

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.

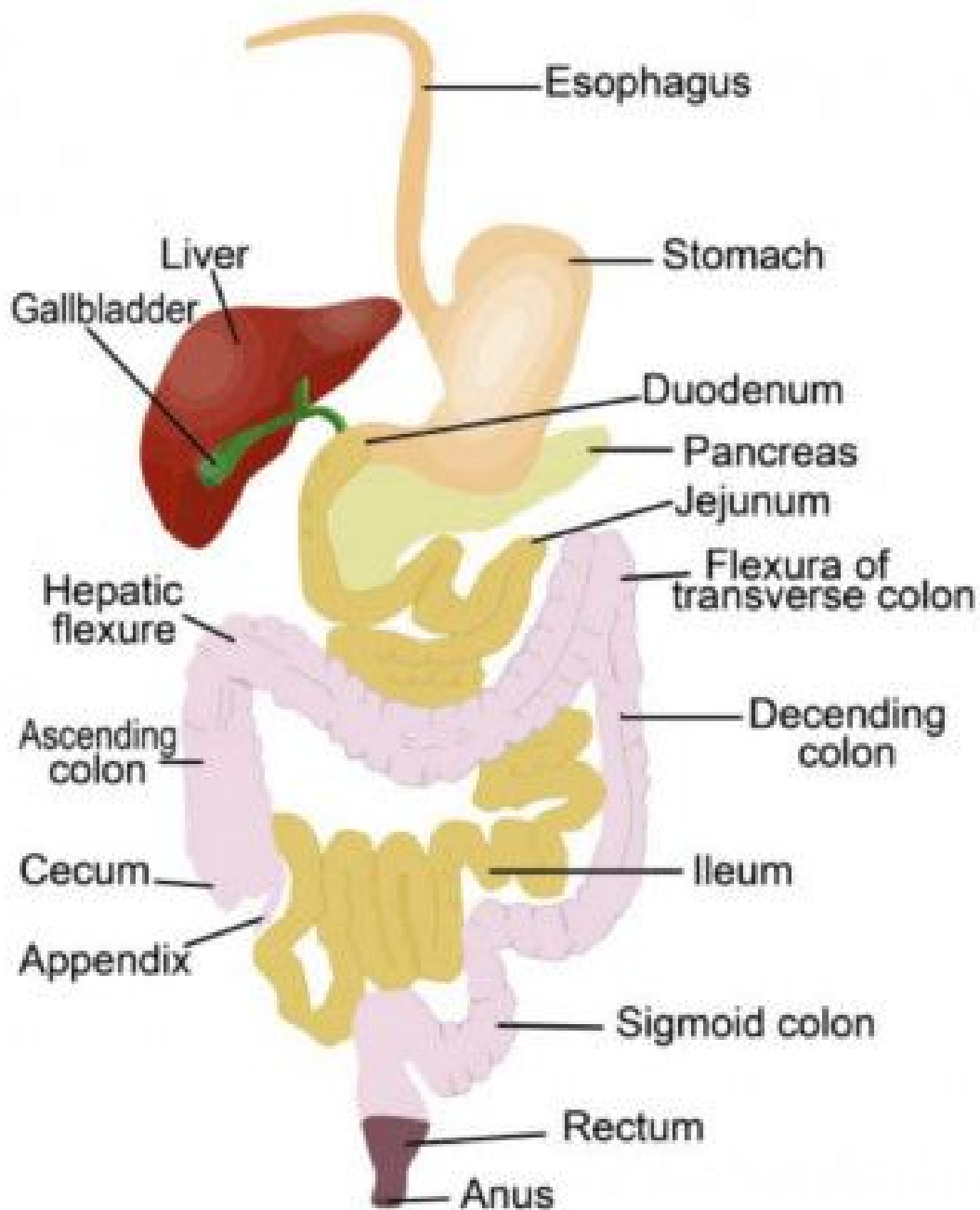
From the mouth, food travels through the back of the throat, called the pharynx, down the esophagus, and to the stomach. The stomach stores food and partially digests it. After two to six hours, the food slowly passes into the first part of the intestine, called the small intestine.

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” your 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 principals. 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

Quality	Example	Useful for
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 or 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 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, shiitakes 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, shiitakes 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 *****

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