

Peaceable Kingdom Essentials has developed this glossary of terms for your convenience to help you better understand the medical and botanical terms.

## DEFINITIONS GLOSSARY OF TERMS- Herbal Uses

### A

- Abcess:** A localized collection of pus and liquefied tissue in a cavity.
- Abortifacient** (also called **Ecbolic**): Drug that induces abortion or premature expulsion of the fetus.
- Absorption:** Nutritionally, the process by which nutrients or other substances are absorbed through the intestinal tract into the bloodstream to be used by the body.
- Acid:** Any of a class of compounds that share certain basic chemical characteristics - i.e., low pH, usually sour tasting and can be corrosive.
- Acidosis:** A condition characterized by excessive acidity of bodily fluids.
- Actinic Keratosis:** An abnormal skin growth stimulated by ultra-violet radiation from sunlight. May lead to a type of cancer called basal cell carcinoma.
- Acute:** Having a rapid onset, severe symptoms and short course - not chronic.
- Adaptogen:** An agent that causes adaptive reactions and increases resistance to stress. Adaptogens enable the body to deal with and recover from stress and disease and appear to increase SNIR (state of non-specifically increased resistance) in the human body, protecting against diverse stresses. It is usually an herb that produces suitable adjustments in the body and tends to normalize body functions. When the job is completed, they are eliminated or incorporated into the body without side effects. Adaptogens generally work by strengthening the immune system, nervous system and/or glandular system.
- Addison's Disease:** Caused by failure of the adrenal glands, marked by lack of appetite, weakness, digestive problems, darkening of the skin.
- Adjuvant:** An immunological agent that increases antigenic response.
- Adrenal Cortex:** The outer portion of the adrenal gland located on top of each kidney. The adrenal cortex produces steroid hormones that regulate carbohydrate and fat metabolism and mineralocorticoid hormones that regulate salt and water balance in the body. Underfunction of the adrenal cortex results in Addison disease, while overfunction occurs in the adrenogenital syndrome and in Cushing syndrome.
- Adrenal Glands:** Two small organs near the kidneys that release hormones.
- Adrenaline** (also called **Epinephrine**): Hormone secreted by the adrenal gland that increases the rate and force of the heartbeat, quickens breathing and causes the liver to break down its energy stores for immediate use.
- Ague:** An intermittent fever, sometimes with chills, as in malaria.
- Alexeteric:** Effective against infection of poisoning.
- Alkaloid:** Highly active plant constituent containing nitrogen atoms.
- Allantoin:** A nitrogen-containing organic compound found in many plants that is used to treat wounds and ulcerated tissue.
- Allergen:** Normally harmless substance, such as pollen, that provokes immune response.
- Allergy:** Intense immune response to an allergen, such as hay fever developing in response to grass pollen.
- Allopathic Medicine:** "Orthodox" medicine employing the use of drugs to oppose and alleviate disease.
- Alopecia:** Medical term for hair loss.
- Alterative:** An agent that helps to gradually and favorably alter the course of an ailment or condition. It helps to alter the process of nutrition and excretion and restore normal bodily function. It also acts to cleanse and stimulate the efficient removal of waste products from the system.
- Alternative Therapy:** Treatment of disease by means other than conventional medical, pharmacological and surgical techniques.
- Amenorrhea:** Absence or suppression of menstruation.
- Amino Acid:** One of twenty-two nitrogen-bearing substances that the body uses to create proteins.
- Amoebicide:** An agent that destroys amoebae.
- Anabolic Compound:** A substance that allows the conversion of simple nutritive materials into complex materials that are part of living tissue during the constructive phase of metabolism.
- Analeptic:** Used as a central nervous system stimulant.
- Analgesic:** Substance that relieves pain by acting as a nervine, antiseptic, antibiotic, antispasmodic or counter irritant.
- Anaphrodisiac:** Destroys sexual desire.
- Anaphylactic Shock:** Severe allergic reaction that can occur within seconds of contact with the allergen, marked by low blood pressure and breathing difficulties.
- Androgen:** Hormones that stimulate male characteristics.
- Anemia:** Condition in which the bloodstream cannot carry enough oxygen to meet the needs of the body's

tissues. The oxygen-carrying pigment (hemoglobin) in the blood is below normal limits.

**Anesthetic (local):** An agent that reduces pain in an area by desensitizing the nerves. Deadens sensation.

**Angina:** Spasmodic, choking, or suffocating pain caused by a reduction in the heart muscle's supply of oxygen.

**Anhidrotic:** Inhibits or prevents perspiration.

**Anodyne:** Pain relieving.

**Anorectic:** Substance that suppresses or causes loss of appetite.

**Anorexia:** Medical term for loss of appetite.

**Antacid:** Substance that neutralizes the acid produced by the stomach.

**Anthelmintic (also called Vermifuge):** A substance that destroys and expels intestinal worms.

**Anthocyanidin:** Class of flavonoids that gives plants, fruits and flowers colors ranging from red to blue.

**Anthraquinone:** A glycoside that acts as a laxative.

**Anti-abortion:** A substance that helps to inhibit abortive tendencies.

**Anti-allergenic:** A substance that counteracts or relieves an acquired hypersensitivity to an allergen that does not normally cause a reaction.

**Anti-arthritic:** A substance that relieves arthritis.

**Anti-asthmatic:** An agent that prevents or arrests an asthmatic attack.

**Antibacterial:** Destroys or stops the growth of bacterial infections.

**Anti-bilious:** A substance that diminishes secretion of bile; an herb used to eliminate a biliary or hepatic or jaundice condition in the body.

**Antibiotic:** An organic substance (literally, life killing) that is capable of destroying viruses, bacteria or other micro-organisms.

**Antibody:** Protein created by the immune system, designed to react to a specific micro-organism or other foreign matter.

**Anti-catarrhal:** Substance that helps the body to reduce excess mucus and phlegm.

**Anticholesterolemic:** Agent that counteracts or relieves the presence of excess cholesterol in the blood.

**Anticholinergic:** Substance that inhibits or blocks the physiological action of acetylcholine at receptor site.

**Anticoagulant:** Substance that inhibits the clotting of blood. Blood thinner.

**Anticonvulsant:** Agent that prevents or relieves convulsions.

**Antidepressant:** Substance that relieves depression.

**Antidiabetic:** Substance that lowers blood sugar.

**Anti-diarrheal:** Agent that eliminates diarrhea.

**Antidote:** Substance that counteracts the effects of poison.

**Anti-dyscratic:** A means to treat chronic metabolic disorders. Has a profound effect on the whole metabolic process.

**Anti-dyspeptic:** Substance that relieves or prevents indigestion or dyspepsia.

**Anti-edema:** Substance that counteracts or relieves a local or generalized condition in which the body tissues retain fluid. Usually produces swelling.

**Anti-emetic:** Substance that reduces nausea and may alleviate or prevent vomiting.

**Anti-febrile:** Substance that reduces fever.

**Antifungal:** Destroys or prevents the growth of fungi.

**Antigen:** Foreign substance that triggers the body to produce antibodies to act against the invader.

**Antigonadotropic:** Opposes or counteracts gonad-stimulating hormones.

**Antihistamine:** Agent that opposes the action of histamine (see Histamine) in allergic reactions and colds. Tends to counteract allergic conditions.

**Anti-hypertensive:** Agent that reduces high blood pressure.

**Anti-inflammatory:** A substance that reduces swelling and pain due to irritation, infection or injury.

**Antikapha:** Substance that counteracts the following characteristics: cold, wet, heavy, slow, dull, smooth and cloudy.

**Antilithic:** Agent that prevents or relieves calculi (stones).

**Antimalarial (also called Antipaludian):** Substance that is therapeutically effective against malaria.

**Antimicrobial:** Agent that destroys or prevents the growth of micro-organisms, bacteria, fungi, protozoa or viruses that are pathogenic.

**Antimycotic:** Antagonistic to fungi.

**Anti-neoplastic:** Prevents the development, growth or proliferation of malignant cells and tumors.

**Antioxidant:** Compound that prevents destructive, free radical or oxidative damage to tissues or cells.

**Antipaludian (also called Anti-malarial):** Substance that is therapeutically effective against malaria.

**Antiperiodic:** Substance that prevents the periodic recurrence of attacks of a disease, as in malaria.

**Antiperspirant:** Suppresses perspiration.

**Antiphlogistic:** Prevents or relieves inflammation.

**Antipitta:** Counteracts the following characteristics: hot, light, fluid, subtle, soft, malodorous, or clear.

**Antiprogestational:** Opposes the effects of progesterone.

**Antiproliferative:** Counteracts a process of proliferation such as the reproduction or multiplication of similar

forms, especially of cells and morbid cysts.

