

Natural Lifestyle

LOVE LIFE, LIVE WELL — NATURALLY

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Aug/Sept 2023



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First steps to nutrition

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LOVE LIFE, LIVE WELL — NATURALLY

Aug/Sept 2023

Welcome



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Our health food stores have never been so important. Although such stores have been around for decades, it was both during and since the Covid-19 pandemic that health food shops have shown just why they are so critical to our communities; not only do they provide us with high quality health and wellbeing products, but they do so with excellent advice, generally provided to customers for free, and we also know that

health stores go above and beyond to provide a service that you simply wouldn't get elsewhere.

You might have got the sense that we are big fans of health stores, so much so that we created the *Natural Lifestyle* Retailer of the Year Award to give them the recognition they truly deserve. This year's awards, sponsored by our good friends at Terranova, are open now, but we need you, our readers, to get involved and nominate the store you would like to see as our winner.

All you need to do is visit www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk/awards and fill out the form, nominate the store and tell us why you think they should be the winner. And by doing so, you can put yourself in the running to win a £100 hamper from Terranova. The deadline for nominations is August 31, before we whittle them down to a shortlist, which will then be judged by an expert team.

We thank you in advance for getting involved, and we look forward to celebrating more of the UK's brilliant health food stores.

Elsewhere in this issue, we have all you need to make a healthy transition from summer to autumn, and prepare for the arrival of the cold and 'flu season. We have assembled an expert panel on page 14, who offer their advice on protecting your immune health, before we also focus on children's health and how to ensure their wellbeing – you can read all about it on page 22.

*Rachel Symonds,
Editor*

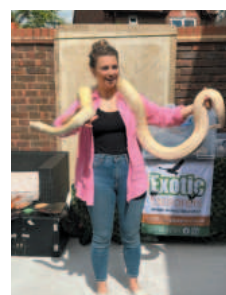


THE BEST BITS

An insight into what the *Natural Lifestyle* team have been up to this month.



It was a time for celebration for our clever Marketing Exec, Rubie, who graduated with an upper second class honours in fashion journalism from the London College of Fashion.



Our design whiz, Daniella, got to grips with a slippery friend during a recent day out.



It was to the water for our Sales Director, Ruth, who had a day out punting with her family to celebrate her recent birthday.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.mynaturallifestyle.com

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Empowering mental wellbeing

Mental health is a topic often in the spotlight these days, but there is still a big role in educating the nation on how to look after this essential area of health.

Now, the UK is to have the first mental wellbeing festival in the shape of Go Mental, an event taking place on October 7 in London. This interactive event is an empowering destination for all things mental wellbeing and is designed to break the silence and stigma around mental health and reduce suicide rates.

Go Mental founder, Rosie Millen, better known as Miss Nutritionist, suffered from severe burnout in 2010. She collapsed from too much stress and was bed bound for three years and also contemplated suicide as her mental wellbeing collapsed, and she found herself in a very dark place.

She explained: "Every day, I would wake up with no energy, totally depressed and helpless. There were so many times when I didn't want to be alive anymore. I considered taking my life three times. Only when I educated myself and put it all into practice did I get better and back on my feet for good."

Following her recovery, Rosie wanted to try and help others who may also be experiencing mental health issues. Go Mental has brought together a powerful selection of mental health professionals, doctors, authors and survivors, who are all ready to share their stories and experience on how to make our mental wellbeing journeys easier. The line-up includes fitness influencer, Bradley Simmonds, mental health campaigner, Ben West, Nutritionist, Madeleine Shaw, Dr Dani Gordon, yoga teacher, Heather Hearts, and the DLC Anxiety Community.

Inside... HEALTH

Back to basics with your nutrient needs

After a new report revealed gaps in the UK's nutrient intake, one expert is reminding of the importance of getting back to basics.

The most recent findings from the UK National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) used to collate a report for Health & Food Supplements Information Service (HSIS), *Back to basics: the nutrients you need, served on a plate*, showed that many people are lacking in as many as eight key nutrients with potentially harmful effects on their health. Worse still there have been significant declines in many nutrients over the last 10-20 years.

HSIS, which has set out the key nutrients we need for health in its latest e-news, said in a statement: "Nutrient shortfalls across all decades of life happen due to the fact that many of us are guilty of either skipping meals, have turned to fad diets, cut out major food groups such as dairy from the diet or are just too hectic to cook healthy meals.

"One in eight people are now vegan or vegetarian with many more simply cutting their meat intake. As a result, shortfalls in vital nutrients – zinc, B12, vitamin D, selenium and iodine – are inevitable. These dietary gaps can be sorted by taking a multivitamin and multimineral supplement, as well as an omega 3 supplement. Bridging the dietary gaps across all population groups can future proof health across the board."



A vegan celebration this autumn

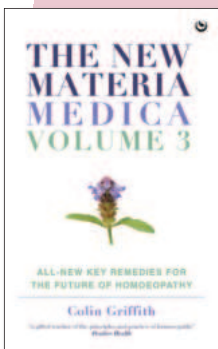
Two new festivals have been announced to celebrate the plant-based movement.

Vegan Events UK has released details of two more events as part of its series of vegan extravaganzas for 2023. The new North Wales Vegan Festival will take place on September 16, followed by Bournemouth Vegan Festival on September 30.

These festivals are among the best places you can go to find out more about living a vegan lifestyle, try some new food and meet with other vegans, and include Christmas Festivals in Bath, Manchester and Leeds (Great Yorkshire Vegan Christmas Festival). The events are for everyone, whether you're flexitarian, vegetarian, vegan, looking to reduce your meat intake or increase the amount of plant-based food you consume. And there is lots to inspire, with talks, recipe ideas and information on going vegan.

Vegan Events UK founder, Victoria Bryceson, explained: "I'm really excited about this year's autumn festivals. We've had such amazing feedback from everyone about our spring shows, I'm expecting them to be sell-out events."

Find out more at www.veganeventsuk.co.uk



LESSONS IN HOMEOPATHY

If you're interested in how homeopathy could support you then a new book can help you on your journey.

The *New Materia Medica Volume 3* has been penned by Colin Griffith and focuses on all new key remedies for the future of homeopathy. Drawing on 10 years of testing remedies, the book offers 36 new homeopathic remedies, offering solutions for our challenging times.

Colin is one of the founding members of The Guild of Homeopaths.

We love

THE GINGER PEOPLE FIJIAN TURMERIC JUICE

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LAMBERTS COLLADEEN DERMA PLUS

Formulated to support the health of the skin, Colladeen Derma Plus combines naturally sourced anthocyanidins with plant-derived lutein, zeaxanthin and green tea extract. As well as being powerful antioxidants, research has identified anthocyanidins to be active in supporting and repairing collagen-rich structures in the body. Lutein and zeaxanthin are two of the most well-known carotenoids, often considered skin 'loving' phytonutrients, whilst there has been much attention on the antioxidant properties of green tea.

NaturesPlus.

Nutrition in Disguise.

