Linden flowers
Take this herb to heart

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Heart disease runs in families, and both our genetic make-up and our customary family diet can predispose us to heart attack.

But a simple herb called linden can actually help prevent heart problems.

Heart attacks don’t strike out of the blue: the right conditions are created for them over many years. This means that you can also use herbs over the long term to prevent heart disease. Linden blossom is almost a designer-made preventive medicine for the cardiovascular system. Because it is commonly available as a pleasant-tasting herbal tea, it can become part of a healthy preventive lifestyle for almost anyone.

Linden (also known as lime) blossoms come from the large tree (Tilia americana, cordata, or europaea) known as basswood in Canada. It’s quite common and you’ll find it planted for shade in cities or growing along country roads. The blossoms are picked in early summer and dried. You can buy linden tea in bags or loose. Make a cup of tea by adding one cup of boiling water to one teaspoon (or bag) of tea. While steeping for about 10 minutes, cover the cup with a saucer so that the steam doesn’t escape. Drink three cups a day.

Linden helps to lower elevated blood pressure. High blood pressure often causes heart problems. When we live with chronic stress for extended periods, the musculature surrounding the arteries can become permanently contracted. This means that the opening through the artery is narrowed and the heart has to pump harder to get the blood through. Linden has gentle, relaxing properties that make it an excellent remedy for long-term stress, especially when it is affecting the cardiovascular system. The long-term use of the tea is required for regulating blood pressure.

Another cause of heart disease is arteriosclerosis. In this condition, arteries lose their elasticity and
Caution: Do not discontinue any prescription drugs without the advice of a qualified physician. Because linden is both vasodilatory and anticoagulant, it must not be allowed to interfere with other similar-acting pharmaceuticals. Be aware that there are some people who may experience an allergic reaction to the pollen of this plant.

flexibility. When the smooth inner surface becomes damaged and scar tissue breaks away, debris (known as plaque) is created in the blood stream. The French phytotherapists and physicians Drs. Lapraz and Duraffourd, at the Hospital Bouicaut in Paris, have demonstrated that linden helps to maintain the smooth inner surface and elasticity of the blood vessel walls.

If the plaque accumulates and blocks an artery, a “stroke” results. When plaque blocks an artery inside the heart muscle, part of the heart muscle dies. Linden works against the aggregation of plaque. It is also an anticoagulant and a vasodilator.

By incorporating regular exercise and a balanced whole-food diet into your lifestyle and by using linden tea, you can take positive steps to counteract inherited predisposition to heart disease.

Linden also has an important role to play in feverish conditions because it is a diaphoretic (a medicine or agent that promotes perspiration). Dr. Rudolph Weiss, in Herbal Medicine (Thieme Medical Publishers, 2000), recommended it in combination with chamomile and elderflowers for influenza. It is also helpful for feverish colds and in preventing subsequent inner-ear congestion and infection. 

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