**Antipruriginous:** Substance that prevents or relieves itching.

**Antiputrefactive:** Agent that prevents the decomposition of animal matter.

**Antipyretic** (also called **Febrifuge** or **Refrigerant**) : A substance that reduces fever and cools the body.

**Anti-rheumatic:** An agent that eases the discomfort of or prevents rheumatism, a condition marked by inflammation and pain in the joints and muscles.

**Anti-sclerotic:** Prevents the hardening of tissues.

**Anti-scorbutic:** Preventing or relieving scurvy.

**Anti-scrofulous:** Substance that treats scrofula or tubercular swellings in the lymph glands, usually those of the neck.

**Antiseptic:** A substance that destroys bacteria and prevents infections. Also helps to prevent tissue degeneration.

**Antispasmodic:** A "relaxant" or "nervine" that relieves or prevents involuntary muscle contractions or "spasms," such as those occurring in epilepsy, painful menstruation or intestinal cramping.

**Anti-syphilitic:** A remedy for the relief of venereal disease.

**Anti-thrombotic:** Prevents blood clots.

**Anti-toxic:** Neutralizes poisons or specific biological toxins in the system.

**Antitussive:** Inhibits the cough reflex - helps to stop coughing.

**Antivata:** Counteracts the following characteristics: dry, cold, light mobile, subtle, rough, hard, irregular and clear.

**Anti-venom:** An antidote for animal, vegetable or mineral poisons.

**Antiviral:** Weakens or opposes the action of a virus.

**Anuria** (also called **Oliguria**): The decreased or absent production of urine, respectively, which may be a sign of dehydration.

**Anxiety:** A condition marked by apprehension of danger and dread, accompanied by nervous restlessness, tension, increased heart rate and shortness of breath.

**Aperient:** Mild laxative without purging.

**Aperitive:** Herbs that stimulate the appetite.

**Aphrodisiac:** Agent that stimulates sexual desire or potency.

**Aphthous Ulcer:** A canker sore that appears as a painful white or yellow ulcer in the mouth.

**Apoplexy:** The result of a stroke (cerebro-vascular accident).

**Aromatic:** Substance containing volatile, essential oils that aid digestion and relieve gas.

**Arrhythmia:** Any deviation from the heartbeat's normal rhythm.

**Arteriosclerosis** (also called **Atherosclerosis**): The process in which fatty substances (cholesterol and triglycerides) are deposited on the walls of arteries, eventually leading to blockage of the artery.

**Arteriosedative:** Relaxes the arteries or arterioles, opening them for increased flow and capacity.

**Artery:** Blood vessel that carries oxygen-rich blood away from the heart.

**Atherosclerosis** (also called **Arteriosclerosis**): The process in which fatty substances (cholesterol and triglycerides) are deposited on the walls of arteries, eventually leading to blockage of the artery.

**Ascaricide:** Kills worms of the genus *ascarus*.

**Ascorbic Acid:** The organic acid more commonly known as vitamin C.

**Astringent:** A substance that contracts, tightens and binds tissues and diminishes (or arrests) internal and external secretions. Can be used to check bleeding and diarrhea.

**Atonic:** Without normal tension or tone.

**Atopy:** A predisposition to various allergic conditions including eczema and asthma.

**Auscultation:** Listening to the heart and lungs, usually using a stethoscope.

**Autoimmune:** Process in which antibodies develop against the body's own tissues.

**Ayurvedic:** Traditional (and ancient) system of medicine in India. (literally, "A Science of Life").

## B

**B-Cell:** An immune system cell that creates antibodies (also called antibody).

**Bacteria:** Single-celled microbes. Some bacteria cause disease, and others (friendly) help the body to aid digestion and protect against harmful organisms.

**Bactericidal:** Destroys bacteria.

**Bacteriostat:** Inhibits or retards bacterial growth.

**Balancing:** Promotes the normal state of action and reaction in the body, mind, emotions or spirit.

**Balm:** Soothing or healing medicine applied to the skin.

**Balsam:** Resin of a tree that is healing and soothing.

**Balsamic:** Having the odor of an aromatic substance called balsam and used in medicines, usually as a healing or soothing agent.

**Basal metabolic rate:** Rate of metabolism when the body is at rest.

**Basic Fibroblast Growth Factor (bFGF):** A hormone that stimulates the growth of blood vessels.

**Basophil:** A type of white blood cell that is involved in allergic reactions.

**Bechic:** Soothing to coughs.

**Benign:** Mild disorder that is usually not fatal. Also pertaining to cells or tumors that are not cancerous.

**Berberine:** A plant chemical of the Alkaloid group found in the roots of barberry and other plants and used in certain tonics and eye preparations.

**Beta-carotene:** Precursor to vitamin A. Plant carotene that may be converted into two vitamin A molecules.

**Beta cells:** Cells in the pancreas that manufacture insulin.

**Bile:** Yellowish secretion created in the liver that is released into the small intestine to aid in fat digestion.

**Bilirubin:** A yellow-brown pigment found in bile and is made in the liver and stored in the gallbladder. It is the breakdown product of the hemoglobin molecule of red blood cells.

**Bioflavonoid (also called Vitamin P):** Any of a group of biologically active flavonoids that are essential for the stability and absorption of vitamin C. Needed for maintenance of collagen and capillary walls.

**Biopsy:** Removal of tissue for diagnostic purposes.

**Bitter:** A plant product (often aromatic) that is used as a tonic and stimulates secretions of the digestive tract and encourages appetite.

**Blistering Agent:** Substance that causes an inflammatory exudation and blistering of the skin when applied locally.

**Blood Brain Barrier:** A protective feature involving capillary walls and other cells that permits the entry of only certain substances into the brain.

**Blood Count:** Basic diagnostic test in which a sample of blood is examined, and the number of red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets are determined.

**Blood Pressure:** The force exerted by blood as it is pumped by the heart and presses against and attempts to stretch blood vessels.

**Blood Purifier:** An agent that cleanses the blood, as well as enhances the blood by increasing the nutrient value.

**Blood Sugar:** The glucose (a form of sugar) present in the blood.

**Bone Marrow:** The spongy material found inside the bones. Most blood cells are made in the bone marrow.

**Bowel:** The long tube-shaped organ in the abdomen that completes the process of digestion. There is both a small and a large bowel. Also called the intestine.

**Brachycardiac:** Making the heartbeat slower.

**Brain tumor:** The growth of abnormal cells in the tissues of the brain. Brain tumors can be benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous).

**Bronchi:** The two main branches of the trachea (windpipe) that lead to the lungs.

**Bronchiole:** A tiny branch of air tubes in the lungs.

**Bronchitis:** Inflammation (swelling and reddening) of the bronchi.

**Broncho-dilator:** Relaxes and opens the upper parts of the lungs to improve respiration and relax constricting spasms.

**Broncholytic:** Breaks down bronchial congestion.

**Bursa:** A sac or pouch that contains a special fluid, which lubricates joints.

**Bursitis:** Inflammation of a bursa.

## C

**C-Cell:** A type of cell in the thyroid. C-cells make calcitonin, a hormone that helps control the calcium level in the blood.

**Cachexia:** Loss of body weight and muscle mass, and weakness that may occur in patients with cancer, AIDS, or other chronic diseases.

**Calcination:** Process of refining by roasting or burning.

**Calcitonin:** A hormone formed by the C-cells of the thyroid gland. It helps maintain a healthy level of calcium in the blood. When the calcium level is too high, calcitonin lowers it.

**Calcium:** A mineral found in teeth, bones, and other body tissues.

**Calcium Carbonate:** A mineral taken primarily as a supplement to prevent osteoporosis. It is also being studied for cancer prevention.

**Calculi:** Stones

**Calmative:** Substance that gently calms nerves (not necessarily sedative).

**Calorie:** A unit of heat or the amount of heat necessary to raise one kg. of water one degree C. A nutritional Calorie is a measurement of the energy content of food. The body needs calories as "fuel" to perform all of its functions, such as breathing, circulating the blood and performing physical activity. When a person is sick, the body may need extra calories to fight fever or other problems.

**CAM (Complementary and Alternative Medicine):** Forms of treatment that are used in addition to (complementary) or instead of (alternative) standard treatments. These approaches include dietary supplements,

mega-dose vitamins, herbal preparations, special teas, massage therapy, spiritual healing and meditation.