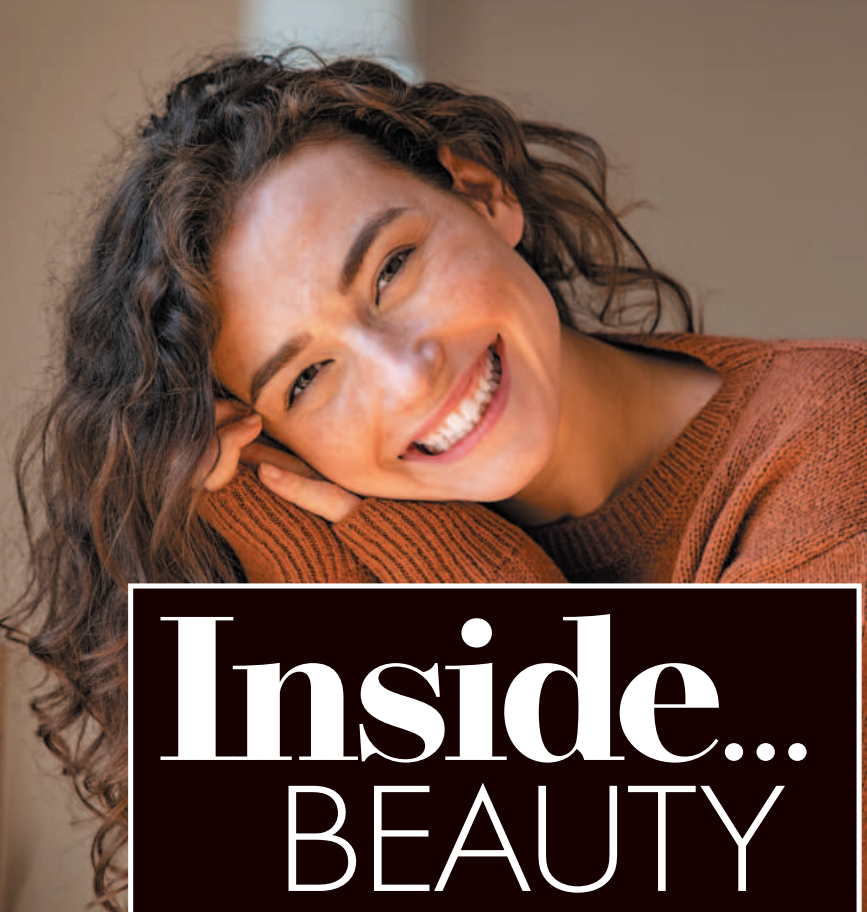
With fun animal shapes & delicious flavours, your kids won't know Animal Parade is good for them!

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Inside... BEAUTY



Revitalise with rosemary

A hair trend uses a tried and tested, century-old product.

First introduced in 1921, Weleda's Revitalising Hair Tonic with Rosemary is one of the oldest products in its range and is now so sought-after that a bottle sells globally every 60 seconds!

This unique heritage product has been a Weleda top 20 product since 2020 when the

recent rosemary trend started to take off and is formulated to strengthen hair and invigorate the scalp, creating lustrous locks by restoring natural strength and shine.

The luxuriously aromatic tonic helps treat problems of the hair and scalp, including hair loss, thinning or brittle hair, dandruff and flaking. No surprise that it has become a TikTok sensation during the recent trend for all things rosemary. Interest in the product has resulted in over 191.7m views on TikTok.

Revitalising Hair Tonic is made from the fresh leaf tips of *Rosmarinus officinalis*, a herb used for centuries for its restorative and tonic properties, and particularly known as a circulatory stimulant. In years gone by it was used as a hair rinse for dandruff. Rosemary helps restore the health of the scalp, making it ideal for treating hair loss and dryness, as well as helping hair regain its shine, manageability and thickness.

Stonecrop and horseradish (which is naturally rich in silica) work together with rosemary to discourage microbial development and reduce inflammation. Regular use helps the condition of permed, bleached or damaged hair. Rosemary oil gives the hair tonic a fresh, zingy scent with a woody-balsamic base note.

POST-SUMMER SKIN SALVATION

If your skin is feeling the effects of the summer, then AEOS has just the thing to help with its Spelt Replenish.

The sun can leave skin in need of intensive care, and designed to help is a crystal infused biodynamic skin care range by AEOS, using a powerful revitalising, regenerative and deeply moisturising hero ingredient across the whole product range – spelt oil.

Harvested at the brand's biodynamic farm in Lincolnshire, the spelt is harnessed using supercritical CO2 extraction methods to preserve its full properties. The AEOS spelt oil's potent antioxidant powers make it a particularly beneficial skincare hero for very dry, prematurely ageing, environmentally-sensitised and pigmentation or eczema-prone skin.

Loaded with energising vitamin E, proteins and essential fatty acids, this skin-loving powerhouse is nature's solution to help moisturise and reinvigorate skin, making it a premium ingredient in all of the AEOS products. Also, spelt oil's high availability to the skin makes it fast-absorbing, enabling skin to reap maximum benefits of the other biodynamic ingredients in products.



MUST HAVE MULTITASKER

Whether to take on holiday or to keep in your handbag for everyday use, a quality multitasker is a must.

Here to help is Q+A Grapefruit Multi-Balm, which does so much more than it says on the tube. The 100 per cent natural formula is packed with vitamin C and antioxidant-rich grapefruit, skin soothing alpha bisabolol and jojoba oil, along with deeply moisturising cocoa butter. Use on the face, hair, body, lips, cuticles, and brows to instantly nourish and soothe.

It's vegan friendly, cruelty free and alcohol free. All packaging is 100 per cent recyclable so can be disposed of in your domestic recycling.



Get the gloss

Give your lips some intense nourishment while adding a lick of gloss with this new creation from Evolve Organic Beauty.

Bio-Retinol Glossy Lip Oil is designed to offer a non-sticky product that offers a soft pink tint that comes from natural radish pigment, naturally flavoured with a blend of organic peppermint and lime essential oils.

It also uses Kalahari watermelon seed oil, an ingredient that is ecologically, economically and socially sustainable. Furthermore, the tube is made from upcycled plastic that comes from sugar cane bagasse, a waste product of the sugar industry.



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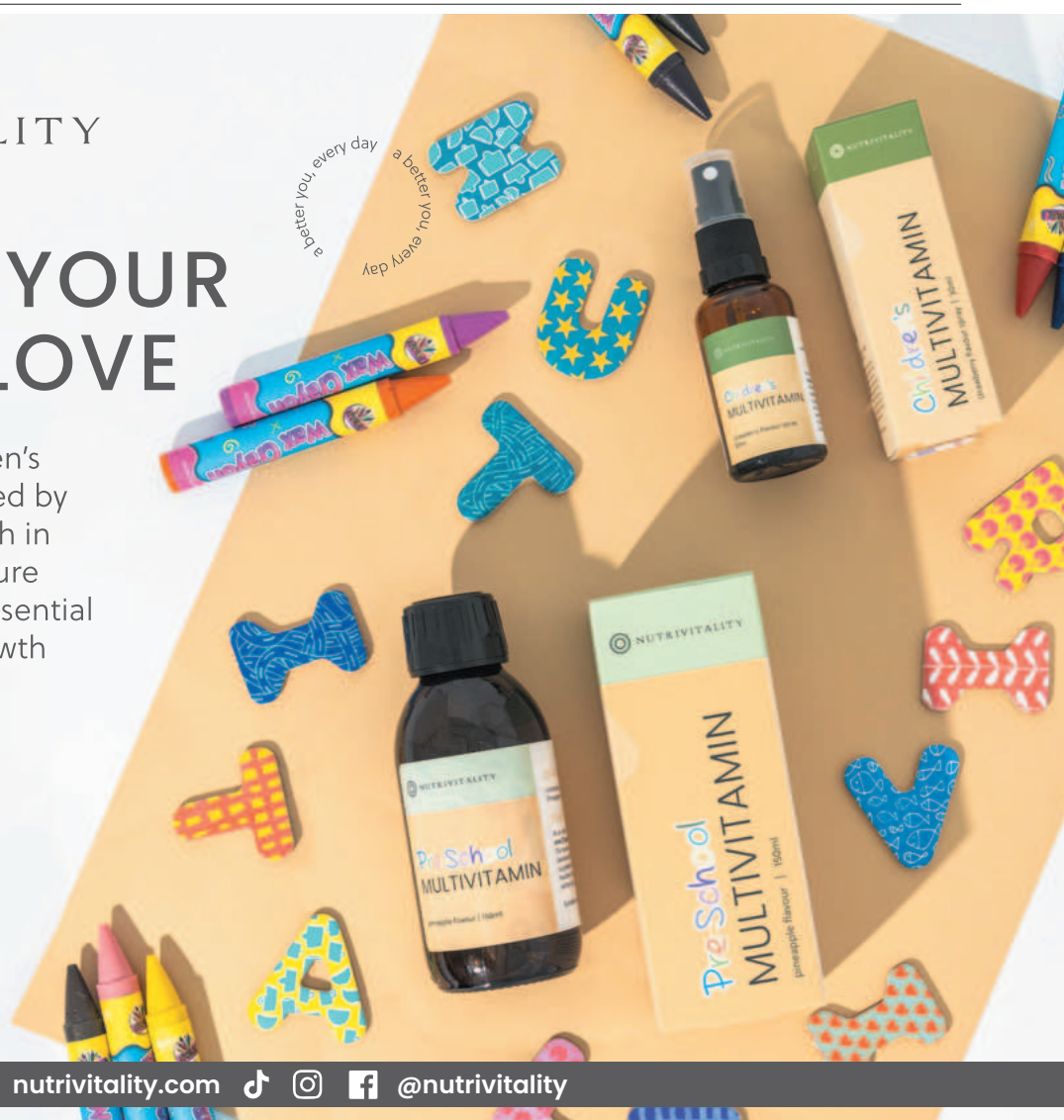
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SUPPORT YOUR flexible friends

