



February 23, 2011 – Grand Rapids, MI

## Blood

There's another part of your cardiovascular system that really is the whole point of the system's existence: the blood. It's considered connective tissue and when you think about it, that makes sense. What does the blood do? It delivers nutrients to tissues and carries away waste products.

The blood moves nutrients such as proteins carbohydrates and fats to wherever they're needed. It takes essential micronutrients such as electrolytes, vitamins, and minerals to cells where their needed. But it also picks up substances the body makes such as hormones and antibodies and delivers them to their target tissue.

Blood also helps dissipate heat; it takes the heat from your core and sends it to the skin to cool you off. It carries liquid to all your tissues; that's why one of the signs of dehydration is dry, unresponsive skin.

But of all the things the blood does, the most important is to carry oxygen to the tissues and to remove carbon dioxide from the tissues. Those are the most critical because without that function, you've got a couple of minutes to live. That's really the problem with a heart attack: the blood becomes stationary.

Here's the most important thing you can do to keep your blood functioning well: stay hydrated. If your fluid levels are high enough, the blood will be thinner and that makes everything in the system work that much better. Water is great, but coffee, tea, soda, milk, soup, even the liquid in fruits and vegetables all help keep you hydrated. Drink up!

What are you prepared to do today?

*Dr. Chet*

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