**Cancer:** Cancer involves the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells that have mutated from normal tissues. This growth can kill when these cells prevent normal function of vital organs or spread throughout the body, damaging essential systems. Cancer cells can invade nearby tissues and can spread through the bloodstream and lymphatic system to other parts of the body. There are at least 200 different kinds of cancers.

**Cancer in situ:** The stage where the cancer is still confined to the tissue in which it started.

**Candida albicans:** Yeast common to the intestinal tract - the fungus responsible for monialia.

**Candidiasis:** An infection brought about when the yeast-like fungi, *Candida albicans*, grows out of control in moist skin areas of the body. It is usually a result of a weakened immune system, but can be a side effect of chemotherapy or treatment with antibiotics. The ailment, Thrush (also called Candidosis), usually affects the mouth (oral Thrush) and rarely spreads throughout the entire body.

**Capillaries:** Tiny blood vessels that link arteries with veins, through which nutrients and wastes pass to and from the body's cells.

**Carbohydrate:** Group of organic compounds, including sugar, starch, cellulose and gum.

**Carbuncle:** Painful infection of the skin and subcutaneous tissues with production and discharge of pus and dead tissue, similar to a boil (furuncle) but more severe (usually caused by *Staphylococcus aureus*).

**Carcinogen:** A substance that causes cancer - for example, nicotine in cigarettes is considered a carcinogen that causes lung cancer.

**Carcinoid (cancer-tumor):** A type of cancer that is usually slow growing and arises from special endocrine cells widely scattered throughout the body. These cells are most commonly found in the gastrointestinal system and sometimes in the lungs and other sites. Carcinoid tumors are potentially malignant and can spread to nearby lymph nodes and elsewhere.

**Carcinogenic:** Substance that can induce cancer.

**Carcinoma:** A cancer that arises from the cells called epithelial cells, which line the body inside and out.

**Cardiac:** Relating to the heart.

**Cardiokinetic:** Regulating or strengthening the heartbeat.

**Cardiopulmonary:** Pertaining to the heart and lungs.

**Cardiotonic:** Substance that tones the heart.

**Carminative:** Agent that relieves intestinal gas pain and distension by expelling gases from the stomach and bowels. Also promotes peristalsis (contraction and relaxing of bowel). Frequently improves digestion.

**Carotene:** Fat-soluble plant pigments, some of which may be converted into vitamin A by the body.

**Cartilage:** A type of connective tissue that acts as a shock absorber at joint interfaces.

**CAT Scan:** Computerized Axial Tomography scan - X-Ray scanning procedure used to create a three-dimensional picture of the body for the purpose of detecting abnormalities.

**Catarrh:** Inflammation of mucous membranes - with a free discharge - especially of the nose, throat, head and air passages.

**Cathartic:** A laxative. (1) Aperient is a mild laxative that promotes evacuation of the bowels by action on alimentary canal and (2) purgative that causes copious, rapid evacuation of the bowel and generally used to treat stubborn constipation in adults.

**Catheter:** A flexible, hollow tube that is inserted into a vessel of the body to instill or remove fluids.

**Cauterize:** Technique used to stop bleeding that involves applying electrical current, a laser beam, or a chemical such as silver nitrate directly to a broken blood vessel.

**Celiac Disease:** A disease that is caused by an immune response to a protein called gluten, which is found in wheat, rye, barley, and oats. Celiac disease damages the lining of the small intestine and interferes with the absorption of nutrients from food. A person with celiac disease may become malnourished no matter how much food is consumed.

**Cell:** A very small but complex organic unit consisting of a nucleus, cytoplasm and a cell membrane. All living tissues are composed of cells.

**Cellulose:** An indigestible carbohydrate found in the outer layers of fruits and vegetables.

**Cephalic:** Referring to diseases affecting the head and upper part of the body.

**Cerebral:** Relating to the brain.

**Cervical Dysplasia:** Abnormal cell growth on the cervix that may lead to cervical cancer.

**Chelation:** Chemical process by which a larger molecule or group of molecules surround or enclose a mineral atom.

**Chelation Therapy:** Introduction of certain substances into the body, so that they will chelate (or bind, mostly to a metal, thus helping the body to remove the foreign substances, such as lead, cadmium, arsenic and other heavy metals.

**Chemotherapy:** The use of drugs to treat disease, especially drug therapy for cancer.

**Chilblains:** The swelling caused by exposure to cold associated with dampness, accompanied by pruritus (itching) and a burning sensation, usually involving the hands, feet, ears and face in children, the legs and toes in women and the hands and fingers in men. Called also erythema pernio and pernio.

**Chiropractic:** System of healing based on the belief that many disorders result from misalignments of the spinal

vertebrae and other joints.

**Chlorophyll:** Pigment responsible for the green color of plant tissues. May be taken in a supplement as a source of magnesium and trace elements. It is the molecule that absorbs sunlight and uses its energy to synthesize carbohydrates from CO<sub>2</sub> and water and is the basis for sustaining the life processes of all plants. Since animals and humans obtain their food supply by eating plants, photosynthesis can be said to be the source of our life also.

**Cholagogue** (or **Chologogue**): Stimulates bile flow from the gallbladder and bile ducts into the duodenum.

**Cholecystitis:** Inflammation of the gallbladder.

**Cholelithiasis:** Gallstones.

**Cholera:** Once a popular name for an acute gastroenteritis, marked by diarrhea, cramps and vomiting.

**Cholestasis:** Stagnation of bile within the liver.

**Cholesterol:** A waxy substance used by the body for a number of purposes, including the creation of cell membranes and hormones. Most (approximately 85%) of the body's cholesterol supply is made in the liver with the rest obtained from food. This crystalline substance is soluble in fats and is produced by all vertebrates.

Cholesterol is a necessary constituent of cell membranes, facilitating the transport and absorption of fatty acids. Excess cholesterol, however, is a potential threat to health.

**High-density lipoproteins (HDL)** are "good" cholesterol

**Low-density lipoproteins (LDL)** are "bad" cholesterol

**Chromosome:** Any of the threadlike strands of DNA in the nuclei of all living cells that carry genetic information.

**Chronic:** Ongoing condition showing little change or of slow progression - an illness that recurs or persists for an extended period of time.

**Chyme:** Undigested food in the stomach.

**Cicatrizing:** Promoting the growth of a cicatrix (scar tissue) over a wound.

**Cirrhosis:** Liver disease marked by the development of scar tissue and nodules, which eventually leads to loss of liver function.

**Citric Acid:** An organic acid found in citrus fruits.

**Climacteric** (also called **Perimenopause**): The period of transition from fertility to menopause in which production of estrogen, the main female hormone, diminishes.

**Clotting Factor:** One of several substances (especially vitamin K) that are present in the bloodstream and are important in the process of blood clotting.

**Coagulant:** Substance that causes blood to clot.

**Cold Sore:** A small skin blister anywhere around the mouth caused by the *Herpes simplex* virus.

**Coenzyme:** A non-protein, necessary component of an enzyme - it is usually a vitamin or mineral.

**Colic:** Severe, spasmodic pain that occurs in waves of increasing intensity - reaches a peak and then abates for a short time before returning - affecting smooth muscle, such as intestines or gallbladder.

**Colitis:** Inflammation of the colon that is usually associated with diarrhea with blood and mucus.

**Collagen:** A protein that can be prepared from connective tissue and from which gelatin can be made.

**Colonoscope:** An instrument for examining the colon.

**Complete Protein:** A source of dietary protein that contains a full complement of the eight essential amino acids.

**Complex Carbohydrate** (also called **Polysaccharides**): Type of carbohydrate that releases its sugar into the body relatively slowly - such as those in starches and fiber.

**Compress:** A pad applied under pressure to an area of skin and held in place.

**Conceptive:** Aiding conception.

**Congenital:** Present from birth, but not necessarily inherited.

**Congestive Heart Failure:** Chronic disease that results when the heart is not capable of supplying the oxygen demands of the body.

**Connective Tissue:** Tissue that performs the function of providing support, structure and cellular cement to the body.

**Constipation:** A condition in which bowel movements are infrequent or difficult.

**Contraceptive:** Preventing conception.

**Contraindications:** Any factor that makes it unwise to pursue a certain line of treatment.

**Contusion:** An injury to tissue that does not break the skin - a bruise.

**Convulsion:** A seizure characterized by intense, uncontrollable contraction of the voluntary muscles that results from abnormal cerebral stimulation.

