approximately 24 cups tea.

### **After-Pregnancy Toning Tea**

After your baby arrives, your body needs to recuperate. This blend helps your uterus regain some of its former tone, replenishes iron, and reminds you to take a break.

These herbs have been used to increase milk production for centuries. Drink it anytime. The tea is restorative, especially after

giving birth and while nursing. This makes a fine beverage for simple pleasure as well.

### *Ingredients*

4 Tbsp. anise seed

4 Tbsp. fennel seed

4 Tbsp. nettle

2 Tbsp. raspberry leaf

2 Tbsp. orange peel

### *Instructions*

Combine seeds and crush or grind coarsely. Combine with remaining ingredients.

For 1 cup of tea, pour 1 cup boiling water over 1 heaping teaspoon of herb blend. Let sit covered for 20 minutes.

Strain out herbs and compost them. Drink warm or cool. Makes enough for approximately 30 cups of tea.

## ***Healthy Foods for the Female Reproductive System***

Our food provides the stuff that we are made of. If we want to have healthy bodies, we need to nourish ourselves. The reproductive system is especially sensitive to environmental toxins. Try to purchase organic local products when available.

Everyone can benefit from eating healthy foods. Women who want to become pregnant, or those who are already pregnant or nursing, need to be especially conscientious about what they eat. Foods can impact the level of comfort that women are able to maintain during different times of their life, including through menstrual cycles and during menopause.

## **Comfort Foods May Worsen Hormonal Imbalances**

It's important for women who suffer from discomfort during menstrual periods, puberty, or menopause to notice the foods they're eating during times of distress. It's even better if they can create a plan of what to eat during stressful times.

Often, a link to a comfort food is identified during times of stress. If the food is eliminated, then discomfort reduces. It's often that simple. For example, some women note that they experience fluid retention during menses. If they eliminate salty foods prior to and during menses, the fluid retention is reduced and they are more comfortable.

## **Healthy Foods for Women**

- Non-GMO soy and other legumes.
- Cruciferous vegetables, including broccoli sprouts, cabbage, kale, cauliflower, and broccoli.
- Milk substitutes, preferably non-genetically modified, organic soy.
- Colorful fruits. Berries are especially healthy. Keep in mind that non-organic berries are heavily sprayed.
- Seaweed daily. Wakame is the richest in phytonutrients, but all are excellent.
- Freshly ground flaxseed daily.
- Clover or mung bean sprouts several times weekly.
- Green tea.

- Culinary herbs. Basil, turmeric, citrus peels, rosemary, ginger, and mustard are especially excellent.
- Cold-pressed oils. Flax is best for cold dishes. Soybean, hemp, pumpkin, sesame, and olive are good, but make sure you balance these with an excellent source of omega-3 fats, such as a supplement of 2000 mg or more daily.
- Beets, celery, shitake mushrooms, tomatoes, asparagus, potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, leafy greens, and avocado.
- Seeds and nuts. Sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, almonds, walnuts, and Brazil nuts are excellent. Try using 1 to 2 tablespoons of nut and seed butters.
- Figs are healthy sweets.
- Citrus fruits have cancer-fighting vitamin C and other cancer-fighting actions.
- Miso soup.
- Tempeh.
- Chile peppers.
- Onions and garlic.

### **Foods Women May Need to Limit or Avoid**

1. Limit fish to twice weekly. Mackerel, tuna, herring and salmon are good choices but tuna, swordfish and other high-fat fish are high in mercury. Avoid farmed fish at all costs, as these also may be high in toxic elements such as arsenic. If you're pregnant, never eat fish more than once a month, due to its potential contamination with heavy metals, especially in high-fat fish. Also, be wary of fish imported from other countries, which have been found to be

contaminated with high levels of bacteria. Superstores may import fish from other countries; always check the source.

2. If you eat red meat, eat only wild, free-range, or grass-fed. Poultry should be free-range and not be given antibiotics. You absorb the antibiotics that are given to animals that you eat.
3. Avoid dairy, especially non-organic, if you're allergic or sensitive to dairy products. Eating any food that you are allergic or sensitive to will create inflammation in the body.
4. Stop eating sweets that contain white sugar or white flour.
5. Eliminate soft drinks, including diet drinks.
6. Avoid the use of any foods that contain sugar alternatives, including sucralose, aspartame, and other chemically-created sugars.
7. Discontinue consuming foods or beverages that contain high-fructose corn syrup, which has been linked to metabolic syndrome, diabetes, gout, and other degenerative diseases.
8. Limit caffeinated beverages, especially coffee. Coffee is often contaminated with high levels of mycotoxins; choose one that is tested and shown low levels of mycotoxins.
9. Limit alcohol to one drink per week, if any.
10. Limit consumption of foods high in mycotoxins if you are sensitive to mold or have been previously exposed to high levels of mold in the home or workplace. These foods include dried fruits, coffee, and commercial (low-grade) chocolate.
11. Commercially made salts should be avoided, although sea salt may be added to foods in small amounts.

## *Healthy Recipes for Women*

### **Vegetable Sushi**

Americans have been slow to appreciate the tastes and textures of seaweed that people in other parts of the world recognize. The following recipe is a vegetarian dish which you can use to introduce your family to seaweed.

Many people love sushi. They often don't realize that several sushi recipes contain seaweed. In addition to having a unique taste and texture, seaweed is one of the best foods to prevent breast and other hormone-dependent cancers.

Seaweed is known to absorb heavy metals from the body, and it benefits thyroid health because of its iodine content.

#### *Ingredients*

1 cup short grain brown rice, cooked

2 Tbsp. rice vinegar

2 tsp. maple syrup

4 sheets nori

Thin slices of avocado, seeded cucumber, sweet pepper, broccoli, sprouts, or snow peas

Pickled ginger, wasabi, soy sauce, or green onions

#### *Instructions*

Combine rice, vinegar, and maple syrup. Lay the shiny side of nori face down on sushi mat or flat surface. Cover nori with 1/4 cup of rice. Leave 1 inch of the nori sheet at the top uncovered by the rice.

Sprinkle one-fourth of the vegetables across the width of the nori sheet, about one-third of the way up the sheet.

Slowly roll the sheet tightly in jelly roll fashion to the upper edge, keeping it firm. Use a sharp knife to slice the roll into uniform 1-inch slices.