Learn the simple steps to protecting your joints and bones.

We put them to use every day, so it stands to reason that we need to support our joints and bones, especially as we age and begin to feel the effects of wear and tear.

But what can you do to protect your musculoskeletal system? And how can a holistic lifestyle help?

Let's start with the fact that there are a range of joint and bone related issues that can arise, whether caused by short term injury or a longer-term condition.

Arthritis is the most common that causes pain and inflammation in a joint, and although there are different forms, the most often seen is osteoarthritis, which affects the smooth cartilage lining of the joint, making movement more difficult, leading to pain and stiffness.

Looking at bone health, osteoporosis is a prevalent condition, in which bones become weaker, making them fragile and more at risk of breaking.

Who's at risk?

Everyone experiences aches and pains from time to time, whether through exercise or injury. But with rest, these will pass. When it comes to a joint or bone condition, different people may be at greater risk.

In the case of arthritis, risk factors include age, family history, your sex as women are known to be at greater risk, as well as a previous joint injury, which can develop into arthritis. Being overweight or obese also places extra stress on the joints.

If we turn to bone health, women are more at risk, especially as they get older and oestrogen levels drop post menopause. Other risk factors include inflammatory conditions, hormone-related conditions, or malabsorption problems, family history, long-term use of certain medications, a low BMI, not exercising regularly, alcohol and smoking.

But there is much you can do from a preventative perspective. A balanced diet with plenty of fruit and veg is a good starting point, as is trying to maintain a healthy weight. Choose wholegrain versions of foods such as bread and rice, and ease off sugar and fizzy drinks, as these can leach all-important calcium from the bones.

An anti-inflammatory diet is important, so ease back on refined carbohydrates and processed food, which can be high in inflammatory omega 6. The Mediterranean diet is naturally anti-inflammatory, and includes plenty of fruit and veg, nuts, seeds, wholegrains and oily fish. You need sufficient protein to support joints and bones, while calcium comes from dairy, leafy greens, and fortified foods.

Joint and bone support

When it comes to essential nutrients, there is plenty to keep the joints and bones healthy, and to ease symptoms if they arise.

- **Omega 3** – these essential fatty acids are anti-inflammatory so a great choice to take as a supplement, but you can also obtain omega 3 from oily fish.
- **Vitamin D** – crucial for healthy bones, many people are deficient in this crucial nutrient. Vitamin K2 is also important and is often taken in a supplement with vitamin D.
- **Curcumin** – found in turmeric, it is an excellent anti-inflammatory and pain reliver.
- **Hyaluronic acid** – an essential molecule that supports the synovial fluid in cartilage.
- **Collagen** – present in most tissues, including the joints, natural levels can decline as we get older, leading to stiffness so a supplement is recommended. You also need to ensure plenty of vitamin C as this helps with collagen production.
- **Magnesium** – excellent for helping relax muscles, it can also ease inflammation and is important for bone health.
- **Glucosamine** – a great joint supporter, this amino sugar supports cartilage and eases pain. It is often found in a supplement combined with MSM and chondroitin.

DON'T FORGET TO MOVE

You might not feel like exercising with a joint or bone condition, but continuing to move is really important; exercise can help to improve movement and joint mobility, increase muscle strength, and reduce stiffness.

When it comes to what to choose, stick to low impact activities, such as walking or swimming, and add in some weight training to build strength and muscle. Pilates is also great for strengthening. If you have a diagnosed condition, it is worth speaking to your doctor first to ensure any plan is right for you.

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Terranova Collagen &
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NaturesPlus Collagen
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Minami PlusEPA

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added fragrance. Clinically shown to increase skin hydration by 39% after 2 hours. Certified vegetarian and made with sustainably sourced New Zealand ingredients "from forest to face". Antipodes' sustainability goals are: plastic-free packaging, 100% recyclable packaging, and a traceable and transparent supply chain.

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BlueIron provides the full recommended intake of iron for

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Every bottle of BlueIron contains vitamins combined with Nordic blueberry concentrate for a great flavour, avoiding the unpleasant taste and side-effects often associated with other iron products. It is also suitable for vegetarians, vegans and includes no artificial colours. BlueIron will make a strong addition to health food stores' existing vitamin and supplement category. **For further info on Lanes Health and its brands, please visit: www.laneshealth.com**

*BlueIron contains naturally-sourced Nordic blueberries for flavour plus iron which contributes to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue. Food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a varied and balanced diet and healthy lifestyle. substitute



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and maintain healthy bones. Each biodegradable tea bag contains no flavourings, oils or excipients enabling it to be reused up to 3 times a day; making it the ideal on-the-go drink to look after your joints!

Website: www.nutratea.co.uk

Email: info@nutratea.co.uk



Colladeen® Derma Plus

Expertly formulated to support the health of the skin, Colladeen® Derma Plus combines naturally sourced anthocyanidins (extracted from grapeseeds and bilberries) with plant-derived lutein, zeaxanthin and green tea extract. As well as being powerful antioxidants, research has identified anthocyanidins to be active in

supporting and repairing collagen-rich structures in the body. Lutein and zeaxanthin are two of the most well-known carotenoids, often considered skin 'loving' phytonutrients, whilst there has been much attention on the antioxidant properties of green tea. Our formula is complete by the addition of vitamin C, niacin and biotin, supporting collagen formation and normal skin health.

www.lambertshealthcare.co.uk

Get the NATURAL LOOK

Cleaning up your beauty regime can support your skin, your health, and the planet. Here's what you need to know.

We have never been more aware of the impact of our shopping choices on the planet, whether it's the food we eat, the products we clean our home with, or the products we throw away.

But how much thought do you give to your beauty regime, in terms of the effect our choices can have on the planet, but also on our skin and, consequently, health. The truth is, opting for chemically heavy beauty products can have a detrimental impact in a number of ways.

As a magazine dedicated to all things natural, we would always advocate you opt for a gentler beauty routine, using products free of some of the most concerning chemicals, and choosing the most sustainable options. But where do you start? Here, *Natural Lifestyle* has all the advice you need.

NATURAL CHOICES

When switching to natural products, try to do it gradually and take the time to find the brands that work for you. As a general guide, choose certified natural or organic, with reputable certification labels including NATRUE, Soil Association, and COSMOS.

Stick to the basics; cleansing the skin morning and evening, with one that is free from chemicals, is a starting point, followed by a moisturiser that is targeted at your skin type, or, if it's night time, you might want a rich facial oil.