**Cordial:** An aromatic, stimulating medicine or drink.

**Coronary Artery Disease:** A condition when the heart receives an inadequate blood and oxygen supply due to arteriosclerosis.

**Coronary Dilator:** Opens the coronary arteries to allow blood to pass through more freely.

**Corrective:** Alters and lessens the severity of action of other herbs, especially cathartics or purgatives.

**Corticosteroid Hormones:** Group of hormones produced by the adrenal glands that control the body's use of

nutrients and the excretion of salts and water in the urine.

**Cortisol:** A hormone produced in response to stress.

**Cortisone:** A glucocorticoid (may also be prepared synthetically) often prescribed as an anti-inflammatory.

**Coumarin:** An anticoagulant.

**Counterirritant:** Causing irritation in one part to relieve pain in another part.

**Cradle Cap:** Seborrheic dermatitis characterized by greasy yellowish scales - a condition of the scalp usually found during an infant's first month.

**Crohn's Disease:** A chronic inflammatory disease that leads to ulceration within the intestines.

**Croup:** A disease of infants and young children that is marked by harsh coughing, hoarseness, fever and difficult breathing.

**Cruciferous:** Referring to group of vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, turnip, rutabaga, Brussels sprouts) that contain substances that may help to prevent colon cancer.

**Cyst:** Abnormal lump or swelling, filled with fluid or semi-solid material in any organ or tissue.

**Cystitis:** Inflammation of the inner lining of the bladder, usually caused by bacterial infection.

**Cytophylactic:** Increases activity of leucocytes (white blood cells) in defense against infections and prevents the decomposition or destruction of cells.

**Cytoscope:** Instrument used to examine the urinary bladder.

**Cytostatic:** Creates an obstruction of a capillary as the result of accumulated leukocytes, as in a region of inflammation.

**Cytotoxin:** Substance that has a toxic effect on certain organs, tissues and cells and produced by injection of foreign cells.

## D

**Debility:** Weakness in bodily functions and organs.

**Decoction:** A water extract of bark or roots prepared at a low boil for ten to twenty minutes.

**Dehydration:** Excessive loss of water from the body.

**Dementia:** Condition marked by breakdown of mental function, marked by personality changes and decline in the ability to speak, remember, think and/or orient oneself. Sometimes referred to as senility.

**Demulcent:** Mucilaginous substance that acts to soothe and relieve inflammation. Softens and soothes damaged or inflamed surfaces.

**Deobstruent:** Agent that removes obstructions.

**Depurative:** Substance that removes impurities and cleanses the blood. Promotes eliminative functions.

**Dermatitis:** An inflammation of the skin evidenced by itching and redness. May sometimes be caused by allergy.

**Dermatropic:** Having an affinity for the skin.

**Dermis:** Layer of skin that lies underneath the epidermis.

**Detoxification:** Process of reducing the buildup of various poisonous substances in the body.

**Diabetes:** A disease in which the body does not properly control the amount of sugar in the blood. As a result, the level of sugar in the blood is too high. This disease occurs when the body does not produce enough insulin or does not use it properly.

Diabetes mellitus: A group of disorders in which there is a defect in the transfer of glucose (sugar) from the bloodstream into cells, leading to abnormally high levels of blood sugar (hyperglycemia). There are two distinct types of diabetes mellitus: insulin-dependent and noninsulin-dependent.

**Insulin dependent diabetes:** Insulin-dependent diabetes (Type 1), also called juvenile-onset diabetes, is the more serious form of the disease. Treatment includes a diet limited in carbohydrates and saturated fat, exercise to burn glucose, and regular insulin injections, sometimes administered via a portable insulin pump.

**Noninsulin dependent diabetes:** Noninsulin-dependent diabetes (Type 2), also called adult-onset diabetes, results from the inability of the cells in the body to respond to insulin. As in Type 1 diabetes, treatment includes exercise and weight loss and a diet low in total carbohydrates and saturated fat. Some individuals require insulin injections; many rely on oral drugs, such as sulphonylureas metformin, or acarbose.

**Dialysis:** Technique using instruments that remove waste products from the blood and excess fluid from the body in the treatment of kidney failure.

**Diaphoretic:** Substance that produces perspiration and elimination through the skin.

**Diarrhea:** Condition in which bowel movements are more frequent or fluid than normal.

**Diastolic:** The second number in a blood pressure reading - the measure of the pressure in the arteries during

the relaxation phase of the heartbeat.

**Digestive:** Substance that aids digestion, usually by providing enzymes from various sources.

**Discutient:** Agent that causes the dispersal of a tumor or any pathologic accumulation.

**Disinfectant:** Destroys the cause of infections.

**Distillation:** Process of extracting essence of plants by heating to vapor, condensing by cooling and recollecting liquid.

**Dithiothiones:** Phytochemicals found in broccoli that increase levels of enzymes that help to protect against certain types of cancer.

**Diuretic:** Substance that increases and promotes the secretion and flow of urine.

**Diverticuli:** Pathological, sac-like "out-pouchings" of the wall of the colon.

**DNA:** Deoxyribonucleic acid - a substance in the cell nucleus that genetically contains the cell's genetic blueprint and determines the type of life form into which a cell will develop.

**Doctrine of Signatures:** An ancient theory from Paracelsus (1493-1541) that herbs were given a symbolic shape or color to indicate their usage - or the shape or form of an herb relates to the manner in which it cures.

**Dopamine:** A substance created by the body that serves as a neurotransmitter.

**Drastic:** A violent purgative. Dopamine is commonly associated with the pleasure system of the brain, providing feelings of enjoyment and the reinforcement to motivate us.

**Dropsy (also called Edema):** Accumulation of fluid in tissues (swelling).

**Duodenal:** Pertaining to the first portion of the intestine just after the stomach.

**Dysentery:** Inflammation of the large intestine marked by bloody diarrhea and cramps.

**Dysmenorrhea:** Difficult or painful menstruation.

**Dyspepsia:** Indigestion.

**Dysplasia:** Any abnormality of growth.

## E

**Ecbolic (also called Abortifacient):** Drug that induces abortion or premature expulsion of the fetus.

**Eccoprotic:** A substance that causes evacuation of the bowels.

**Edema (also called Dropsy):** Accumulation of fluid in tissues that results in swelling.

**EEG (Electroencephalogram):** Test that monitors heart function by tracing the conduction of electrical impulses associated with heart activity.

**Elixir:** An alcohol-based medication.

**Emetic:** Substance that causes vomiting.

**Emmenagogue:** Substance that promotes and stimulates menstruation.

**Emollient:** Agent that softens tissue and acts to soothe.

**Emulsion:** Combination of two liquids that do not mix with each other (oil and water). one substance is broken into tiny droplets and is suspended within the other. Emulsification is the first step in the digestion of fats.

**Endocrine System:** Glands that secrete hormones into the bloodstream. The endocrine glands include pituitary, thyroid, thymus and adrenal glands, as well as the pancreas, ovaries and testes.

**Endorphin:** One of a number of natural hormone-like substances found primarily in the brain - suppresses the sensation of pain by binding to opiate receptors in the brain.

**Enfleurage:** The process in which odorless fats or oils are used to absorb the fragrance of fresh flowers.

**Enzyme:** One of many specific protein catalysts that initiate or speed chemical reactions in the body without being consumed.

**Ephedrine:** Plant chemical of the alkaloid group.

**Epidermis:** The outer layer of the skin.

**Epilepsy:** Nervous system disorder, characterized by recurring attacks of motor, sensory and psychic malfunction - with or without consciousness or convulsive movements.

**Epinephrine (also called Adrenaline):** Hormone secreted by the adrenal gland that increases the rate and force of the heartbeat, quickens breathing and causes the liver to break down its energy stores for immediate use.

**Episiotomy:** A childbirth procedure, when the muscle and tissue between the vagina and anus may be cut during labor.

**Epstein-Barr Virus:** Virus that causes infectious mononucleosis and that may cause other health problems as well.

**Errhine:** Promotes or induces nasal discharge.

**Eruction:** The expulsion of stomach gases through the mouth - a belch or a burp.

**Erysipelas:** A very contagious bacterial skin infection that usually affects the arms, legs or face, characterized by shiny, red areas, small blisters and swollen lymph nodes.

**Esculent:** Edible or fit for eating.

**Essential Fatty Acids:** Three unsaturated fatty acids (arachidonic, linoleic and linolenic) essential for health and cannot be manufactured by the body.