Repeat with the remaining three sheets and remaining other ingredients. Serve cold with ginger, wasabi, soy, and green onions as garnishes.

## **Miso Soup**

Miso is exceptionally rich in phytonutrients that prevent breast and other hormone-dependent cancers, and it's one of the simplest soups to make.

Miso comes in three types: white, yellow, and red. White is the mildest, while red miso has the strongest flavor. Miso provides the probiotics that form during fermentation in addition to its other healing benefits.

You can store miso in the refrigerator for several months, as it keeps very well. Always add miso after the soup is removed from the stove so that the probiotic cultures in the miso remain alive.

### *Ingredients*

3 Tbsp. toasted sesame oil

1 onion, thinly sliced

2 cloves garlic, crushed

2 stalks celery, chopped

4 oz. shitake mushrooms, thinly sliced

2 carrots, thinly sliced



1/4 lb. extra-firm tofu cut in 1/2-inch cubes

4 cups vegetable broth

1/2 cup snow pea pods

1-inch piece of ginger root, finely minced

3 tsp. white miso

1/4 cup parsley, chopped

Tamari sauce to taste

### *Instructions*

Heat oil in a large pot. Sauté all vegetables except pea pods, ginger, and miso until lightly browned. Add tofu. Sauté lightly until golden. Add broth.

Simmer for 20 minutes until vegetables are tender. Remove from heat. Add pea pods, ginger, and miso. Stir well. Ladle into bowls. Garnish with parsley. Add tamari to taste. Serves 4.

## **After-Birth-Get-Back-to-Normal-Quickly Placenta Capsules**

If you're pregnant, you may want to start preparing for your postnatal health early.

Dr. Donna discovered the importance of human placenta as an investigative health reporter and wrote a few stories on the topic.

In other countries, many women use the placenta as a quick and natural way to restore their hormone levels and lose baby weight. Sometimes the whole family eats the placenta in a soup as part of the baby celebration.

Human placenta is high in female hormones, and these hormones are naturally balanced.

Placenta capsules will also help with hormone regulation during menopause, too.

Here's what to do:

1. After you deliver the placenta, have someone take the placenta and wrap it in foil or place it in a ziplock bag. Freeze it so it stays fresh.
2. When you're feeling ready to cope with the world, thaw the placenta and give it a close examination. Remove any darkened areas of it. There shouldn't be too many of them! You can leave the part of the umbilicus on the placenta.
3. Boil the placenta in a pot with purified water and about 1/4 cup grated ginger. When you boil it, simmer it so that it cooks slowly. The placenta will look similar to liver.
4. Let the placenta cool, then slice it very finely.
5. Dehydrate the placenta slices in the oven on low temperature until done.
6. Next, pulverize the placenta with your mortar and pestle or your coffee grinder.
7. Encapsulate the placenta powder into size 00 capsules.

The dosage is 2 capsules daily.

If you're not sure about doing this yourself, you might hire a placenta specialist who has been trained in how to do this procedure. Placenta from moms who have hepatitis or other communicable diseases should never be consumed.

## 10. Herbs for Children

### *How to Safely and Effectively Use Herbs for Children*

Children are not just smaller versions of adults—their bodies are quite unique, and their growth rate is much higher than that of adults.

Children may metabolize herbs and medications differently than grown-ups, but using herbs for children's health can be very useful and safer than using pharmaceuticals. Prompt use of homemade natural remedies for kids often eliminates the need for antibiotics and drugs that have undesirable side effects. However, each situation is different. Always check with your health care provider before implementing herbal interventions for your child.

Make some herbal preparations to keep your child healthy. Vitamin-rich soups and snacks are tasty and provide wellness benefits, too.

Use herbs to provide first aid for children's simple common afflictions. For example, diaper rash, belly aches, teething problems, and minor cuts and bruises respond wonderfully to herbal interventions.

If your child needs conventional medication or therapies, herbs can support healing and help to restore wellness.



Children are generally more sensitive to any substance, including herbs and conventional medicine. This can be a benefit, as tiny amounts work very well, or it can be a concern. When creating herbal formulas for children, try making a liquid form of an herbal preparation, such as syrup or a tea. Apply a dime-sized amount to the inner aspect of your child's arm, at the elbow. Wait a day and see if there is any rash or redness. If not, use the herb as desired.

**To keep children safe, always store herbal and conventional medicines in child-proof containers and out of reach of children.**

### ***\*\*\* Methods for Administering Herbs to Children \*\*\****

#### **Soothe Them amongst the Suds**

Give your child an herbal bath. Their skin is soft, and the healing benefits of herbs are absorbed immediately.

Plus, the child benefits from the soothing qualities of a bath. Herbal baths are great for restless children, kids who itch, and for those with stuffy heads.

Herbal baths are outstanding ways to reduce fever. Often, you will find that sick children become calm and get the sleep needed to restore their natural exuberance after having an herbal bath.

### **Everyone Loves Popsicles**

Herbal popsicles are terrific treats and provide fluids to soothe bellies and cool sore throats. Children dehydrate quickly when get sick; they may not want to drink, but often will suck on herbal pops.

If your child shows signs of dehydration—listlessness, repeated vomiting or diarrhea, urinating less, sunken eyes, or tenting of skin—call your health care provider immediately. Dehydration can be very serious for a small child.

### **Soothing Salves and Creams**

Apply salves and creams. These can provide protective barriers that promote wound healing.

### **Make Some Extracts and Tinctures**

Prepare these ahead of time. Use glycerin as the liquid to dissolve the herbs. It is effective and tastes sweet, but isn't sugar. The tinctures are not as strong as those extracted by alcohol, but the children's bodies respond well anyway.

### **Make a Sweet Syrup**

Herbal syrups are delicious. They're soothing and easy to administer. They also disguise the taste of bitter herbs.

## **Everyone Loves Candy**

Make herbal candies. These are wonderful ways to administer less tasty herbs to children. They may be used on a regular basis with herbs rich in vitamins and minerals or to alleviate acute conditions.

For example, slippery elm lozenges are great for kids with sore throats and coughs.

## **Take the Herb Directly**

Administer an herbal remedy to yourself. If breastfeeding, you can consume the remedy and it will be consumed by your baby as you nurse him or her. If using this method, consume an amount that is effective for an adult.