Plant-based ingredients include Sodium Cocoyl Glutamate and Disodium Cocoyl Glutamate. For ingredients that are complementary to skin, rosehip is regenerating, so ideal for older skin, calendula for skin that is inflamed, or almond for skin that is sensitive. Another ingredient increasingly being used in natural products is bakuchiol, which is known to have similar benefits as retinol, as well as being full of antioxidants.

Keep it clean

It's also important that you maintain some simple hygiene standards around your beauty products.

Try to keep make-up clean, and be sure to adhere to use by dates; products will be marked with the number of months they can be used for once opened and it is important you do this to avoid growth of bacteria.

Also keep any tools and brushes clean; making sure your brushes are clean will keep bacteria at bay and allow your skin to breathe. Don't forget that your skin needs to be cleansed naturally and one of the best ways to do this is by staying hydrated, drinking plenty of water and herbal teas.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

Although there is greater awareness around chemicals in beauty products, it is still a big problem, made harder by the difficulty in understanding product labels and what the ingredients are.

The organisation, Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, advises choosing products with simpler ingredient lists. Avoid products with fragrance or parfum, which can hide any number of ingredients, some of which may be linked to health concerns. Commonly seen chemicals to avoid include:

- Parabens – found in many skin and beauty products, there is concern they can mimic oestrogen in the human body, linking them with reproductive issues.
- Sodium Lauryl Sulphate (SLS) and Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES) – these are found in all kinds of skin and bodycare products and used as foaming agents. They are undesirable for the skin, can be drying, and interrupt its natural microbiome.
- Phthalates – this is a common ingredient in beauty products, and is a known hormone disruptor.
- Synthetic preservatives – this includes phenoxyethanol and polyethylene glycols (PEGs), which are used as thickeners. They are known to not biodegrade easily and can irritate the skin.
- Mineral oils – used as thickeners and fillers, they can pollute soil and waterways, and are not considered to be sustainable.

THE PLANETARY EFFECT

Beauty products can have a huge effect on the environment. For one, chemicals found in many conventional products can end up in our waterways, polluting oceans and having an impact of aquatic life. Many of these chemicals are also not made from sustainable sources.

We should also look to the packaging, which in beauty products involves plastic bottles, caps, pumps, and tubes, not to mention the outer packaging – all of which can end up in landfill. Be sure to choose those that come in recycled and recyclable packaging, and ideally, opt for products in minimal packaging.

TRY THIS

Terranova Serum 768
Organic Skin Oil

Lemon Myrtle Anti Bacterial
Foaming Hand & Face Wash

Good Health Naturally
Revitalising Moisturiser

Weleda Skin Food

Boost your natural defences

With cold season on the way, now is the time to build your immune defences, holistically.

Although we can succumb to bugs at any time of year, we tend to be more susceptible to colds as autumn arrives, for a variety of reasons. For one, as weather turns colder, it acts as the perfect breeding ground for bugs to thrive. But we must remember that the ending of the summer holiday and the start of a new school year means we are around more people, raising our risk of catching colds, not to mention it being a stressful time of year – which, in turn, affects our immune system.

Let's also bear in mind that colder weather can see our diet and lifestyle change, being indoors more, meaning we don't get much vitamin D from the sun, and we may eat less healthy foods in favour of comfort eating. All of this can affect our immune system, and lowered immunity means greater risk of

falling ill with colds or flu.

Alice Bradshaw, Head of Nutrition Education and Information at Terranova, added: "We tend to think of the immune system as our guard against colds and infections, but its functions extend way beyond those conditions. The immune system is located throughout the body and involves various types of cells, tissues, proteins and organs. Various pathogens from pollution, germs, bacteria and viruses would potentially be deadly but for the defence mechanism provided by the immune system."

Martin Watson, Country Manager at Solaray, went on: "When it comes to ensuring good immune health, a year-round approach is to be recommended, following a balanced diet, with protein, complex carbs, and healthy fats in every meal"

EAT FOR IMMUNITY

Giving your diet a once over and checking for any elements that could lower immunity is worth doing, before adding in the best foods to build it back up.

"A diet containing fresh whole foods will be supportive of immune health," Alice explained: "Many phytonutrient-rich foods, especially organic fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds contain nutritional factors that will be supportive to the immune system. Green foods (such as broccoli, kale and spinach, spirulina, barley grass), medicinal mushrooms, berries and garlic are some foods that have shown immune-supportive properties in research studies."

Keeley Berry, New Product Development Manager at BetterYou, added: "Avoiding excess fat, caffeine and alcohol will help keep the immune system at its best. Whilst exercise is great for your overall health and wellbeing, immunity is lowered briefly after periods of intense exercise. So, if you're someone who likes to workout often, you may benefit from adding immunity boosting ingredients in your post-workout drink or snacking on fruits and nuts rich in zinc, vitamin C and selenium."

Lindsay continued: "Protein is essential for immune function, as it is necessary for building and repairing tissues, including immune cells. Choose lean protein sources, such as chicken, fish, beans, and lentils. Healthy fats, such as those in nuts, seeds, and fatty fish, can help reduce inflammation and provide essential nutrients for immune health. It's also important to limit added sugars and processed foods. These can contribute to inflammation and weaken the immune system. Adequate hydration can help flush toxins out of the body and support optimal immune function."

Think of the gut, with Alice suggesting: "Fermented foods like sauerkraut, kefir, live yoghurt, and kimchi will go a long way to supporting the gut microbiome, but don't forget to include prebiotic foods too."

IDENTIFY LOW IMMUNITY

There are different reasons why your immune system can be under par, and some telltale signs you need to take action.

Keri Briggs, Senior Brand Nutrition Specialist at Lamberts, explained: "Chronic stress and elevated levels of stress hormones can affect immunity and inflammation. Sleep is strongly linked to immune function, and sufficient sleep may be particularly linked to the function of the adaptive immune system, T-lymphocytes and immune memory."

Lindsay Powers, Nutritionist at Good Health Naturally, added: "When someone is sedentary, they may have poor circulation, impairing immune function. Environmental factors can weaken the immune system and increase risk of illness. Exposure to pollutants, toxins, and other environmental factors can all impact immunity."

Alice continued: "The mind and attitude play a significant role in the health and functioning of the immune system. Unavoidable life-stressors, such as bereavement or depression, has been shown to diminish important immune function."

Corin Sadler, Nutrition Advisor at Viridian Nutrition, also pointed out: "Alcohol lowers leucocyte mobilisation to areas of infection and can increase our susceptibility to infection, whilst sugar inhibits their ability to destroy pathogens. Interestingly, sugar's effects are dose dependent and can reduce immune system effectiveness by up to a half for up to five hours after

consumption.

"Dysbiosis or altered gut microbiome also influences immune health. The role of beneficial bacterial species is to crowd out pathogenic bacteria, as well as ensuring intestinal epithelial lining integrity, which provides a barrier to infection."

And let's not forget the impact lowered immunity can have on us.

"In the short-term, a weakened immune system can make someone more susceptible to infections and illnesses. This can lead to missed days of work or school, decreased productivity, and overall poor quality of life," Lindsay explained. "In the longer term, a compromised immune system can contribute to development of chronic health issues. Chronic inflammation, which can result from a weakened immune system, has been linked to various health problems, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer."

When it comes to signs of low immunity, Lindsay added: "Some common signs of a weakened immune system can include frequent colds or infections, slow wound healing, chronic fatigue, digestive problems, skin rashes, and allergies. Additionally, individuals with a compromised immune system may be more susceptible to more severe illnesses, particularly those caused by bacteria or viruses, and may take longer to recover from infections or injuries."

PACK IN THE NUTRIENTS

There are many nutrients needed for healthy immune function, and some can be commonly lacking.

Alice advised: "Most people can benefit from a general multivitamin and mineral formulation as inadequate intake of micronutrients can negatively impact immune health. Vitamin A and carotenoids play a role in stimulation of numerous immune processes. Primarily, these nutrients are integral to the maintenance of the integrity of the skin and linings of the respiratory and GI tract. These tissues are intricately involved in regulating immune health."