**Essential Oil** (also called **Volatile Oil**): Any of the large class of volatile (readily vaporizing), usually scented plant oils used in many herbal medicines - a mixture of hydrocarbons that are less soluble in water than alcohol or fat.

**Essiac Tea**: Invented by Canadian nurse, Rene Casse, it is a popular herbal mixture for the treatment of cancer (unauthorized by the orthodox medical community). The original formula contains four basic herbs: burdock root, sheep sorrel, slippery elm bark and rhubarb root. Later formulas include more.

**Estrogenic**: Agent that causes estrus - acting to produce the effects of an estrogen.

**Euphoriant**: A substance that gives a general sense of well-being; tends to produce euphoria.

**Excipient**: An inert substance added to a prescription in order to confer a suitable consistency or form to the drug.

**Excitant**: A substance that produces excitation of the vital functions.

**Expectorant**: A substance that loosens and expels mucous secretions and phlegm from the respiratory systems and air passages. Promotes the thinning and ejection of mucus or exudates from the lungs, bronchi and trachea.

## F

**Fatty Acids**: A major component of fats that is used by the body for energy and tissue development.

**Febrifuge** (also called **Antipyretic** and **Refrigerant**): Agent that lessens fever and cools the body.

**Fiber**: Indigestible portion of plant matter - an important component of a healthy diet because it can bind to toxins and remove them from the body.

**Soluble Fiber** is "soluble" in water. When mixed with water, it forms a gel-like substance and swells. Soluble fiber has many benefits, including moderating blood glucose levels and lowering cholesterol. The scientific names for soluble fibers include pectins, gums, mucilages and some hemicelluloses. Good sources of soluble fiber include oats and oatmeal, legumes (peas, beans, lentils), barley, fruits and vegetables (especially oranges, apples and carrots).

**Insoluble Fiber** does not absorb or dissolve in water. It passes through our digestive system in close to its original form. Insoluble fiber offers many benefits to intestinal health, including a reduction in the risk and occurrence of colorectal cancer, hemorrhoids and constipation. The scientific names for insoluble fibers include cellulose, lignins and also some other hemicelluloses. Most of insoluble fibers come from the bran layers of cereal grains.

**Fibromyalgia**: A chronic disorder characterized by widespread musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, and multiple tender points that occurs in precise, localized areas, particularly in the neck, spine, shoulders and hips; also may cause sleep disturbances, morning stiffness, irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety and other symptoms.

**Flatulence**: Excessive amounts of gas in the stomach or other parts of the digestive tract.

**Flavonoids** (also called **Bioflavonoids**): Any of a large group of crystalline compounds found in plants.

**Folic Acid (Folate)**: A "B-complex" vitamin that is being studied as a cancer prevention agent.

**Free Radical**: A highly reactive chemical that often contains oxygen and is produced when molecules are split to give products that have unpaired electrons (a process called oxidation). Free radicals can damage important cellular molecules such as DNA or lipids or other parts of the cell.

**Free Radical Scavenger**: A substance that removes or destroys free radicals.

**Fungicide**: A substance that has a destructive, killing action upon fungi.

**Fungus**: One of a class of organisms that includes yeasts, mold and mushrooms. A number of fungal species are capable of causing severe disease in immuno-compromised hosts.

## G

**Galactagogue**: Stimulates and increases production and flow of milk.

**Gallbladder**: The pear-shaped organ found below the liver. Bile is concentrated and stored in the gallbladder.

**Gallstone**: The solid material that forms in the gallbladder or common bile duct. Gallstones are made of cholesterol or other substances found in the gallbladder and may occur as one large stone or as many small ones, and vary from the size of a golf ball to a grain of sand. Also called cholelith.

**Gastric**: Relating to the stomach.

**Gastric Reflux Disease** (also known as **GERD**): It is the backward flow of stomach acid contents into the esophagus (the tube that connects the mouth to the stomach) and characterized by frequent indigestion or heartburn.

**Gastritis**: Inflammation of the stomach and intestinal tract.

**Gastrointestinal:** Pertaining to the stomach, small and large intestines, colon, rectum, liver, pancreas and gallbladder.

**Genetic:** Inherited.

**Genistein:** An isoflavone (type of phytochemical) found in alfalfa sprouts and cruciferous vegetables, etc., and aids with symptoms of perimenopause and may prevent some cancers.

**GERD** (also known as **Gastric Esophageal Reflux Disease**): It is the backward flow of stomach acid contents into the esophagus (the tube that connects the mouth to the stomach) and characterized by frequent indigestion or heartburn.

**Gingivitis:** Inflammation of the gums.

**Glaucoma:** A condition in which the pressure of the fluid in the eye is so high it causes damage.

**Gleet:** A urethral discharge, either of mucus or pus, commonly seen in the chronic form of gonorrheal urethritis.

**Glucose:** A monosaccharide, which is found in the blood and is one of the body's primary energy sources.

**Glucoside:** A glycoside that when chemically broken down yields the type of sugar called glucose.

**Gluten:** One of the proteins in wheat and certain other grains that gives dough its tough, elastic character.

**Glycogen:** A polysaccharide (complex carbohydrate) that is the main form in which glucose is stored in the body, primarily in the liver and muscles. It is converted back into glucose as needed to supply energy.

**Goiter** (also known as **Struma**): A noncancerous enlargement of the thyroid gland, visible as a swelling at the front of the neck, that is often associated with iodine deficiency.

**Gonadotrophic:** A substance that stimulates the gonads - applied to hormones of the anterior pituitary, which influences the gonads.

**Grippe** (also known as **Influenza**): Any acute viral infection of the respiratory tract.

## H

**Hallucinogen:** A substance that induces hallucinations.

**Heavy Metal:** A metallic element that is extremely toxic, such as arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury.

**Hematinic:** Improves the quality of the blood, increasing the hemoglobin level and the number of erythrocytes.

**Hematogenic:** Promotes the formation of blood cells.

**Hematology:** The science that studies the blood.

**Hematonic:** Increases the amount of hemoglobin in the blood.

**Hematuria:** Blood in the urine.

**Hemoglobin:** The iron-containing red pigment in the blood that is responsible for the transport of oxygen.

**Hemolytic:** Destructive to blood cells.

**Hemopoietic:** Increases the rate of formation of blood.

**Hemorrhage:** Abnormal or profuse bleeding.

**Hemorrhoids:** Distended veins in the lining of the anus.

**Hemostatic:** A substance that arrests the flow of blood within the vessels, arrests hemorrhaging.

**Hepatic:** Pertaining to the liver and flow of bile.

**Histamine:** Chemical released by the immune system that acts on various body tissues. It has the effect of constricting the smooth bronchial tube muscles, dilating small blood vessels, allowing fluid to leak from various tissues and increasing the secretion of stomach acid.

**HIV:** Human immunodeficiency virus. It is the virus that causes AIDS.

**Hodgkin's Disease:** A type of lymphoma (cancer of the lymphatic system).

**Homeopathy:** The practice of the use of active ingredients in minute dosages, along with naturally occurring substances in order to provide a healthier balance of internal chemistry. It is an alternative method of treatment, which is said to be based on the nature's Law of Cure, namely "Like Cures Like," which was proclaimed by a German scientist, Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, in 1796. The remedies are prepared from natural substances and work by stimulating the body's own healing power.

**Homeostasis:** The metabolic equilibrium actively maintained by several complex biological mechanisms that operate via the autonomic to offset disrupting changes.

**Hormone:** One of numerous essential substances produced by the endocrine glands that regulate many bodily functions.

**Hydragogue:** Purgative, causing watery evacuations.

**Hydrophobia:** Fear of water and Hydrophobic means lacking an affinity for water molecules.

**Hyperglycemia:** High blood sugar level.

**Hyperlipidemic:** Elevated cholesterol and triglycerides in the blood.

**Hypertension:** High blood pressure.

**Hypoglycemia:** Low blood sugar level.

**Hypotension:** Low blood pressure.

## I

**Immune System:** A complex system that depends on the interaction of many different organs, cells and proteins. Its chief function is to identify and eliminate foreign substances, such as harmful bacteria that have invaded the body.

**Immuno-stimulant:** An agent that enhances and increases the body's immune (defense) mechanism to combat disease.

**Incontinence:** The inability to control urination or defecation.

**Inflammation:** A reaction to illness or injury characterized by swelling, warmth and redness.

**Infusion:** A preparation made by steeping the plant material in hot water for twenty minutes, making it stronger than tea.

