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TCM and Your Heart Health

The heart is the primary organ of the cardiovascular system. Along with the vessels, it is constantly working, pumping life-giving blood and supplying oxygen to all the cells and tissues of the body. Besides oxygen, it carries all the nutrients for every cell of the body—vitamins, minerals, enzymes, sugars for energy, proteins for cellular repair, and numerous other vital substances. If the blood is not moving properly—regularly and strongly through all the tissues—waste products build up. Aches and pains may occur in the muscles and other parts of the body. If the blood is not adequately conveying its precious cargo to all the cells and carrying away wastes to be eliminated through the bowels, urine, and sweat, the aging process is speeded up ten times or more. The heart is obviously a vital part of a wellness program, because its primary job is to move the blood through the tissues every minute of every day with no holidays and time off for ‘good behavior.’

It is interesting that in Traditional Chinese Medicine—an important natural system of health and healing that has been developing for over 4,000 years, the heart is associated with the nervous system and ‘the spirit.’ It is said that if the Heart system is strong, then the mind will be clear, the emotions positive and calm, and the spirit strong. Joy is the emotion associated with the heart. It is thought that experiencing joy will have a beneficial effect on the heart. Sometimes we don’t allow ourselves to feel joy, holding back on the expression of who we are as individuals. This may be a result of lack of love and guidance during the formative years or traumatic experiences or illness at any time of life. In this case, our hearts become ‘hardened.’ This can promote heart and vascular disease like arteriosclerosis, which literally means ‘hardening of the arteries.’ In TCM there is the understanding that we can also experience too much of an emotion, and this might lead to illness. How can we feel too much joy? This is called mania. People who are manic allow their emotions and nervous system to get carried away to such an extent that it literally damages their adrenals and nervous system, as well as the heart.

In both TCM and western herbalism, there are many herbs that are known to offer significant protection to the heart. Some herbs can calm and regulate the heart and increase blood flow and nutrients to the heart muscle itself, strengthening its ability to do its work.

Here is a list of some of the important benefits the regular use of herbs can have on the heart:

- increasing the blood supply to the heart muscle
- lowering blood pressure
- steadying the heartbeat
- preventing clots from forming
- improving the tone of the vessels
- lowering cholesterol and triglyceride levels
- having an antioxidant effect

***These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.**

Sources: Christopher Hobbs, PhD