Keeley added: "Vitamin D is important for regulating many systems within the body as it can interact with integral parts of the immune system as lots of cells in the body express the vitamin D receptor. Vitamin D is hard to get in your diet, and whilst our bodies can make its own vitamin D through sunlight exposure, those of us in the northern hemisphere may not be blessed with sunshine all year round. There is also UV light exposure health risks to consider, so it may be best to consider swapping long days in the sun for a couple of sunny hours, plenty of SPF and a vitamin D supplement instead."

Lindsay also suggested: "Omega 3 fatty acids can help to reduce inflammation and support immune function. Probiotics can help support the immune system and promote gut health. Probiotics are live bacteria and yeasts similar to beneficial microorganisms found in the gut and can help keep the microbiome healthy. They are linked to improved immune function, reduced inflammation, and protection against respiratory infections."

Corin continued: "Whilst live bacteria are often the focus of support, prebiotics are key too. Acacia gum has been shown to increase ability to defend against infection against the common cold virus, reducing incidence of infection by 23 per cent. Supplementing

with *L. rhamnosus* GG helps support and strengthen the immune system. It influences the immune response by specifically stimulating antibody production and enhancing phagocytic activity."

Keri suggested: "Vitamin C is essential for the conversion of proline and lysine to make collagen, which is a component of one of the main barriers in the immune system; the skin. Studies have also shown vitamin C can enhance movement of white blood cells and their related communication with other immune cells, improve phagocytosis, increase production of B and T lymphocytes, and improves immunoglobulin levels."

Let's also remember some key minerals.

Lindsay suggested: "Zinc is an important nutrient that plays a role in maintaining immune function and combating infections. Iron is necessary to produce red blood cells that support immune function. Selenium is also important, as it helps to neutralise harmful compounds and protect against oxidative stress."

If you do succumb to illness, you have plenty of holistic options.

"Vitamin D3 – preferably with K2 in the formula – is great to take year-round, not just in winter," Martin suggested. "Berberine, the amino acid, L-Lysine, combined with antioxidant olive leaf extract can give extra support to normal immune function when you need it."

Keri went on: "Beta glucans are a group of naturally occurring compounds, most often found in fungi and medicinal mushrooms, but often commercially derived from yeasts such as *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. It is the form β -1,3/1,6 glucans which have been most widely studied and the effects on the immune system are multiple. Several studies have found it reduces the incidence and duration of infection, whilst also making symptoms less severe."

Keeley also suggested: "It's also important to keep hydrated and your electrolytes such as magnesium in fine balance, particularly if you're experiencing vomiting too."

Try this

- ★ Lamberts Probioguard
- ★ Solaray Immufocus Response
- ★ Floradix Immune Support
- ★ Manuka Health Manuka Honey Drops
- ★ Sun Chlorella Tablets

JUST ADD HERBS

The plant world has given us some powerful immune builders.

Keri commented: "Echinacea has been shown in repeated trials to reduce the duration and severity of the common cold. It also has positive effects on wound healing and inflammation. Elderberry is traditionally used for supporting the immune system, which seems to be mainly linked to its content of anthocyanidins, a group of plant polyphenols found in dark purple and red fruits."

Alice added: "Various botanical supplements and superfoods are also immune supportive. These include medicinal mushrooms, garlic, elderberry, astragalus and olive leaf."

And Corin recommended: "Elecampane is a valuable botanical during the colder months. It has a real affinity for the lungs, especially if there is a lot of mucous. It has a warming, expectorant quality and is very restorative to lung tissue. Another often overlooked herb is ashwagandha which is traditionally used for bronchitis and asthma. As an adaptogen it can be supportive to those who have high stress, and therefore immune suppression.

"Cleavers have shown in research to possess immunomodulatory properties, stemming from its polysaccharides, flavonoids, phenolic acids, and pectin. It increases proliferation of lymphocytes, but also works to help relieve lymphatic congestion."

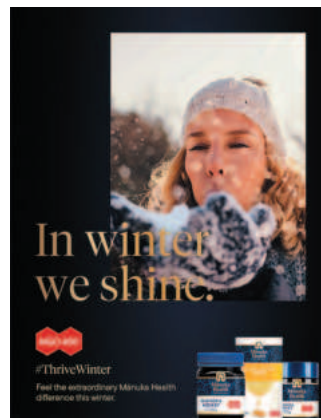
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one formulation, but also provides enzymes that are stable within a pH range 2 to 8 – greatly enhancing their digestive efficiency. The Magnifood Complex includes both digestive/carminative botanicals and bifidogenic foods to support the activity and function of the enzymes and beneficial bacteria. Fructo-oligosaccharides have also been included for their microflora-enhancing properties.

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Ask the experts



GUT HEALTH IN EARLY YEARS

by Martina Della Vedova

Why is gut health so important for children and what signs can be overlooked?

Gut health is increasingly proven to be the foundation of our whole body health: brain, digestion, immune, hormonal health, to name just a few. Our gut microbiome complements our ability to survive. Without it, we wouldn't exist, and we wouldn't be able to biochemically adapt and evolve.

Children, when born, get their first imprinting from mum's microbiome (if born naturally). Mum's breastmilk will continue to protect, enrich, and feed that newly transferred biome. Latest research shows the importance of breastfeeding during weaning to assist the child's digestion and immunity when getting in touch for the first time with real foods and lowering the incidence of reactions.

Being exposed to different materials starts giving them a personal and unique microbiome. Science says it takes about 1,000 days (from conception to after the second year of age) to set the basis for a human gut, so it is extremely important we listen to children's symptoms and experiences of foods and materials they get in

touch with. What we know so far is that the most diverse gut microbiome, the more able to adapt and to defend itself an individual can be.

Symptoms that can be overlooked or misread are discomfort, skin rashes, vomiting, poor sleep, abnormal faeces, poor appetite, and cramps. If symptoms persist, seek the help of a health practitioner. For very young children, the NHS suggests if children cry more than three hours a day, three days a week for at least one week, they might be experiencing colic.

What are the biggest contributors to poor gut health in the young, and what diet and lifestyle could you recommend?

Poor gut health may derive from a poor diet, sedentary lifestyle, stress, inflammatory conditions, genetics and birth experience and immediate care after birth. All these are linked to poor gut diversity.

Food and beverages are the only source of food for our microbiome: they digest and eat what we eat, helping us to breakdown and absorb nutrients. If we don't feed our bacteria correctly, we will push our microbiome towards an unhealthy population, which

will not be able to support us and instead can cause symptoms or drive an already present condition.

Food and beverages should only contain natural foods (nothing artificial such as sweeteners, preservatives or stabilisers) and this is why it is suggested that fresh foods are the best choice, even better when organic, local and sourced by producers we know and trust. Foods rich in fibre and polyphenols are the ones that support our microbiome, such as vegetables, fruit and spices. Also, outdoor activities support a healthy gut as they encourage movement and fresh air. Stress relief is also a top priority.

Would you recommend supplements for children's gut health?

There are options for children of all ages. Probiotics that look at different symptoms and conditions and age tailored are available on the market, as well as stress support supplements for children.

Look for probiotics with prebiotics, digestive enzymes, and green foods concentrates. Choose a scientifically proven and diverse probiotic complex. Ask your local health food store for assistance and always speak with your health professional.

Q How can bromelain be beneficial to health, and do you advise a supplement?

Catherine Gorman advised: Bromelain has a long history of use for its anti-inflammatory and digestive benefits. It's a proteolytic enzyme found mainly in the stems of pineapples. It breaks down protein molecules into smaller fragments of amino acids, which the body can absorb more easily.