**\*\*\* The End \*\*\***

## ***Herbal Medicine Dosages for Children***

Herbal medicine works differently than pharmaceuticals. When I speak with other conventional health care providers, the professionals get really stuck whenever dosage comes up in the discussion. As a nurse, I had to be meticulous about doses when administering pharmaceuticals; however, when using herbal preparations, this is not so much a concern.

Herbs are not harmful drugs, though caution is always necessary. The best way to be cautious using herbs with children is to constantly upgrade your herbal knowledge. Always check your herb manuals to be sure you've given the right amount. And always use herbs that are safe and don't have a toxic dosage you need to remember.

The herbs that I and Dr. Donna use, especially for children, are extremely safe. Barring an allergic reaction, the cause for concern is often more theoretical than real, in my opinion. As long as you

are using the correct herbs, safety is one of the major benefits of using herbs to keep your children well. The following is a suggested guide, not a hard and fast rule.

Child's age	Amount of tea
3 months–1 year	1/2 teaspoon
1–2 years	1 teaspoon
2–4 years	2 teaspoons
4–6 years	1 tablespoon
7–11 years	2 tablespoons
12+ years	1 cup

Amount of herbal tea children can drink, assuming an adult drinks one cup

### ***The Best Herbs for Children***

Many easy-to-grow herbs make fabulous remedies for children. You can even have children grow their own medicine! Base your children's herb garden upon their ages.

In the garden, choose herbs that will be colorful, like calendula. Lambs ears are fuzzy and amuse children—they're soft and can be used as absorbent dressings for minor scratches. Little ones like to pet them. Older kids love learning that it's been called the "toilet paper plant." Mullein is also called the "toilet paper plant."

Plant a variety of herbs that smell and taste good. Lemon balm and other members of the mint family are always popular with children. Fortunately, these herbs are all very easy to grow and can tolerate even the smallest child's loving care.

Use your herb garden as a stepping stone to teaching children about nature, creating nutritious meals and for fun crafts. The best herbal medicine for children, and everyone, is playing with the herbs growing in the dirt. Even a windowsill herb garden can introduce children to the natural world.

Here are some of the best herbs for children. By the way, all these herbs help adults, too.

**Dill (*Anethum graveolens*)**



Dill is the most common flavoring for pickle making. It's an outstanding remedy for children as well. I grew the best crop of dill in a big tub this year—it was one of the shorter varieties, so it didn't bend, and the seed heads just kept coming!

Try pressing the finely cut foliage and seed heads in between the pages of an old telephone book for herbal crafts. It's easy and fun.

Medicinally, I use dill as an outstanding remedy for colic or any respiratory congestion. It is very safe. Nursing mothers can drink an infusion of the foliage or make a decoction of the seeds to



relieve colicky babies. The root can also be decocted, though this isn't something that I do. The seeds are convenient and the foliage is tasty.

Incorporate dill in some of your bread recipes. It's a classic in rye bread. Dill also is a great flavor when used in stews.

### **Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*)**

Catnip may make your cat kooky, but it's one of the best herbs to calm and soothe children. Unfortunately, children do not agree with cats, and don't believe that catnip tastes good. It has a strange bitter flavor, so you need to disguise its taste with other herbs or make a tasty preparation, such as a syrup or candy.

Catnip is my first choice for soothing discomfort caused by teething or colic. It's very relaxing and makes a terrific tepid bath to bring down a fever.

Catnip can be employed to relieve childhood diarrhea. I combine it with dill and blackberry leaf for that problem.

For minor hyperactivity, try combining catnip with lemon balm, passionflower, or chamomile.

### **Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*)**



Calendula is also known as “pot marigold.” It’s an edible flower. If you grow your own calendula, notice how sticky the flowers are—they’re full of the emollient healing compounds that enhance wound healing and provide protection to delicate skin.

My daughter-in-law makes a salve with calendula flowers infused in olive oil on the windowsill. She uses the wonderful salve for her little daughter’s bottom. Thanks to her excellent care and this wonderful salve, my granddaughter has never had a diaper rash. That’s quite an accomplishment! The oil can also be used to relieve earaches, provided there’s not a ruptured eardrum present.

Calendula’s bright orange and yellow blossoms are packed with skin-healing phytochemicals that help cells to repair themselves, and they fight fungal growth and provide antiseptic protection against bacteria.

This herb may be used to relieve shingles and minor burns. As a warm poultice or compress, it will reduce the pain of an earache.

It also reduces inflammation externally as well as internally. It has been used to heal ulcers, reduce fevers, and relieve menstrual cramps and indigestion.

Calendula, when combined with chamomile, makes a terrific hair rinse, especially for blond hair.

### ***Herbal Remedies for Children***

Making herbal remedies for children is fun, inexpensive, and safe. Try preparing some remedies in advance, so that you will have them on hand if your child gets a “boo-boo” or develops some of the common childhood complaints.

### **General Health**

#### **Dill and Apple Pops**

These are easy to make, and they’re wonderful for belly aches and loose stools. To make these rich in vitamin C, add 2 teaspoons of rose hips when you remove the pan from the stove. You can also add 2 teaspoons of elderberries before you heat the final juice in order to enhance your child’s immune function.

#### *Ingredients*

Frozen pop molds

2 cups organic apple juice

2 tsp. dill seed

#### *Instructions*

Bruise the seeds in a mortar and pestle or coarsely grind in a coffee grinder. Simmer the seeds in the juice for 20 minutes, covered, over low heat. Remove from stove.

Cool slightly. Strain and compost the seeds. Pour juice into pop molds. Freeze until firm. Yield varies depending upon size of molds.

### **Baby's Bottom Salve**

No baby should ever have a diaper rash. Clean your baby's skin with each diaper change, and provide time for the skin to air out.

Use a thin layer of this salve to prevent stool and urine from irritating tender skin. This salve is useful for soothing minor scrapes and cuts as well. Do not use salves on a fresh burn; instead, use this once healing has started.

#### *Ingredients*

1 oz. calendula flowers

1 cup olive oil

2 Tbsp. beeswax, grated

#### *Instructions*

Place herbs in a clean jar. Cover with oil. Oil should cover herb by about one inch. Cover. Place in a warm spot, such as on a sunny windowsill. Shake vigorously at least once daily. Let sit for two weeks.

