**Self-Reliance in Health Course**

**Lesson 8 – Cardiovascular System**

Purpose:

To transport oxygen, nutrients, and hormones throughout the body, send waste to the respiratory and urinary systems for removal and regulate body temperature. This system is intertwined with the lymphatic system, to filter and return blood and the digestive system to provide nutrients, delivered via the blood. This system includes the heart, blood, arteries, veins, and capillaries, which is the “river of life” in our body.

Blood

​The blood is known as "the river of life", it contains red and white blood cells, platelets and plasma. Red blood cells are the transporters, carrying oxygen and nutrients to each body system. White blood cells are part of the [immune system](http://weebly-link/324723761446871313) to defend the body against pathogens. Platelets repair and stop damage to the system and plasma is the liquid component that contains nutrients, hormones and waste. Not only does the blood carry oxygen and nutrients, but it also expels waste.

**Blood Care:**
One of the problems with ["leaky gut"](https://draxe.com/health/7-signs-symptoms-you-have-leaky-gut/) is toxins are leaked into the blood stream rather than being expelled through the proper elimination systems. The first step to healthy blood is making sure the [gut is healthy](http://weebly-link/303618474402508053) and working properly. Next work on eliminating as many [environmental toxins](http://weebly-link/184441929376983722) as possible and make sure [the liver](http://weebly-link/184441929376983722) is strong and functioning so it can process and eliminate toxins. Then work on purifying and cleansing the blood, mystery illnesses can occur from the blood having too many toxins in it and disease can weaken the circulatory system as the blood is working overtime to get all the toxins out.  When the cause of disease is difficult to pinpoint after [nutrition](http://weebly-link/185425031562425003), [gut health](http://weebly-link/303618474402508053), [digestion](http://weebly-link/403388802141557080), and [liver function](http://weebly-link/184441929376983722) have been addressed, suspect blood toxicity.

* Alterative herbs "alter" the blood by cleansing and purifying. They aid the body in assimilating nutrients, eliminating waste and restoring proper body function. They are best used as a daily tonic, over a long period of time to properly detox and purify, restoring health and vitality. Alfalfa
	+ Burdock
	+ Cayenne (capsicum family0
	+ Sweet woodruff
	+ Dandelion
	+ Elder
	+ Garlic
	+ Nettles
	+ Plantain
	+ Red clover
	+ Red raspberry
	+ Yarrow
	+ Yellow dock
* Blood Purification formula

<http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/blood-purifying-herbal-blend>

* Dr. Christopher’s Blood Stream formula

Conditions:

**Anemia** is a condition when the amount of oxygen carried by the blood is decreased due to either a reduction in red blood cells or hemoglobin in the blood.  Without the proper amount of oxygen to deliver to cells around the body all activity will be slowed down resulting in weakness and fatigue, breathlessness, pale skin and lips, headaches, dizziness and a host of other symptoms and conditions.  The most common cause is a lack of iron and other minerals which can result from blood loss, poor diet, and failure of the body to absorb minerals and nutrients.  After addressing [diet](http://weebly-link/185425031562425003) and [gut health](http://weebly-link/303618474402508053) you can "feed" the blood with food and herbs..

Mineral rich herbs usually have deep roots that pull iron and other minerals from the earth. The plant processes the minerals so that our bodies can absorb them through the leaf or root. Synthetic supplements have a hard time being absorbed into the body and can even cause heavy metal build up.  Other plants help build blood in the body and are filled with a variety of vitamins and minerals. All these herbs will help to build and nourish the blood.

* + Dandelion
	+ Thyme
	+ Alfalfa
	+ Nettles
	+ Raspberry leaf
	+ Yellow dock root
	+ Hawthorn
	+ Mullein
* Food rich in iron:
	+ Beet, carrot, and prune juice.
	+ Legumes
	+ Pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, hemp seed and flaxseeds
	+ Green leafy vegetables
	+ Raw honey
	+ Amaranth, oats, quinoa, and other grains.
	+ Blackstrap molasses
* Blood Building Formula

<http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/bone-tissue-builder-herbal-blend>

* Herbal Iron Formula

<http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/home-remedies-herbal-iron>

* Dr. Christopher’s Herbal Iron formula

Heart and Arteries

The heart is what pumps the blood throughout the body and even generates its own electrical impulses. The arteries and veins are the “highway” system the blood flows through. These should all be kept clear and open for good flow.