If bromelain is taken with food, it helps support digestion. But if taken on an empty stomach, it can work systemically throughout the whole body. Its anti-inflammatory activity is well documented. It's been shown to inhibit the production of certain enzymes and cytokines, which contribute to inflammation. Thus, helping alleviate symptoms of pain, swelling, and redness associated with inflammatory conditions such as arthritis, asthma and allergies. One study found bromelain effectively reduced joint pain in individuals with osteoarthritis. It's also been shown to alleviate nasal swelling and congestion in people with sinusitis. Other research suggests it may be beneficial at reducing symptoms of ulcerative colitis.

Bromelain can support cardiovascular health by reducing risk of blood clots and improving circulation. This means it could be a valuable tool for those with cardiovascular disease or other conditions impacting blood flow.

As if that wasn't enough, it may also help support immune health. It appears to modulate immune cells, including T cells, B cells, and natural killer cells, which helps stimulate the innate and adaptive immune response.

If you are looking for a natural way to optimise your health, consider including plenty of pineapple in the diet, or supplementing.

About the experts



ALICE BRADSHAW is a qualified Nutritional Therapist with a passion for health writing. She has worked in the natural health industry for 25 years and is Head of Nutrition Education and Information at Terranova.



MEGHNA PATEL is the founder of Mahi Naturals distribution company, which sources and imports award-winning beauty and personal care brands into the UK, including Hope's Relief skincare for dry skin and eczema.



MARTINA DELLA VEDOVA obtained a Master in Functional Genomics in Italy and trained as a Nutritional Therapist in London. She has worked for NaturesPlus as a Nutritional Advisor since 2016 and sees clients privately.



CATHERINE GORMAN is a Nutritional Therapist and Health Coach at Good Health Naturally, a leading worldwide producer of nutritional supplements.

Natural health helpers

Support your health with these holistic products, available in your local health store.

Ditch the plastic, drink the juice

Turmeric shots are all the rage, but individual plastic bottles are very wasteful, and they often contain less than 20 per cent juice.

The Ginger People's Fijian Turmeric Juice is over 99 per cent juice and is packed in glass bottles with up to 20 shots per day! They are new so ask your store to order if you don't see them on shelf.



Protect from within

Now summer's finally here, it's time to protect your skin from within.

Kollagen Plus is the only supplement packed with collagen, silica and hyaluronic acid to keep your skin drenched with moisture to keep the wrinkles at bay. Better still, there's no nasties such as preservatives, artificial sweeteners or colours and it was voted Best Beauty Supplement by *Natural Lifestyle*.



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Whether it's a summer cold, hay fever or blocked sinuses, there's simply nothing like the feeling of relief which comes with the Otosan Nasal Wash system.

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What a relief

Insect repellents can help but there's always a few insects that manage to make a meal of you on summer evenings!

Biteaway is a patented device which uses a short burst of heat to stop the itching, pain and swelling in seconds. It's suitable for pregnant women and children over five under supervision and can be used over and over again with a replaceable battery.



Products featured are available from your local independent health store

Ask the experts



NOURISH THE SKIN YOU'RE IN...

by Meghna Patel

How common are skin conditions in children, and why?

Skin conditions in children are quite common due to the skin being so delicate. Babies that are susceptible to conditions like eczema can also react to the food that the mum is eating when they are breast feeding and even some formula milks.

What can exacerbate dry skin in babies and children?

Many people will also be using chemical-based shower gels and bubble baths that can affect our long-term skin health. Most contain chemicals such as sodium lauryl sulfate that strip the skin of its natural oils and disrupt the water content of cells. In addition, an increase in central heating, double glazing and carpeting has produced warmer, more comfortable homes – both for humans and for dust mites which can cause allergies and exacerbation of skin conditions if susceptible.

Avoid detergents and surfactants. This can range from household cleaning agents to the things we use to clean our own bodies. Typical culprits include sodium laureth sulfate or sodium lauryl ether sulfate (SLES). These are found in many body washes and shampoos as a cheap foaming agent and can strip the skin of natural oils. Don't

over-wash and choose natural, unperfumed products.

What standards should someone look for when buying skincare products for dry skin?

Pick products that have high levels of natural actives for maximum therapeutic benefit. On the label, ingredients are listed in order of descending percentage content so if natural ingredients are right at the bottom and not in meaningful quantities, the product will not have many beneficial natural skin healing properties.

The quality and ingredients of skincare products are very important. This is why I recommend a high content of natural active ingredients for therapeutic benefit. Ideally, select products with calendula, which reduces inflammation and soothes skin, active manuka honey, which has anti-bacterial, soothing and healing properties, and aloe vera, which stimulates cell regeneration, has anti-bacterial, wound healing properties and is a potent emollient.

Plants are well known for their significant contribution to good health. We recognise their fibre and vitamin content, but they also contain a group of compounds known as polyphenols that boast an extraordinary wide range of health benefits.

Q What are polyphenols and how can they benefit my health?

Alice Bradshaw explained: Interest in polyphenols is due to research which demonstrates their potency in multiple areas of health and wellness, including protecting against harmful compounds found in the environment and helping to balance the body's inflammatory responses.

Many of the foods that are sometimes considered 'superfoods', such as dark chocolate, wine and nuts, are, in fact, incredibly rich sources

of these polyphenols.

Over 8,000 types of polyphenols have been identified and these can be divided into four main groups:

- **Flavonoids:** Examples include quercetin, kaempferol, catechins, and anthocyanins and are primarily found in foods like apples, onions, dark chocolate, and red cabbage.
- **Phenolic acids:** This group of polyphenols include stilbenes and lignans, which are mostly found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and seeds. Tea and coffee are also good sources.
- **Polyphenolic amides:** This category includes capsaicinoids in chili peppers and

avenanthramides in oat (which are thought to contribute to the well-known heart health benefits that oats offer).

- **Other polyphenols:** This group includes perhaps the most well-known polyphenol, resveratrol, found in red wine. Also in this category are ellagic acid (found in berries), curcumin (in turmeric), and lignans (in flax and sesame seeds).

A diet which embraces a broad range of plant foods is a great way of getting the benefits of these phytonutrients. Polyphenols are also found in some botanical and nutritional supplements and are popular with those seeking to optimise their health.

SUPERCARGE YOUR HEALTH

CHLORELLA AND IMMUNITY

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WELLNESS IN THE *young*

The summer holidays are nearing an end, which means the start of a new school year, and all the health effects this can bring. Here's how you can ensure your youngsters are fuelled the right way.

Being a youngster in our modern world is challenging, whether it's the pressures from school, the ever-presence of social media, not to mention the ease with which poor quality food can be accessed. All of these can end up leaving children stressed, and lacking in key nutrients, which has a huge knock-on effect to so many aspects of their life.

And we must also remember that children have a range of nutrient needs at different stages of their development and can often miss out on these through eating the wrong foods and not taking supplements. So, what do you need to know about ensuring your young ones have the right balance?

Katy Grieshaber, Nutrition Advisor at Viridian, commented: "The *Global Children's Health Report 2023* highlighted contributing factors to the worldwide decline in children's health. Two major threats have been identified as climate change and pollution fears, as they could lead to respiratory

problems and other health issues. An influx of harmful marketing adverts promoting unhealthy lifestyles and diets is thought to play a significant role in the decline in children's health, as children are exposed to unhealthy food options and an inactive lifestyle. It has been reported that one in five (19.9 per cent) of children aged seven-16 lived in households facing deprivation due to a reduction in household income."

Isabelle Nunn, Head Nutritionist at Kinetic, highlighted issues around mental health in the young: "The pandemic has had an impact on youngsters, particularly on their mental health. A survey by the charity, Young Minds, suggest that eight out of 10 said the pandemic has made their mental health worse. According to the statistics, on average, one in three children in every classroom have a diagnosable mental health illness. Half of all adult mental health conditions are present at the age of 14. And alarmingly, 200 children in the UK die of suicide every year (Maudsley Charity)."