Strain out flowers with a fine mesh strainer, cheesecloth, or coffee filter, and add them to your compost pile. Be sure that all plant parts are filtered out.

Combine beeswax and infused oil in a double boiler and heat until wax melts. Stir. Continue heating for one additional minute. Pour

into clean used baby food jars or other containers. Let cool. Apply lids.

Yield is 1 cup. This salve does not need refrigeration because of the beeswax.

### **Catnip Bath Fever Relieve Remedy**

This is a great fever reducer. If your child has an illness that causes skin irritation, you can put two cups of oatmeal in a clean stocking or sock and add it to the tub to soothe your child's skin.

#### *Ingredients*

1 cup catnip

4 cups boiling water

#### *Instructions*

Pour boiling water over catnip. Cover. Strain out the herbs and compost them. Let the catnip infusion cool to room temperature.

Add it to a tepid bath (the bath should feel neither hot nor cold).

Allow your child to soak in tub for up to 20 minutes.

### **Nature's Medicine Balls for Colds, Ear Infections, Flu, and Other Respiratory Illnesses**

This recipe hides the taste of less tasty herbs, and is traditionally and historically used to reduce fever and treat infections. I use it for times when children have respiratory illnesses. These are very yummy and full of nutrients.

#### *Ingredients*

1/4 cup almond butter

- 1/4 cup honey
- 2 Tbsp. echinacea root, powdered
- 1 Tbsp. catnip, powdered
- 2 Tbsp. elderberries, dried and chopped
- 1 Tbsp. rose hips, ground
- Organic chocolate chips or raisins
- Unsweetened shredded coconut

### Instructions

Combine all of the ingredients except for the coconut. Mix well with your hands. You will have very firm, dough-like candy.

Form nickel-sized balls with your hands. Roll in shredded coconut. Store the remedy in your refrigerator.

I recommend that this candy be eaten 3 to 4 times daily. Below, you'll find my dosage chart on how much to give children of different ages.

Child's Age	Dosage
3–5 years	1/2 of one ball each dosage (3–4x/day)
6–11 years	1 whole ball for a dosage (3–4x/day)
12+ years	2 balls for each dosage (3–4x/day)

Make sure that they don't try to eat more, because they're very tasty; there's no need for a higher dosage.

### Constipation

Occasionally, children get constipated. This is especially common if they are going through a “picky” phase of eating and not eating

a balanced diet. It's a great time to talk to them about the importance of keeping their bowels working properly.

Try the following herbal candy recipe for relief.

## **Go Balls**

### *Ingredients*

1/4 cup dates (you may also substitute apricots or prunes)

1/2 cup warm prune juice

1/4 cup almond butter

1/8 cup flax seed, finely ground

1/8 cup oatmeal

### *Instructions*

Soak dates in prune juice for 15 minutes. Drain juice and set juice aside. Place dates, almond butter, flax seed, and 1/2 of oatmeal in food processor. Process until a firm paste forms.

Add remaining oats or juice as needed to obtain a very stiff consistency using a processor and then your hands. Form nickel-sized balls with your hands.

Store the remedy in your refrigerator. Have your child eat this candy 1 to 2 times daily. Here's a dosage chart to make it easy to remember.

<b>Child's Age</b>	<b>Dosage</b>
3–5 years	1 ball each dosage (1–2x/day)
6–11 years	2 balls each dosage (1–2x/day)
12+ years	3+ balls each dosage (1–2x/day)

Roll the balls in ground nuts if your child likes them, as nuts add fiber as well.

## **Bites, Stings, and Rashes**

Bugs seem to like the taste of children's tender skin and warm blood. And have you noticed that if there's poison oak, poison ivy, or poison sumac around, children are sure to touch it?

Carefully clean the affected area with soap and cool water. Keep the following paste on hand to relieve itching and swelling. The paste hastens drying of weepy rashes.

## **Itch-Away Healing Clay**

### *Ingredients*

2 Tbsp. peppermint leaf (you can substitute 5 drops of peppermint essential oil or 20 drops tea tree oil)

1 cup cosmetic clay (any kind will do, but children like the colorful orange or green kinds)

1/3 cup witch hazel extract

1/2 cup boiling water

### *Instructions*

Make a very strong tea by covering the peppermint leaf with the boiling water. Let sit, covered, for 20 minutes.

When cool, strain the herbs from the liquid. Squeeze the herbs firmly against a strainer to get all of the healing properties of the mint. Discard the herbs. Set tea aside.

Place the clay in a container with an airtight lid. Pour the witch hazel and the herb tea into the clay, stirring constantly. Add liquid until you have a thick paste.



Apply the lid. Label the container carefully, stating that it is for external use only.

If your children are older, and there is no chance of them eating the paste, store it in the refrigerator for extra coolness. Otherwise, store it out of their reach at room temperature.

Apply topically to clean skin whenever insect bites or rashes occur. (It also works on hemorrhoids.) Wash off when dry or as desired.

### ***Healthy Recipes for Children***

Children who get the chance to grow their own foods or help in the kitchen tend to eat healthier. Each time you're in the kitchen, take the time to offer a teaching moment on health and how to take care of oneself naturally.

Try making these easy recipes with your children or grandchildren.

#### **Fruit and Granola Skewers**

These skewers are quite attractive and fun for the little ones to make. I used to send these with children to school as a treat for all students when it was my children's turn to bring snacks. Use any flavored yogurt that your child loves. In this recipe, using fresh organic local fruits creates the best recipe. These treats are packed with flavor, fiber, and phytonutrients. And yogurt provides healthy bacteria, which promotes digestive and immune health.

#### ***Ingredients***

1 banana, cut in 1-inch chunks

1 cup strawberries, washed, with tops removed

1/2 cup fresh pineapple, cut in 1-inch chunks

1 Tbsp. orange juice

1/2 cup fruit-flavored Greek yogurt

1 cup granola

Wooden or plastic 6-inch skewers

### *Instructions*

Mix fruits in a bowl. Add orange juice. Toss. Thread fruit on skewers. Leave room for the skewer to act as a handle.

Pour yogurt onto a tray. Spread granola on another tray. Dip fruit in yogurt. Then roll into granola.

