



Herbs play a powerful role in managing heart disease risk factors within your control, namely hypertension, anxiety, and high cholesterol.

Possibly the world's most respected medicinal plant, garlic has now featured in over 1,100 published scientific articles.

### Garlic (*Allium sativum*)

Eating just one clove per day can mean an 80 percent reduction in the risk of developing life-threatening blood clots. Garlic also normalises blood pressure, boosts elimination of fat deposits that otherwise 'fur up' arterial walls via the bile, and makes arterial walls more flexible.

### Hawthorn (*Crataegus oxyacantha*)

This herb counters one of the most common causes of death in industrialised countries – heart attack due to lack of blood flow. Hawthorn works in four ways: it improves the heart's pumping action; reduces the heart's workload; steadies an irregular heartbeat; and increases the heart's tolerance to oxygen deficiency, which is particularly beneficial if arteries are partially blocked. Interestingly, hawthorn also ensures an even distribution of vitamin C reserves throughout cells, which helps strengthen and improve function in smaller capillaries and blood vessels.

### Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*)

Widely known for enhancing and preserving memory by improving micro-circulation and blood flow, this has important applications for heart health because improved circulation equals a reduced stroke risk. Ginkgo has a relaxing effect on the lungs, which improves blood flow to the heart and reduces the heart's demands for oxygen. By increasing circulation to the extremities, ginkgo eases intermittent claudication (leg pain caused by poor circulation), and is the herb of choice for anyone with Raynaud's syndrome (severe discomfort in response to cold). Caution: Do not take ginkgo without professional advice if you are on anti-coagulant medication. \*

# Heal your heart



## D-I-Y with Toni: Heart-healthy tea

- 1 tablespoon dried hibiscus flowers
- 1 tablespoon ground rosehips
- 2 tablespoons dried motherwort leaves
- 2 tablespoons dried hawthorn berries and leaves

To make a tonic tea, use 1 teaspoon per cup of boiling water. Strain and sweeten to taste.

Toni Green is a Newcastle-based naturopath, herbalist, and iridologist. [www.naturalhealthsolutions.net.au](http://www.naturalhealthsolutions.net.au)

### Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*)

This herb's Latin name translates as "lion-hearted", providing a strong clue as to its applications. A nervine and heart tonic, it was traditionally given to pregnant women suffering from anxiety, hence "mother's wort", meaning "mother's herb". Modern research confirms that motherwort has a blood-thinning effect, promotes circulation, and lowers levels of fat in the blood; it also slows a too-rapid heartbeat and has a mild diuretic effect, which eases high blood pressure.

### Olive leaf (*Olea europaea*)

Although probably best known as a natural immune-booster, olive leaf extract (OLE)'s active ingredient, oleuropein, is a strong hypotensive, helping to relax and dilate blood vessels and so lowering blood pressure. In one European study, identical twins with hypertension were given either a daily dose of OLE or a placebo; at the end of the test, the twins taking OLE demonstrated significant reductions in blood pressure and total cholesterol. Other studies show that OLE limits formation of arterial plaque, slows oxidation of LDL ("bad") cholesterol, and eases heart arrhythmia.