**Inotropic:** Affecting the force of muscle contraction.

**Insulin:** A hormone produced by the pancreas that regulates the metabolism of glucose (sugar) in the body.

**Interferon:** A protein produced by the cells in response to viral infection that prevents viral reproduction.

**Interleukin:** Any of a number of immune system chemicals manufactured by the body to aid in fighting infection.

**Intestinal Flora:** The "friendly" bacteria present in the intestines essential for the digestion and metabolism of certain nutrients.

**Intestines:** The portion of the alimentary canal extending from the stomach to the anus.

**Intoxicant:** Causes intoxication or drunkenness.

**Ischemia:** Condition of being starved for blood.

**Isoflavones:** A class of phytochemicals that inhibits the uptake of estrogen, which may help prevent estrogen-based cancers, such as breast cancer.

## J

**Jaundice:** A condition in which the skin and the whites of the eyes become yellow, urine darkens, and the color of stool becomes lighter than normal. Jaundice occurs when the liver is not working properly or when a bile duct is blocked .

## K

**Keratin:** An insoluble protein found in hair, skin and nails.

## L

**Lactic Acid:** An acid that results from anaerobic glucose metabolism and is present in certain foods (and sour milk). It is also produced in the muscles during anaerobic exercise and causes muscle fatigue during strenuous activity.

**Lactose:** one of the sugars present in milk.

**Larvacide:** Substance that kills larvae.

**Laser:** Light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation. An instrument that focuses light waves and used in surgical procedures.

**Laxative:** Agent that produces gentle bowel movement.

**Lecithin:** A mixture of phospholipids that is composed of fatty acids, glycerol, phosphorus and choline or inositol. All living cell membranes are largely composed of lecithin.

**Lenitive:** Demulcent or soothing substance. Eases pain or discomfort.

**Leucorrhoea** (also Leukorrhoea): A whitish or yellowish vaginal discharge.

**Leukemia:** A cancer of the blood producing tissues, especially the bone marrow and lymph nodes, resulting in an overabundance of white blood cells.

**Leukopenic:** Activity that causes an abnormally low number of leukocytes in the circulating blood.

**Limbic System:** Group of deep brain structures that, among other things, transmit the perception of pain to the brain and generate an emotional reaction to it.

**Lipids:** Substances found in nature and are soluble in the same organic solvents as fats and oils. Important nutritional lipids include choline, gamma-linolenic acid, inositol, lecithin and linoleic acid.

**Lipophilic:** Substance that is capable of dissolving, of being dissolved in, or of absorbing lipids.

**Lipoprotein:** A type of protein molecule that incorporates a lipid - acts as an agent of lipid transport in the lymph and blood.

**Lipotropic:** Any of a number of substances that help to prevent the accumulation of abnormal or excessive

amounts of fat in the liver, control blood sugar levels and enhance fat and carbohydrate metabolism (i.e., choline, inositol and methionine).

**Litholitic:** Substance that affects the dissolution of a calculus or stone (gall, kidney).

**Lithotriptic:** Same as above.

**Lubricant:** Substance that reduces friction between parts which brush against each other as they move.

**Lupus:** A chronic, autoimmune disease, which causes inflammation of various parts of the body, especially the skin, joints, blood vessels and kidneys.

**Lutein:** A phytochemical (one of the carotenoids) found in dark leafy vegetables and is beneficial for the eyes. May help protect against macular degeneration.

**Lycopene:** A phytochemical found in tomatoes and appears to protect against prostate cancer and skin against harmful ultraviolet rays.

**Lymph:** A clear fluid derived from blood plasma that circulates throughout the body, collected from the tissues and flows through the lymphatic vessels, eventually returning to the bloodstream. It nourishes tissue cells and returns waste matter to the blood stream.

**Lymph Nodes:** Hundreds of small oval bodies that contain lymph. Lymph nodes act as our first line of defense against infections and cancer.

**Lymphatic system:** A network that includes lymph nodes, lymph, and lymph vessels that serves as a filtering system for the blood.

**Lymphedema:** Swelling either from obstructed cancerous lymph nodes or from surgically removed lymph nodes.

## M

**Maceration:** To make soft by soaking or steeping in a liquid (or) to separate into constituents by soaking.

**Macrophage:** A type of immune cell that surrounds and digests foreign materials and cellular debris in the body.

**Malignant:** Refers to cells or groups of cells that are cancerous and likely to spread.

**Menopause:** The cessation of menstruation, caused by a sharp decrease in the production of the sex hormones, estrogen and progesterone.

**Menorrhagia:** Excessive loss of blood during menstrual periods.

**Metabolism:** The physical and chemical processes necessary to sustain life, including the production of cellular energy, the synthesis of important biological substances and degradation of various compounds.

**Migraine:** Severe, recurrent headache, usually affecting one side of the head.

**Mitosis:** The process of cell replication by division.

**Monoterpenes:** Phytochemicals found in citrus fruits and vegetables and act as antioxidants and help to protect the immune system.

**Mortification:** Gangrene.

**Mucilage:** A thick aqueous solution used as a lubricant. Herbs that have a soothing effect on inflamed mucous membranes.

**Mucous Membranes:** Membranes that line the cavities and canals of the body and communicate with the air, i.e., inside the mouth, nose, vagina, etc.

**Mucus:** The slick, slimy fluid secreted by the mucous membranes - acts as a lubricant and protector of the mucous membranes.

**Mutagenic:** Induces or increases mutation in an organism.

**Myalgia:** A condition marked by pain in the muscles.

**Mydriatic:** A substance that dilates the pupil.

## N

**Narcotic:** A substance that induces a state of stuporous analgesia - causes stupor and numbness.

**Natural Killer Cells (NKs):** An immune system cell that is activated by antibodies that secretes chemicals to destroy cancer cells and infectious microbes.

**Naturopathy:** A form of health care that uses diet, herbs and other natural methods to cure illness. The goal is to produce a healthy body without the use of drugs by stimulating innate defenses.

**Nausea:** A stomach disturbance characterized by the feeling of the need to vomit.

**Nematicide:** Kills nematode worms, which includes roundworms and threadworms.

**Nephritic:** Acts on the kidneys and renal system.

**Nephritis:** Inflammation of the kidney.

**Nervine:** A substance that calms and soothes the nerves and reduces tension and anxiety. A tonic for the nervous system that eases stress, nervous disorders and nourishes the nerves.

**Nervous System:** Bodily system comprised of the brain, spinal cord, nerves, ganglia and parts of the receptor

organs that receive and send stimuli and transmit impulses to effector organs.

**Neuralgia:** It is a severe, throbbing or stabbing pain along the course of a nerve.

**Neurasthenia:** Condition or functional neurosis marked by severe nerve weakness, intense nervous irritability and nervous exhaustion (sometimes called nervous breakdown, although not technically used). Neurasthenia was a term first coined by Beard in 1869 to describe a condition with symptoms of fatigue, anxiety and pessimism. It was explained as being a result of exhaustion of the central nervous system's energy reserves that were attributed to civilization. In the late 1800s, it became a popular diagnosis and led to rest cures.

**Neuropathy:** A complex of symptoms caused by abnormalities in motor or sensory nerves.

**Neurotransmitter:** A chemical that transmits nerve impulses from one nerve cell to another. Major neurotransmitters include acetylcholine, dopamine, gamma-aminobutyric acid, norepinephrine and serotonin.

**Neutraceutical:** A food or nutrient-based product or supplement designed and/or used for a specific clinical and/or therapeutic purpose.

**Neutral:** In chemistry, neither acid nor alkaline.

**Nourishing:** Feeds, restores and strengthens.

**Nutrient:** A constituent of food necessary for normal physiologic function; provides nourishment. It is a substance that is needed by the body to maintain life and health.

**Nutritive:** Nourishes and builds body tissues.

## O

**Occult Blood Test:** A test that detects the presence of blood in bodily excretions such as stool, sputum or urine and most often used in screening for cancer.

**Oliguria** (also called **Anuria**): The decreased or absent production of urine, respectively, which may be a sign of dehydration.

**Oncology:** Medical specialty dealing with cancer.

**Organic:** A term used to describe foods that are grown without the use of synthetic chemicals, such as pesticides, herbicides and hormones.

**Osteoarthritis** (or Degenerative Joint Disease): The most common form of arthritis, primarily (but not exclusively) affecting older persons and marked by early-morning stiffness, pain that worsens with joint use, loss of joint function and swelling.