**Heart Care**:

* Diet – see Lesson 1
* Avoid smoking, alcohol, refined carbs and sugars.
* Exercise regularly.
* Regularly focus on stress relieving activities – this is different for each person. For me it is gardening, some meditate, do yoga, listen to relaxing music, read, write, etc. Find what works for you and everyday take some “me” time.
* Get an adequate amount of rest each day.
* Strive for healthy relationships with family, friends, and even animals.
* Heart happy food: vegetables, fiber, limited animal protein, antioxidant rich foods, garlic and onions, tomatoes, berries, whole grains, avocado, brassicas family (broccoli, kale, cabbage), and even cocoa beans.
* Heart happy herbs: hawthorn berry, turmeric, cayenne pepper, rosemary, cinnamon, garlic, motherwort, olive leaf, and guggul.
* Heart Health daily supplement:

<http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/heart-heath-herbal-capsules>

I made this formula for my husband to take daily since he has a family history of heart disease. I also prepared it for my grandfather who was told his arteries were clogged with plaque and because of his health and age there was nothing that could be done. He was sent home to die. He took these faithfully for a couple more years before he finally did pass away. A note about grandpa, he was not willing to give up his goodies and fast food and was also dealing with diabetes on top of the heart condition. Remember that nutrition is the foundation of a healthy body, along with the will of the Lord.

Conditions:

Any issues dealing with the heart should definitely be dealt with under the direction of a competent health care provider, but since part of this course is about what we can do if we do not have ready access to healthcare, I will give a few suggestions for emergency care while waiting for help.

**Heart Attack:** When the supply of blood to the heart is reduced or cut off, oxygen can longer get to the heart and if not restored within minutes the heart begins to die. Restrictions can be caused by fatty plaque deposits in the arteries (mainly formed by the diet), a piece of tissue or air lodged in the artery or a blood clot in the artery. Symptoms include shortness of breath, chest pain, squeezing or pressure, discomfort or pain in the shoulders, arms, back or neck, dizziness, nausea and sweating. Get help as soon as possible and while waiting:

* Drink 1 teaspoon powdered cayenne in a glass of warm water and/or 2 dropperfuls of cayenne tincture under the tongue.
* If person is unconscious put the cayenne tincture under the tongue a few drops at a time, until help arrives.
* Use this same protocol for a stroke and hypothermia.
* Dr. Christopher used this protocol time and again with patients and it always brought them out of a heart attack.

**Hypotensive herbs** have the effect of lowering elevated blood pressure. They include some of the following:

* [hawthorn](http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-hawthorne)
* motherwort
* crampbark
* black cohosh
* gumweed
* nettle
* valerian
* [linden](http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-linden)
* passionflower

**Hypolipidemics** are herbs that are able to decrease the level of cholesterol in the blood. They include some of the following:

* [hawthorn](http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-hawthorne)
* artichoke
* eleuthero
* reishi mushroom
* [turmeric](http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-turmeric)
* [garlic](http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/garlic-natures-antibiotic)
* ashwagandha
* triphala

The Emotional Heart

There are many studies now that support emotions having profound impact on the physical body, both positive and negative.  Just as the heart pumps life giving blood throughout the body, it is also a sensory organ communicating information about the emotional state to the rest of the body. Just as positive thoughts and emotions can strengthen the [immune system](http://weebly-link/324723761446871313) (or depress them), they can also impact the heart and cardiovascular system.  Have you ever heard of a person dying of a "broken heart"?  It is an actual condition called stress cardiomyopathy, caused by intense emotional stress that leads to cardiac dysfunction and even death.  Emotions truly are powerful, and we will be discussing them deeper in Lesson 10.

**Emotional Heart Care**:  Many of the herbs and foods that are good for the physical heart can also aid and heal the emotional heart. Hawthorn for example is known as the heart herb. Along with building and nourishing the heart and cardiovascular system, it is also a wonderful remedy for grief and sadness as it can uplift the spirits.  Linden blossoms are used for rest, relaxation and lifting the mood but they can also be used as a remedy for the physical heart as a tonic to nourish and feed it. Here are some other lifestyle choices that can build, strengthen, and nourish the physical heart:

* Develop meaningful relationships with family and friends.
* Meaningful acts of service that foster a sense of community and bonding.
* Having animal companions or even plants to care for.
* Spending time in nature.
* Allow yourself to feel an emotion, but then let it go. Replace the negative emotion you let go with a positive one, such as sadness for joy.
* Avoid a constant reliance on news, media, politics, social media, etc.  These generally foster feelings of negativity and keep you from using your time to do the suggestions above.
* Experience and focus on gratitude, joy, contentment, love, forgiveness and all the positive feelings.
* Journal your feelings.  Take them to the Lord for comfort, guidance or understanding and journal the response you feel in your heart.
* Take time each day to breathe deeply.

Herbs for emotional heart care are best inhaled as you make and drink as a tea during a relaxing time period, such as before bed or in the morning. They can also be used as hydrosols that can be incorporated into beauty care or just spritzed over your body while inhaling.

* Hawthorn
* Linden
* Lavender
* Rose
* Tulsi
* Anise hyssop
* Mimosa blossoms
* Vanilla