## **Apple Raspberry Sauce**

In the fall, we always pick apples. Here's a recipe that combines two of my grandson's favorite healthy treats into one. The recipe can be canned or frozen so you'll have a dessert ready all winter long. These are rich in vitamins, fiber and antioxidants.

### *Ingredients*

10 firm apples, such as Cortlands

1 tsp. cinnamon

1/4 tsp. nutmeg

1/4 tsp. ginger

1/4 cup maple syrup

1 cup raspberries

### *Instructions*

Peel and core apples. Dice into 1/2-inch sized chunks. Add apples and spices to crock pot.

Cook in crock pot for 6 hours on low heat. Add syrup and berries. Stir. Continue cooking for two hours or until apples are very soft. Serve warm or cold.

## 11. Herbs for Longevity

### *Overview of Longevity*

While this chapter discusses age-related changes, it has important information for everyone. To live long, healthy lives, it's essential to incorporate strategies that promote longevity at all ages. As we become healthier, life expectancies lengthen and our vision of what we expect about our quality of life changes as well.

Growing up, I remember my aunts and uncles, who seemed very old—and when I look at photos of them now, they still look old. Interestingly, in reality, the aunts and uncles were younger at that time than I now by several years. It was only a generation or two ago that people considered the age of 65 to be old. Now I see people in their eighties and nineties who ride bikes and swim daily.

As a hospice nurse, I took care of people in their final days on earth. Some looked old at 40 years of age. Others were young-looking at 105. While genetics does play a role, there is much that we can control. I and Dr. Donna both believe that genetics isn't as important as many other experts believe.



**If Genetics Isn't the Primary Influence on Aging, What Is?**

Family members learn habits, cooking, and ways of relating from those in their households. These patterns of behavior relating to life are passed down through generations.

It appears that certain health challenges run in families. And while it's possible that this can be truly genetic, it may often be due to unchanging patterns of exercise, drinking, eating poorly, overworking, and so forth.

We can choose to optimize our chances of living long, healthy lives. Even if we're afflicted by illness, by making healthy choices, we'll be able to cope with health challenges better.

Select and consult with a health care provider to develop a wellness plan to keep you healthy for many years.

### ***Common Health Concerns Associated with Aging***

As we get older, energy levels sometimes decrease; this can be caused by several things. Common ones are nutritional issues and depression. Lack of activity can also contribute. Your health care provider can help you to determine why you're lacking energy.

As we age, we're not able to metabolize some nutrients as well as when we were younger. Our stomach acid is not always as strong as it should be, and nutrient absorption can be reduced. Vitamin supplements may be useful, as most of us have hidden vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

Declining eyesight and reduced hearing can occur, too. Be sure to get regular vision and hearing exams, and eat foods which can promote eye health, such as berries and orange-colored fruits and vegetables.

Decreased bone density and flexibility sometimes occur with increased age. Regular exercise is very important to maintain strength and suppleness—exercise also benefits circulation, and when your organs get a lot more circulation, they stay well-nourished.

Skin can lose elasticity and become fragile. Pay extra attention to keeping your skin moisturized.

Older people often fear dementia and falls more than other conditions. If a person's balance is off, they will be more prone to falls. Some forgetfulness is not unusual; however, dementia is a disease, not a normal part of aging. And forgetfulness is a sign that the cognitive skills of the brain need to be boosted. Certain herbs can help with this.



### **Your Aging Is Truly in Your Own Hands**

We're fortunate to live at a time when many tools are available to assist us in aging attractively and remaining full of vitality. Educate yourself and choose whatever works best for you.

Improved living conditions and health options have made living longer possible.

The herb world and healthy nutritional choices offer us choices as well. In fact, herbal medicine excels at preventing and treating common conditions that often peak in our later years.

Below are some of the most outstanding herbs for promoting longevity and vitality.

### ***Herbs for Longevity***

Modern medicine is excellent at treating emergencies and healing acute conditions with the aid of pharmaceuticals and incredible surgical procedures. What high-tech medicine does poorly is treat chronic illnesses, and these become more prevalent as we age.

While there is a trend in modern care to focus on prevention, this focus is in its infancy in actual practice. Fortunately, herbal medicine is outstanding preventative medicine and excels at facilitating wellness in the face of chronic health challenges.

Herbs work well, as they provide nutritional benefits that are not commonly found in people's everyday diets. They nourish the body as well as prevent disease. Herbs promote healing and relieve symptoms causing distress.

There are countless herbs that promote longevity. Use a variety of them throughout your life to reap their benefits and add spark to your meals. Cinnamon added to whole grain breakfast cereal can help regulate blood sugar, and it's not only a simple thing to do, but it also makes oatmeal or other whole grain cereal taste better.

Marjoram and oregano are some of the most potent antioxidant plants. Antioxidants are one of the keys to promoting longevity. Essentially, they prevent our cells from turning rancid and "rusty." While this is an oversimplification, it's quite similar to the work that antioxidants do for us. So eat lots of colorful fruits and vegetables and add herbs to your diet. Consume small amounts of healthy fats and eat a primarily plant-based diet.



### Oregano Leaves

Instead of purchasing poorly absorbed calcium tablets, get calcium from dark green leafy vegetables and herbs like nettles, dandelions, kelp, and horseradish. If you want to use a calcium supplement, use a bio-chelated one with manganese, magnesium, zinc, and vitamin D. I prefer the calcium citrate form. Or make a high-calcium herbal blend yourself.

Keep your eyes healthy by eating blueberries and other dark-skinned fruits. One of the best herbs for healthy vision is called bilberry.

***\*\*\* Considerations about Using Herbs for Older Adults \*\*\****



- It may take longer for herbs to work in older adults, due to changes in digestion.
- The amount of herb needed to obtain desired effects may to be less or more than in younger adults, also due to changes in digestion.
- The organs of elimination—liver, skin, lungs, bowel, and kidneys—may take longer to break down herbs. This is because toxins accumulate in every organ unless the organs are regularly detoxified. Hence, herbs may produce more intolerances in older adults than in younger people.
- Many older adults are using multiple pharmaceutical drugs—these may interact with the herbs. Don't use herbs at the same time as a drug to produce similar effects. For example, if a person is taking a pharmaceutical antibiotic, do not use an herb such as echinacea simultaneously.
- Do not use herbs without consulting a health care professional if blood thinners are in use.
- Do not discontinue medications without the advice of your health care provider.
- Consult with your health care provider if you have questions about your health or herbs that you may want to incorporate into your longevity program.
- Elders can safely use any of the herbs that younger adults use, as long as the above considerations are adhered to.