POOR QUALITY DIETS

Expanding waistlines has been in the spotlight as data shows obesity in the young is becoming a real and concerning problem.

Isabelle commented: "Childhood obesity is one of the biggest public health issues facing the UK. Obesity increases the risk of developing a range of health conditions in childhood and later life, including heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes and some cancers. Obese children are much more likely to be obese adults, which may lead to significant health risks. Twenty three per cent of those aged four-five were overweight in England (in 2020) and while trends for those have been stable, those of 10-11 have been increasing."

Katy added: "It has been speculated that the rise in obesity rates is associated with expensive living costs and the overall cost of food, causing families to opt for cheap, high-sugar, and salt meals to ensure their children eat. It has been reported that 10.1 per cent of reception-age children were obese in 2021/22, with a further 12.1 per cent being overweight. At ages 10-11, 23.4 per cent were obese and 14.3 per cent overweight."

The healthy eating approach

So, how can you ensure your children are enjoying a healthy and balanced diet, that also means they aren't overconsuming?

"Offering healthy and balanced options from all five food groups provides essential nutrients needed to stay healthy. Some immune-boosting options include fruits and vegetables loaded with essential vitamins A, C and D, yogurt containing essential probiotics that promote good digestive health, and whole grains and healthy, lean proteins that help fuel and provide energy for active children," Katy suggested.

"School-aged children need lots of energy and nutrients because they're still growing. A healthy, balanced diet for children aged seven-10 should include at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day, meals based on starchy foods, such as potatoes, bread, pasta and rice (wholegrain varieties when possible), some milk and dairy products or alternatives, some foods that are good sources of protein, such as meat, fish, eggs, beans and lentils."

Isabelle added: "Aim to keep up with a routine with regards to meals, so children do not graze on the wrong snacks, contributing to unstable blood glucose levels, cravings, gut dysbiosis and a sluggish digestion. Keep variety and favour natural sugars instead of refined present in processed food. Breakfast is key to starting the day right, providing a good amount of fibre, protein and healthy fats. Children are often given, out of convenience, shop bought 'child friendly' cereals or a very processed piece of bread with spread and jam. Without knowing, a parent is giving the child processed foods with very little nutrition, fibre and too much sugar to give them the energy, nutrients to focus and think and learn and develop as they should."

Try this

- ★ NaturesPlus Animal Parade
- ★ Nutrivitality Pre-School Multivitamin
- ★ Terranova Green Child Friendly Microflora
- ★ Natures Aid Super Stars Bone Support



VITAL NUTRIENTS

When it comes to nutrients, there are essential vitamins all children need.

Isabelle explained: "Vitamin D is an important fat-soluble vitamin that regulates calcium and phosphate homeostasis and is vital for musculoskeletal health. Vitamin D can support a healthy mood, immune system and heart. Since vitamin D comes mainly from sunlight (80-90 per cent and 10-20 per cent dietary sources, deficiency is very common. It is important to note that a vitamin D deficiency will impact absorption of nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, iron, phosphate or zinc.

"From birth to the age of one, it is recommended to give children 8.5-10mcg daily if they are breastfed or given under 500ml of infant formula a day. Infants given over 500ml of formula daily, vitamin D should be omitted as formula milk is fortified with it. Children over the age of one should take 10mcg daily, particularly during autumn and winter. This is because it is difficult to obtain vitamin D from food alone, and sun exposure isn't enough in the UK to provide us with the recommended vitamin D."

Katy added: "The Government recommends children aged six months-five years are given supplements containing vitamins A, C and D daily. Babies who consume more than 500ml of infant formula daily should not be given supplements as formulas are fortified with vitamins A, C and D and other nutrients."

There are also minerals and other nutrients children have a heightened need for.

Isabelle advised: "Children may lack fibre, leading to constipation and irritability. Fibre supports a healthy gut microbiome, which is intrinsic to so many health attributes, from good sleep, mental focus, allergies, and good immune system and also the breaking down and absorption of nutrients, which our gut is responsible for.

"Iron deficiency is common among children. It often begins when infants transition into toddlerhood and start becoming pickier with food. Iron is required for many bodily functions; it is an essential component of haemoglobin, the protein responsible for carrying oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body. Symptoms of deficiency include tiredness, looking pale, shortness of breath."

FOCUS ON SLEEP

Sleep is imperative for us all, but particularly for children as they develop.

Isabelle advised: "So many children sleep poorly due to bad habits, or being overstimulated with screens, poor nutrition (too much sugar and stimulants in the diet) or eating too late, for instance. So, helping them reset the habit over the summer can make a huge difference ahead of the new school year."

Katy added: "Sleep needs vary by age, but research shows lack of sleep can affect the immune system and its ability to fight infection. Help your child get the sleep they need by enforcing an age-appropriate bedtime. You should provide them an environment designed for sleep. It should be cool, dark, quiet and free of screens. Research has shown that children who do not achieve the recommended amount of sleep are more likely to be overweight. The less children sleep, the greater the risk of them becoming obese. Lack of sleep can also affect their mood, behaviour, cognitive awareness and health."

Opt for homeopathy

Homeopathic remedies are a great holistic choice to support a child's health, and there are a range of options, depending on what your youngster needs.

Roz Crompton, Homeopath at Helios Homeopathy, explained: "Homeopathy is gentle, safe and effective in children of all ages. It is holistic in that it treats the whole person and works on both emotional and physical complaints. It works well alongside conventional medicine too."

Looking at remedies for emotional complaints, Roz continued:

- Aconite/Arg-nit/Arsenicum 30c – this combination has a long history of traditional use to support symptoms associated with mild stress and anxiety, for example anticipatory anxiety before a forthcoming event, such as an exam or giving a talk or even just going to an unfamiliar place.
- AAA – a combination of Ambra grisia, Arg nit and Anacardium, which help support anticipatory anxiety, especially around exam time, along with brain fog and exhaustion from overstudying.
- Pulsatilla – suited to sweet, shy and often timid children who cling to their parents at the school gates and become very upset. It is useful for children

who need reassurance and cry especially at bedtime as they do not like being on their own.

"For physical complaints:

- Arnica 30c – the number one remedy for injuries to soft tissue such as bruises and sprains and broken bones. It is an excellent remedy both for physical trauma but also for emotional shock that might arise from an injury.
- Aconite 30c – number one for the first stage of any inflammatory illness that comes on suddenly after exposure to cold, for example, a cold, sore throat, cough earache etc.
- ABC – this combination of Aconite, Belladonna and Chamomilla 30c is excellent to relieve the pain and inflammation of childhood teething, fevers, earaches and sore throats.
- Arsenicum 30c – the number one remedy for tummy upsets with diarrhoea and often vomiting.
- Bryonia 30c – for dry and painful coughs.
- Gelsemium 30c – for heavy colds and typical flu with shivering, dull heavy headache and aching bones."

Natural Lifestyle Top Picks



Children's Vitamin D3 and K2 Sublingual Spray™

As the little ones return to school, there is no better time to think about giving their immune systems some extra support. Vitamin D3 is critical for maintaining the immune system, and the government recommends daily supplementation to achieve optimal levels. The combination of D3 and K2 is also essential in the healthy development of children's bones and teeth. Each spray delivers D3 200iu, allowing flexible dosing and a convenient and practical solution for the whole family's daily intake, from infants to adults. Spray directly under the tongue or onto food. 30ml (approx 220 sprays per bottle). Vegan.

www.wholesalehealthltd.co.uk

Hay Fever? Dust or Pet Allergy?



HayMax is the organic drug-free allergen barrier balm, proven in independent university studies to trap over 1/3 of pollen grains

before they enter the body. It's 100% cruelty free and has never been tested on animals. It carries the Vegetarian Society Approved vegetarian trademark and is certified organic by the Soil Association. HayMax has the Allergy UK Allergy Friendly Product award (non-fragranced versions). HayMax has now switched to using sugar cane to make their pots, using up CO2 instead of producing it. As it is drug-free HayMax is suitable for children as well as pregnant and breast-feeding women. Visit www.haymax.biz.