**Osteoporosis:** A disorder in which minerals leak out of the bones, rendering them progressively more porous and fragile.

**Oxidation:** A chemical reaction in which oxygen reacts with another substance, resulting in a chemical transformation, which may result in some type of deterioration or spoilage.

## P

**Palliative:** A substance that relieves or soothes the symptoms of a disease or disorder without affecting a cure.

**Panacea:** A cure-all.

**PAP Test:** Microscopic examination of cells collected from vagina and cervix to test for signs of cancer.

**Parasite:** An organism that lives on or in, and obtains nourishment from, another organism.

**Parasiticide:** A substance that kills parasites in the digestive tract and on the skin.

**Parasympathetic regulator:** Regulates the parasympathetic nervous system, enhancing immune activity.

**Parasympatholytic:** Produces effects resembling those of interruption of the parasympathetic nerve supply to a part.

**Parkinson's Disease:** A chronic nervous disease - slowly progressive, degenerating disease characterized by tremor, mask-like facial expression, shuffling gait, muscle rigidity and weakness.

**Parturient:** Stimulates uterine contractions, which induce and assist labor, promotes and hastens childbirth.

**Pathogen:** Any agent that causes disease, for example bacteria.

**Pectoral:** A substance that has a general strengthening and healing effect on the bronchio-pulmonary area and respiratory system.

**Pediculicide:** Agent that destroys lice.

**Peptide:** Substance composed of two or more amino acids.

**Perimenopause** (also called **Climacteric**): The period of transition from fertility to menopause in which production of estrogen, the main female hormone, diminishes.

**Peristalsis:** A progressive wave-like movement that occurs involuntarily in hollow tubes of the body, especially in the alimentary canal, creating an alternate contraction and relaxation of the walls, i.e., intestinal tract, ureter, etc.

**Peritoneum:** The membrane lining the abdominal cavity.

**Pernicious Anemia:** Anemia caused by vitamin B-12 deficiency, marked by red blood cells that are very large.

**pH:** Potential of hydrogen. Scale used to measure the relative acidity or alkalinity of substances.

**Phagocytosis:** Process in which phagocytes engulf and digest microorganisms and cellular debris; an important defense against infection.

**Pharyngitis:** Inflammation of the pharynx, the upper portion of the digestive tube from the esophagus to the mouth and nasal cavities.

**Phenylketonuria (PKU):** Inherited disorder caused by lack of an enzyme needed to convert the amino acid, phenylalanine, into another amino acid, tyrosine, so that excesses may be eliminated from the body. A buildup of excess phenylalanine in the blood can lead to neurological disturbances and mental retardation.

**Philter (or Philtre):** A love potion.

**Phlegm:** Thick mucus, especially from the respiratory tract.

**Photosensitizing:** In combination with light, a substance that will cause a sensitivity reaction such as discoloration of the skin.

**Phototoxic:** Renders the skin susceptible to damage by light.

**Phytochemical:** Any one of many substances present in fruits and vegetables.

**Phytoestrogenic:** Possessing activity similar to estrogens.

**Piscicide:** Substance that is poisonous to fish.

**Pituitary Gland:** A small, oval endocrine gland located at the base of the vertebrate brain that secretes a number of different hormones that regulate growth, maturation and metabolism by co-ordinating the actions of other endocrine glands.

**Placebo:** A pharmacologically inactive substance used to provide a basis for comparison with active substances.

**Plaque:** An unwanted bacterial deposit of a certain substance on tissues, often with the potential to cause some health problem, i.e., a buildup of plaque in arteries may lead to arteriosclerosis; plaque on teeth can cause decay and gum disease; plaque on the brain may cause Alzheimer's disease.

**PMS:** Premenstrual Syndrome - marked by a variety of symptoms experience prior to the start of menstruation, including acne, backache, breast tenderness, irritability, mood swings and water retention.

**Poisonous:** A substance that causes injury, illness or death.

**Polysaccharides (also called Complex Carbohydrates):** Type of carbohydrate that releases its sugar into the body relatively slowly - such as those in starches and fiber.

**Poultice:** An herbal paste spread on a cloth and applied externally to the body.

**Precancerous Lesion:** Abnormal tissue that is not malignant, but that may be in the process of becoming so.

**Precursor:** Starts a chain reaction, which accelerates growth.

**Probiotics:** Elements that encourage the growth of beneficial bacteria in the body.

**Progesterone:** A female sex hormone that acts in concert with estrogen to control the menstrual cycle.

**Prognosis:** A forecast as to the likely course and/or outcome of a disorder or condition.

**Prophylactic:** Any agent that contributes to the prevention of infection and disease.

**Prostaglandin:** Any of a number of hormone-like chemicals that are made in the body from essential fatty acids and that have important effects on target organs - substances that regulate body processes, such as blood pressure, inflammation reaction, smooth muscle contraction in the windpipe, intestines and uterus.

**Protein:** Any of many complex nitrogen-based organic compounds made up of different combinations of amino acids - the basic elements of all animal and vegetable tissues.

**Proteolytic:** Pertaining to the splitting or breaking down of proteins by hydrolysis of the peptide bonds with formation of smaller polypeptides; the process may be catalyzed by proteolytic enzymes, by acids or by bases. Proteolytic enzymes break down dietary proteins, yet do not attack the proteins that make up the normal cells of the body.

**Protisticide:** Kills any member of the kingdom protista, a single-celled endo-organism.

**Pruritus:** Itching.

**Psychedelic:** A substance that causes visual hallucinations, intensified perception, and sometimes, behavior similar to that seen in psychosis.

**Psychotonic:** Invigorates and increases the general well-being of the brain.

**Psychotropic:** Affects the mind, denoting drugs used in the treatment of mental illnesses.

**Pulicide:** Substance that is destructive to fleas.

**Pulmonary:** Relating to the lungs.

**Pungent:** A spicy and acrid substance that dispels phlegmatic stagnation with a tonifying action on the lungs.

**Purgative:** A substance that promotes bowel movement and increased intestinal peristalsis.

**Putrefaction:** Decomposition of organic matter, especially proteins, by the action of bacteria and resulting in the formation of foul-smelling compounds.

**Pyretic:** Relating to fever.

## Q

**Quicksilver:** An old term for mercury.

**Quinsy:** Tonsillitis or peri-tonsillar abscess.

## R

**Radiation Therapy** (also called **Radiotherapy**): Treatment most often used for cancer that involves the use of ionizing radiation, including Roentgen rays, radium or other radioactive substances to destroy specific areas of tissue.

**RAST (Radioallergosorbent Test)**: Blood test that measures for allergic reactions.

**Raticide**: A substance that is poisonous to rats.

**Raynaud's Disease**: A circulatory disorder caused by insufficient blood supply to the hands and feet and resulting in cyanosis, numbness, pain, and, in extreme cases, gangrene.

**RDA (Recommended Daily Allowance)**: The amount of vitamins or other nutrients that should be consumed daily in order to prevent nutritional deficiency (determined by the USFDA).

**Red Blood Cell**: Blood cell that contains the red pigment hemoglobin and transports oxygen and carbon dioxide in the bloodstream.

**Refrigerant** (also called **Antipyretic** and **Febrifuge**): An agent that lessens fever and cools the body.

**Regulative**: An agent that aids in normalizing the system.

**Rehabilitative**: A substance or situation that restores or puts back in good condition.

**Rejuvenative**: An agent that makes young or youthful again. Refreshes, replenishes and revives.

**Relaxant**: A substance that relaxes nerves and muscles and reduces tension, especially muscular tension.

**Remission**: The lessening or reversal of the signs of disease.

**Renal**: Relating to the kidneys.

**Repellant**: An agent that inspires aversion or distaste. Repels or drives off, also an insect repellent.

**Resolvent**: A substance that reduces inflammation or swelling and arrests an inflammatory process or causes the absorption of a tumor or growth.

**Restorative**: Substance that renews health and strength and is effective in the regaining of normal physiological activity.

**Retrovirus**: Type of virus that has RNA as its core nucleic acid and contains an enzyme called reverse transcriptase that permits the virus to copy its RNA into the DNA of infected cells - in effect taking over the cells' genetic machinery.

**Revulsive**: A counter-irritant or substance that causes irritation or a mild inflammation in order to relieve a deep-seated inflammatory condition.

**Reye's Syndrome**: A condition that can follow viral infection and involves brain inflammation and fatty tissue invasion of the internal organs.