\*\*\* *The End* \*\*\*

**Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*)**



Bilberry is a small wild European blueberry. It has been studied extensively and found to contain plant pigments called anthocyanidins. The pigments promote health of the eyes and circulation, and can promote vein strength and may prevent varicose veins from developing.

When we talk about varicose veins, most people think of them occurring in the legs, but did you know that hemorrhoids are actually varicose veins too? So bilberry may help shrink them also.

While bilberry is a great herb, you can also substitute ordinary blueberries for similar effects. Berries are some of the most important foods you can eat that promote longevity, as they contain vitamins and fiber, and are rich in antioxidants.

Bilberries and blueberries promote healthy vision. They help maintain the circulation of the tiny capillaries in the eyes, including the retina.

This berry also helps with blood sugar regulation. Diabetics should monitor their blood sugar levels, as medication adjustments may be needed when consuming bilberries.

### **Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*)**



Ginkgo leaf is a wonderful tonic herb that can help with memory and circulation. It can also help to relieve ringing in the ears and dizziness. This ancient plant has been used for centuries. It prevents stroke, erectile dysfunction, and the formation of blood clots. Ginkgo can also ease pain in legs caused by poor circulation.

Ginkgo has antidepressant actions and improves oxygenation of the whole body; it can also help with attention and it's useful for treating mild to moderate dementias.

Check with a physician before using ginkgo if you're on blood thinners, such as warfarin or aspirin, diuretics, or antidepressants.

### **Black Tea / Green Tea (*Camellia sinensis*)**

Ordinary black and green teas are good medicine. They differ in their biochemical makeup, so I like to use both kinds. Tea may help to prevent osteoporosis, which is a condition in which bone mineral content has decreased, resulting in a weakening of the bones and susceptibility to fracture. Tea polyphenols reduce cholesterol and blood pressure, and can help prevent heart attacks and other circulatory diseases. Tea prevents cancer. It's a mild diuretic and diminishes diarrhea.

Tea contains caffeine, which is a stimulant. It has approximately half of the amount contained in coffee, however amounts vary.

Some people find that the caffeine in tea is too stimulating. For example, I cannot drink it after 4:00 p.m. or I won't sleep, but I'm still able to enjoy it during the rest of the day.

Green tea may help some women better tolerate drugs used to prevent recurrence of breast cancer.

Tea can interact with blood thinners and some medications used for asthma. For most people, the dosage is 3 to 4 cups daily.

## *Illnesses and Remedies*

### **Hearing Loss and Ringing in the Ears**

Hearing loss is common as we age. Ringing in the ears sometimes is caused by medication, high blood pressure, or other health conditions.

### **Sensory Sensation Tea**

Try this tea to relieve ringing in the ears or vertigo. It promotes healthy eyes and circulation, and tastes great. This is an excellent tonic tea that promotes longevity due to its antioxidants and pigments in the plants.

#### *Ingredients*

2 tsp. black tea

2 tsp. green tea

2 Tbsp. bilberries or blueberries, dried

1 tsp. cinnamon

1/8 tsp. cloves

1 qt. water

#### *Instructions*

Combine herbs. Cover with water. Let sit, covered, for 20 minutes. Strain out the herbs and compost them. Makes 4 servings.

Sweeten or add slices of fruit if desired. Serve hot or cold. Drink 3 to 4 cups daily.

### **Overall Brain Health**

Because of aging-cognitive decline, it's important to support your mental function throughout your life.

### **Think Drink Powder**

The herbs in this blend support brain health. They are nourishing and energizing, aiding your focus and memory. Some of the herbs work as a quick pick-me-up, while others take a month or two to reach maximum effect.

Use it as a preventative tonic or for mild memory problems.

Some herbalists believe that the active ingredients in ginkgo do not extract well in water. Using this method, you will consume the whole leaf, getting all of its benefits.

#### *Ingredients*

6 Tbsp. ginkgo leaf, powdered

1 Tbsp. rosemary leaf, powdered

3 Tbsp. sesame seed, ground

3 Tbsp. peppermint leaf, powdered

1/2 tsp. ginger, powdered

#### *Instructions*

Combine herbs. Add 1 teaspoon of the powder to juice or smoothies three times daily.

If you don't like the flavor, omit the sesame seeds and powder the herbs. Put the powder in 00-sized vegetable capsules using a capsule maker. If you use capsules, try taking two capsules three times daily.

Makes approximately 36 servings.

## **Osteoporosis**

Osteoporosis is actually the loss of bone density—instead of a bone appearing solid, bone loss gives it a lacy appearance. There are literally holes in the bones. Exercise (especially weight-bearing exercises), proper nutrition, and calcium, as well as other bone minerals, can help to prevent or slow bone loss. There are over 12 nutrients needed to create healthy bone, so don't focus only on one. Your body needs all of them to restore the bone to its healthy state.

The following tea recipe is a great source of calcium and other nutrients that help maintain healthy bones.

### **Tone Your Bones Tea**

Try using this blend to ensure bone health and relieve and prevent osteoporosis. Drink 3 cups daily.

#### *Ingredients*

- 1 tsp. black tea
- 1 tsp. nettle
- 1 tsp. raspberry leaf
- 1 tsp. oat straw
- 1 tsp. orange peel
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon

#### *Instructions*

Combine ingredients. To make 1 cup of tea, pour 1 cup boiling water over 1 heaping teaspoon of the blend. Let sit, covered, for 20 minutes. Strain and compost the herbs. Makes about 4 servings.



## **Osteoarthritis**

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. It can cause pain and decreased movement. Stretching and gentle exercise, alternating with rest, can provide relief. Topical heat can feel good on painful joints.

### **Ginger Plaster for Arthritis**

This recipe is applied directly on a joint to relieve pain. It can be covered with a warm towel.

Do not leave it on for more than 20 minutes. If you have diminished sensation, don't use this recipe.

Check frequently for redness. Wash the area with soap and warm water after using. The amount of ingredients required depends on the size of the joint—for fingers, you could just mix this in a bowl and soak the fingers right in it.

#### *Ingredients*

Ginger root, dried, powdered

Cayenne pepper (optional)

Vinegar (any kind)

#### *Instructions*

Pour ginger in a bowl. Add just a tiny sprinkle of cayenne if making a large plaster. Eliminate the cayenne if you are using the recipe for small joints or just don't want the cayenne (cayenne can feel very hot to the skin and if used on open wounds can burn the skin, so be very careful).

Add just enough vinegar to make a thick paste. Apply liberally to the affected joint. It can be covered with a warm towel. Do not leave it on for more than 20 minutes.

## **Incontinence**

There are many causes of incontinence. Treatment depends upon the cause, so a health care practitioner should be consulted to determine the origin of the incontinence. Common causes are weakened muscles, pressure, impaired sensation, and infection. Other physical and mental problems may cause incontinence as well.

### **Soothing Bladder Tea**

#### *Ingredients*

1/2 cup pearl barley

1/4 cup fresh cranberries or 1/8 cup dried

1 cup fresh green corn silk

2 Tbsp. honey

1 qt. water

#### *Instructions*

Simmer the barley and cranberries in water for 30 minutes, covered. Remove from heat. Add corn silk.

Replace the cover. Let sit for 20 minutes.

Then strain out and compost the solids. Add honey and stir. Drink 1 cup 3 times daily.

## **Constipation**

Constipation results from immobility and not enough exercise, a diet low in fiber, structural changes, and not consuming enough fluids.

## **Constipation Preventative**

This is the easiest preventative that I know of for constipation. Apricot nectar or apple cider can be substituted for the prune juice. Drink the remedy at least once daily. It has health benefits for the entire body.



### *Ingredients*

8 oz. prune juice

4 Tbsp. flax seed, finely ground

1 tsp. flax seed oil

### *Instructions*

Combine ingredients. Drink immediately. If you don't like the texture, try adding the flax to applesauce or pear sauce.

## **Pressure Sores and Bedsores**

Sometimes people become bed-bound due to illness or advanced age. The best treatment for bedsores is prevention. Some people are more prone to bedsores, such as those who have spinal cord injuries, have suffered strokes, or cannot move their own muscles.

It's important to turn the person in their bed at least once every 2 hours. Some experts even advise once every 15 minutes! Use lots of pillows to aid positioning.

If incontinence is a concern, keep the person clean and dry.

Foods high in vitamins, such as fruits and vegetables, are essential, as are foods high in protein. Instead of commercial nutritional supplements, try making smoothies with protein powders, yogurt, and fresh fruits and vegetables. If a pressure sore does occur, try the following remedy.

## **Pressure Sore Ointment**

### *Ingredients*

3/4 cup comfrey root

1-1/4 cup olive oil

1/4 cup bees wax, finely grated

### *Instructions*

Using a double boiler, heat the comfrey and the oil for 1 hour. Cool and strain the herbs through several layers of cheesecloth.

Squeeze the cloth tightly to get all of the healing properties. Pour the oil back into the top of the cleaned double boiler. Add beeswax.

Gently heat until beeswax is melted. Pour the salve into small, covered containers that have been sterilized by boiling. Be sure the jars are completely dry prior to pouring in the salve to prevent mold.

Store at room temperature. Apply to clean skin as needed. This may be applied as a barrier to prevent bedsores or applied directly to small bedsores. Apply every 4 hours or with every diaper change.

## ***Healthy Recipes for Longevity***

### **Sesame Greens**

This easy side dish is packed with bone-strengthening ingredients. It's very quick and simple to prepare. Use whatever greens are available. I'm partial to nettle, dandelion, and kale, as they have the most bioavailable nutrients.

#### *Ingredients*

1/4 cup walnuts, chopped

2 Tbsp. sesame seeds

2 Tbsp. walnut oil

2 cloves garlic, pressed

12 cups greens, all tough parts removed, rinsed, dried, and coarsely chopped

2 tsp. lime juice

1 tsp. lemon juice

1 Tbsp. parsley, chopped

1 Tbsp. fresh basil, chopped

### *Instructions*

Toast nuts in frying pan over medium heat, stirring frequently. When they're lightly browned, remove from pan. Add sesame seeds. Stirring frequently, toasting until golden. Combine nuts and seeds. Set aside.

Wipe out the pan, then add the oil. Heat on medium-high. Add garlic. Cook for one minute.

Add greens. Stir-fry until tender. Remove from heat. Add lemon and lime juice. Toss.

Add parsley and basil. Toss. Sprinkle nut and seed mixture on top. Serve hot. Makes 6 servings.

## **Blueberry Blast**

This is an antioxidant-rich smoothie that contains ingredients which will nourish your entire body and promote longevity. Black cherry is especially beneficial for people with arthritis and gout. The yogurt contains bone-strengthening calcium as well as healthy microorganisms, which enhance digestive and immune health.

### *Ingredients*

1 cup blueberries

1/2 cup unsweetened cherry juice

1 cup low-fat Greek yogurt of choice

1/2 banana, frozen

2 Tbsp. sesame seeds

1 tsp. nettle leaf

1 tsp. flax oil

### *Instructions*

Combine all ingredients in blender. Makes 1 to 2 servings.

## **12. Advanced Herbal Medicine Making: How to Make an Herbal Tincture**

Tinctures are popular liquid herbal preparations, and simple ones can be easily prepared at home.

There are two main methods for making tinctures; one is precise and scientific, while the other is known as folkloric or simple tincturing. This book focuses on how to make tinctures using the folkloric method.

In a nutshell, tincturing only involves a few steps:

1. Cover bruised, chopped, or finely cut herbs with liquid.
2. Shake daily.
3. Remove herb and bottle it.

The liquid that covers the herbs may be one of several types. Vinegar, vodka, glycerin, and wine are examples of liquids used. The herbs in the liquid are called the marc. The liquid is referred to as the menstruum.

It takes about a month to make a tincture. I have made some extremely potent ones in which I let the herbs to macerate for a couple of years.



ADVANTAGES OF TINCTURES	DISADVANTAGES OF TINCTURES
Long shelf life	Unpleasant taste
Portable, require little storage space	Alcohol base not tolerated by all
Easy to use	Need to learn about proper selection of <u>menstruum</u> for best results
Inexpensive when homemade	Expensive when purchased
Personalized blends	Must wait several weeks before using

Two of the most common menstrua used for making tinctures are alcohol, such as vodka, and vinegar. The chart on the next page compares the advantages and drawbacks of each.