**Rheumatic**: Pertaining to, or characterized by, acute or chronic inflammation, soreness and stiffness of muscles and pain in the joints.

**RNA (Ribonucleic acid)**: Complex protein that carries coded genetic information from the DNA in the cell nucleus to protein-producing cell structures called ribosomes.

**Roborant**: A strengthening tonic.

**Rodenticide**: A substance used to kill rodents.

**Rubefacient**: Herbs that, when applied to the skin, stimulate circulation in that area of normal physiological activity.

## S

**Saponins**: Active plant constituents that produce a lather in water.

**Sarcoma**: A cancer of the connective tissue

**Saturated Fats**: Fats that are solid at room temperature and most are of animal origin, although a few, such as coconut oil and palm oil, come from plants.

**Scald Head**: A disease of the hair follicles with formation of small yellow crusts and a very offensive odor; usually affects the scalp - may also be ringworm, or some similar affliction, of the scalp.

**Schizonticide**: A substance that destroys the schizont, a stage in the development of the malarial parasite.

**Scrofula**: Tuberculosis involving the swelling of the lymph nodes of the neck - usually occurs in early life.

**Sebum**: Oily secretion produced by the glands in the skin.

**Secretolytic**: Substance that arrests the flow of secretions.

**Secretomotor**: Substance that stimulates secretion.

**Sedative**: A substance that allays excitement, induces relaxation and is conducive to sleep.

**Seizure**: Sudden, brief episode or convulsion that is characterized by changes in consciousness, perception, muscular motion and/or behavior.

**Sensual**: Refers to anything that enhances the body's physical senses.

**Sepsis**: Putrefactive destruction of tissues by disease-causing bacteria or their toxins.

**Serotonin:** A hormone that influences a number of bodily functions, including digestion, respiration and blood pressure maintenance. Also serves as a neurotransmitter that exerts a calming effect and regulates sleep.

**Shingles:** A viral infection with the herpes varicella-zoster virus, marked by painful blisters that follow the course of a nerve.

**Sialogogue:** Substance that promotes the flow of saliva.

**Simple Carbohydrate:** Rapidly digested carbohydrate because of its chemical structure and absorbed into the bloodstream, i.e., glucose, lactose and fructose.

**Soporific:** Herb that helps to produce sleep.

**Spasmolytic:** A substance that relieves smooth muscle spasms.

**Spermatogenic:** Produces semen or spermatozoa.

**Spermicide:** Substance that is destructive to spermatozoa.

**Splenetic:** Agent that affects chronic disease of the spleen - thought to relieve fretful or surly conditions.

**Stasis:** Stagnation or cessation of flow.

**Sterilant:** Agent that eliminates living micro-organisms.

**Sternutatory:** Substance that induces sneezing.

**Steroid:** One of a group of fat-soluble organic compounds with a characteristic chemical composition.

**Stimulant:** An herb that increases the activity or efficiency of a system or organ - acts more rapidly than a tonic herb.

**Stomachic:** An agent that relieves gastric disorders. It tones and gives strength to the stomach, helps digestion and improves the appetite.

**Stroke:** Attack in which the brain is suddenly deprived of oxygen as a result of interrupted blood flow.

**Stupefacient:** Substance that induces stupor - stupefying or narcotic.

**Styptic:** An astringent that arrests hemorrhage and bleeding.

**Sudorific (also called Diaphoretic):** A substance that causes heavy perspiration.

**Suppurative:** Agent that produces pus.

**Sympathetic Nervous System Inhibitor:** A substance that inhibits the actions of the sympathetic nervous system.

**Syncope:** A brief loss of consciousness caused by a temporary deficiency of oxygen in the brain - a swoon.

## T

**T-Cell Stimulant:** Substance that stimulates the white blood cells that are critical to immune function.

**T-Cells:** Type of lymphocyte that is a crucial part of the immune system. Helper T-cells co-ordinate the immune response against infectious microbes and cancerous cells, enabling the body to defend itself, while suppresser T-cells suppress the immune response, preventing the immune system from attacking the body itself.

**Tachycardia:** An increase in heart rate above normal.

**Taeniafuge:** An agent that expels tapeworms.

**Tannin:** An astringent phenolic plant constituent.

**Testosterone:** The main male hormone, important to proper sexual function, fertility and development of secondary sex characteristics (beard growth, etc.).

**Tetters:** Old term for eczematous skin diseases.

**Thermogenesis:** The generation of heat, particularly in brown fat deposits, that provides necessary warmth and may also be a way the body burns excess food to avoid weight gain.

**Thrombosis:** Clots in the bloodstream that block the blood vessel.

**Thrush:** Infection by the fungus *Candida albicans* of the mouth and throat.

**Thymoleptic:** Substance that raises the mood and alleviates depression.

**Thyrostatic:** Substance that reduces the activity of the thyroid gland.

**Tincture:** An herb extract that is steeped in alcohol for several weeks - available commercially and usually taken in drops.

**Tinnitus:** A ringing in the ear.

**Tonic:** A substance that exerts a gentle strengthening effect on the body. Designed to restore enfeebled function and to promote vigor and a sense of well-being. Tonic herbs restore and strengthen individual organs and the entire system.

**Topical:** Pertains to a certain area of the skin or to a substance that affects only the area to which a substance is applied.

**Toxic:** Poisonous.

**Trans-fatty acid:** The type of fat found in margarine.

**Triglycerides:** The primary form in which fat is both found in the blood and stored in the body.

**Tryptophan:** L-tryptophan is an essential amino acid with a documented sleep inducing effect. L-tryptophan is used in the body to produce the B-vitamin, niacin.



## U

**Ulcer:** A lesion on the skin or a mucous membrane.

**Unguent:** A salve for soothing or healing.

**Uremia:** A toxic condition associated with renal insufficiency, produced by the retention in the blood of nitrogenous substances normally excreted by the kidney.

**Urethritis:** An infection of the urethra in both men and women. In men, urethritis is most often contracted as a result of sexual contact.

**Uterosedative:** A sedative to the uterus.

**Uterostimulant:** Substance that stimulates the uterus.

## V

**Vagotonic:** An agent that aids problems of irritability of the vagal nerve. May help with excessive peristalsis and loss of the pharyngeal reflex.

**Vascular:** Pertaining to the blood vessels.

**Vasoconstrictor:** An agent that narrows blood vessel openings, restricting the flow of blood through them.

**Vasodilator:** An agent that causes relaxation of blood vessels.

**Vein:** Blood vessel that carries blood away from the body's tissues and toward the heart.

**Vermicide:** A medicine that kills intestinal worms.

**Vermifuge** (also called **Anthelmintic**): A substance that destroys and expels intestinal worms.

**Vertigo:** Faintness, dizziness or inability to maintain one's balance.

**Vesicant:** A counterirritant strong enough in some cases to cause blistering.

**Virocide:** Substance that kills viruses.

**Virus:** Any of a group of tiny, disease-causing entities with very simple structures. They cannot reproduce on their own and must take over cells within the host organism to do so.

**Vitamin:** One of approximately fifteen organic substances that are essential in small quantities for life and health. Most cannot be manufactured by the body and must be supplied by the diet.

**Vitamin P** (also called **Bioflavonoid**): Any of a group of biologically active flavonoids that are essential for the stability and absorption of vitamin C.

**Vitiligo:** Appearance of non-pigmented patches on otherwise normal skin.

**Volatile Oil** (also called **Essential Oil**): A scented plant oil used in many herbal medicines - a mixture of hydrocarbons that are less soluble in water than alcohol or fat.

**Vulnerary:** A substance that arrests bleeding in wounds and prevents tissue degeneration.

## W

**Wash:** Liquid medicinal preparation for external use - a lotion.

**Western Diet:** A diet characteristic of western societies, i.e., high in fat, refined carbohydrates and processed foods and low in dietary fiber.

**White Blood Cell:** An immune system cell that destroys invading organisms along with infected or damaged cells. Also known as a leukocyte.

**Whites:** See Leucorrhoea.

## X/Y

**Yeast:** Any of a group of single-celled fungi, some of which can cause infection.

## Z

**Zygote:** A cell that is the result of fertilization. That is, two haploid cells-usually (but not always) an ovum from a female and a sperm cell from a male-merge into a single diploid cell called the *zygote* (or *zygocyte*). Twins and multiple births can be monozygotic (identical) or dizygotic (fraternal).

**Zymotic:** Caused by or pertaining to any infectious or contagious disease.