Alcohol	Apple Cider Vinegar
Costly	Cannot extract all benefits from some herbs
Not for use by children, alcoholics, or if liver disease is present	Tolerated by a broad range of people and ages
Great for acute, short-term illness	Good for long-term chronic use
Greatest variety of use	Tastes better, digestive food tonic
Extracts properties that other liquids can not	Helps regulate acid base balance of body
Most potent extractor of healing benefits	Moderate shelf life
Very long shelf life	Inexpensive

The herbs you use in tinctures may be fresh or dried, and should be in small pieces.

***Making a Traditional Tincture***

**Echinacea Root Tincture for Immune and Respiratory Health**

*Ingredients*

Echinacea root

Vodka

### *Instructions*

Tightly pack herb into a wide mouth jar. Cover with vodka. Apply cover tightly. Shake vigorously. Recheck to make sure vodka covers all plant matter. Add more vodka if needed. Store the tincture blend at room temperature.

Shake at least once daily for one month. Always check to be sure herbs are submerged in the vodka.

After a month, strain the mixture through several layers of cheesecloth. Squeeze the herbs tightly in the cheesecloth to get all of the medicinal benefits from the herbs. Compost the herbs.

Strain the liquid through a coffee filter. This may take several hours, depending upon the amount of liquid and how finely the herbs were ground.

Place the tincture in small colored glass jars (preferably dark ones). Be sure to label them carefully with instructions and the date prepared.

Store the tincture in a dry, dark place, such as a closet. Keep out of reach of children. Use at the first sign of cold or upper respiratory infection. Adults should take 1/2 teaspoon every hour until they start to feel some relief. After that, take 1/2 teaspoon four times daily for the duration of the illness.

### *Tincture Recipes for Common Ailments*

**Follow the same preparation instructions as in the echinacea tincture for the following recipes.**

The herbs may be purchased at an herb shop, natural foods store, or online. The measurements are in “parts.” Using a “part” allows

you to maintain proper recipe proportions whether you're making a large or small quantity of a remedy. For example, 1 part may be a 1 tablespoon or it may be 1 cup. You get to choose based upon your needs. Using "parts" is a versatile method of remedy making once you get used to it.

## **Diarrhea Stopper**

Here is a blend designed to stop diarrhea. The measurements are given in parts. Follow the instructions just like you use to make the echinacea tincture above.

### *Ingredients*

2 parts blackberry root or leaf

1 part white oak inner bark

### *Instructions*

Follow the instructions for the echinacea tincture above.

To use this tincture, take 1/2 teaspoon dose of the extract. Repeat after each loose stool, up to a maximum of eight doses in 24 hours.

## **Insomnia Blend**

If you're having trouble sleeping, take some of this tincture before bed.

### *Ingredients*

1 part hops

1 part valerian root

### *Instructions*

Prepare in the same manner as the echinacea tincture.

Take 1/4 teaspoon one hour prior to going to bed. Repeat at bedtime or if you awaken during the night. Increase gradually over subsequent nights, up to 1 teaspoonful at a time if needed.

### **Blood Pressure and Tension Taming Blend**

Keeping your blood pressure in check is an important part of maintaining a healthy heart, and keeping your tension level down will help keep your blood pressure from rising too high. This simple blend will help with both.

#### *Ingredients*

3 parts hawthorn berry

2 parts motherwort

1 part passionflower

#### *Instructions*

Combine herbs and follow instructions for preparing the echinacea tincture recipe.

Take 1/2 teaspoon four times daily

### **Immune Tincture for Upper Respiratory Tract Infections**

Upper respiratory infections can be very uncomfortable and keep you from going about your day—this tincture will give you some quick relief and help you get back on track.

#### *Ingredients*

3 parts echinacea root

3 parts Oregon grape root

2 parts elecampane root

2 parts garlic

1/8 part cayenne

### *Instructions*

Combine herbs and follow instructions for preparing the echinacea tincture recipe.

Use at the first sign of cold or upper respiratory infection. Adults should take 1/2 teaspoon every hour until they start to feel some relief. After that, take 1/2 teaspoon four times daily for the duration of the illness.

## **Osteoarthritis Reliever**

Osteoarthritis can be a very painful condition, and tinctures including these ingredients can be a big help in relieving your pain.

### *Ingredients*

4 parts white willow bark

3 parts black cohosh

3 parts meadowsweet

2 parts celery seed

### *Instructions*

Combine herbs and follow instructions for preparing the echinacea tincture recipe.

To use, take 1/2 teaspoon 4 times daily.

## **Prostate Relief Formula**

For men, prostate problems can be a huge nuisance. This tincture can help provide relief for many of them.

### *Ingredients*

4 parts fresh saw palmetto berries

4 parts corn silk, fresh green parts

3 parts buchu leaf

2 parts marshmallow root

### *Instructions*

Combine herbs and follow instructions for preparing the echinacea tincture recipe.

To use, take 1/2 teaspoon four times daily.

## **Menopause Relief**

Menopause often comes with hot flashes, headaches, fatigue, and other unpleasant symptoms; this mixture will help get these symptoms under control and keep menopause from being a very irritating point in your life.

### *Ingredients*

3 parts nettle

2 parts vitex berries

2 parts black cohosh root

2 parts sage leaf

2 parts motherwort

### *Instructions*

Combine herbs and follow instructions for preparing the echinacea tincture recipe.

To use, take 1/2 teaspoon four times daily.

## 13. Now Get Started!

In this book, you've learned many different foundational principles about using natural healing to better your life with herbs, and you've read dozens of formulas that have been proven effective by me and Dr. Donna in our years of experience with herbal medicine.

It's exciting to realize that you are equipped with the knowledge you need to overcome many common ailments experienced. How wonderful it is to know that these common ailments don't have to hold you back any longer! When they show up, you can simply take out this book and find the answer. Then you can obtain the ingredients and give the herbal remedies a try.





All the stories provided to you in this book will be the stepping stones that you need to give you the faith and courage to proceed.

Remember that the herbs of this earth are gifts from God for your healing. He is with you in this pursuit and will direct your path. Look for the mighty miracles to come!

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