Website: www.haymax.biz

Email: info@haymax.biz



Support your child's sleep, focus, immunity and more!

MAG365 Kids contains calming MAG365 Ionic Magnesium Citrate plus immune-boosting nutrients like zinc and vitamins C, D3 & K2 in a bioavailable powder supplement. MAG365 Kids is formulated by mothers

who ensure their supplements are pure and free of fillers and common allergens – just 100% goodness for your littles.

www.itlhealth.co.uk

Green Child Microflora

The microflora strains used in Terranova Green Child Friendly Microflora are developed through Rosell and CHR Hansen technology - utilising the world's most heavily researched strains of bacteria. These have a high level of acid-resistance, are stable in ambient temperatures and have demonstrated the ability in supporting child immune function and digestion. The formula is also rich in bifidogenic/ microbiota-enhancing factors provided by a synergistic Magnifood Complex of wholefood ingredients including beetroot, spinach, kale and soluble rice bran a source of beneficial fibre.

www.terranovahealth.com

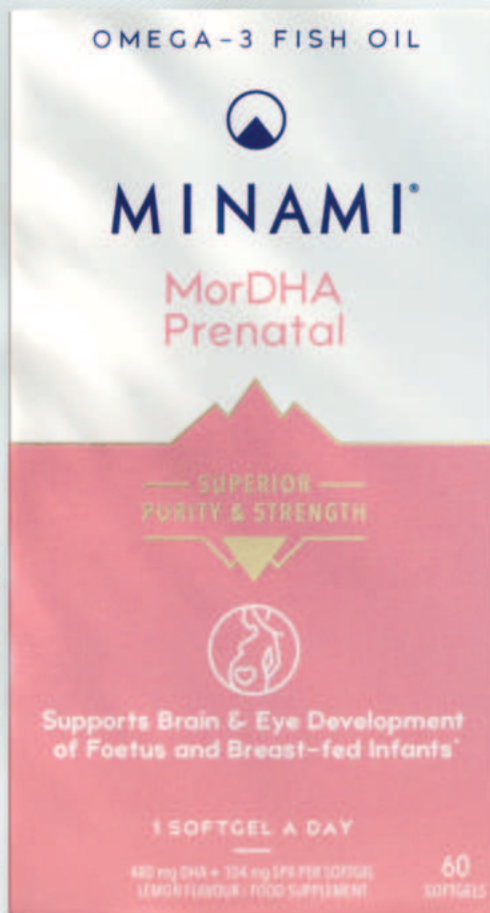




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DHA is proven to help with normal eye and brain development of the fetus and breastfed infants if taken by (expecting) mothers².



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Omega-3 helps expecting mothers to maintain a healthy heart³.



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¹DHA contributes to maintaining normal vision and brain function with a daily intake of 250 mg DHA. ²Additional intake of at least 200 mg DHA by the mother. In addition to the recommended daily amount of 250 mg EPA+DHA contributes to the normal development of the eyes and brain in the breast-fed foetus or infant. ³EPA and DHA contribute to a normal heart function with a daily intake of at least 250 mg EPA+DHA.

Nurturing a healthy

VAGINAL MICROBIOME

Learn how you can maintain the health of this delicate microbiome to support better health.

Did you know that the vagina is inhabited by millions of beneficial bacteria which protect from infections such as thrush or bacterial vaginosis? Up to 75 per cent of women experience vulvovaginal infections during the course of their life and imbalances in vaginal microorganisms (dysbiosis) can also contribute to infertility, hormonal problems, pregnancy complications, and urinary tract infections.

So, how do you nurture a healthy vaginal microbiome?

WHAT DISRUPTS YOUR VAGINAL MICROBIOME?

Factors involved here includes:

- Changes in oestrogen levels – throughout the menstrual cycle, menopause and pregnancy.
- Menstruation (blood has an alkaline pH).
- High sugar diet, smoking, and alcohol consumption.
- Gut microbiome imbalances.
- Exposure to synthetic chemicals, toiletries, and fragrances that upset vaginal pH and bacteria.
- Sexual activity and changes in the vaginal pH as a result of exposure to semen.
- Chronic stress.
- Medications like Oral Contraceptive Pill (OCP), Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), steroids, and antibiotics.

Understanding bacteria

A healthy vaginal microbiome is composed of over 200 species, mainly from the *Lactobacillus* family. They produce lactic acid, which helps to maintain the vaginal pH within the required 3.5-4.5, as well as several antimicrobial molecules, which prevent opportunistic bacteria from proliferating uncontrollably.

Imbalances in beneficial bacteria can result in infection, both bacterial and fungal, and inflammation. Millions of women worldwide are affected by issues with vaginal health of some form in their lifetime. So, what symptoms do you need to look out for and what can you do to restore balance?

Common symptoms of vaginal dysbiosis include abnormal vaginal discharge (for example, grey/thick white), a strong, fishy odour, itching, pain during sexual intercourse, redness, burning and swelling.

Steps to a healthy microbiome

First of all, if you have any of the above symptoms, or suspect you have an infection, consult your doctor to get assessed and tested. Nutritional therapists, or other holistic practitioners, may also offer comprehensive testing and natural solutions, so it is worth getting in touch for support alongside medical advice. Still, there are many things we can do every day that can help:

- Use hypoallergenic, pH neutral natural hygiene products.
- Carefully select non-irritating condoms and lubricants.
- Change sanitary products frequently and if using a menstrual cup, be sure to sterilise on a regular basis.
- Wipe front to back to avoid translocation of gram-negative bacteria from anus to vagina.
- Wear natural fibre underwear.
- Used good quality oral and topical probiotics with clinically-researched strains that are selected for supporting vaginal microbiome.

Reader offer

Natural Lifestyle has teamed up with BioCare to offer readers the chance of winning one of five packs of IntraFresh Plus. Intrafresh Plus is a uniquely formulated vaginal tablet providing

clinically-researched strains of live bacteria with FOS, arabinogalactans, and tara gum for vaginal microbiome support, freshness, and comfort. It contains 800m *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *Lactobacillus fermentum* live bacteria, which are naturally found in a healthy vaginal microbiome. The addition of prebiotics and other unique ingredients helps to reduce the vaginal pH and create a favourable environment for the right microorganisms to flourish. See opposite page to enter.



NATURAL LIFESTYLE Giveaways

Natural Lifestyle is about giving back to our readers, and each month, this page will showcase a selection of giveaways.



GOOD HEALTH NATURALLY REVITALISING MOISTURISER

Carefully crafted from skin-loving natural ingredients, Good Health Naturally's new Revitalising Moisturiser contains coenzyme Q10, alongside the powerful plant-based retinol alternative, bakuchiol oil, for maximum rejuvenation benefits. As well as aloe, sweet almond oil, oat oil and avocado oil, it includes the micronutrient biotin to support optimum skin health in a vegan-friendly formula. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of five.

PURE ENCAPSULATIONS ASHWAGANDHA

Pure Encapsulations Ashwagandha provides 500mg of high potency ashwagandha extract in each vegetarian capsule and is standardised to provide a guaranteed level of active phytonutrients known as withanolides. Ashwagandha has a long history of use and is one of the most prized botanicals in traditional Ayurvedic medicine. Modern research interest has also resulted in several human clinical trials documenting its use – and *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of 10.



SKINGLO ROSE GOLD MARINE COLLAGEN DRINK

Transform your skincare routine with SKINGLO's Rose Gold Marine Collagen Drink and unlock the secret to a beautiful complexion. Clinically proven to help restore your skin from within, this easy-to-use sachet contains all the collagen you need to reduce wrinkles, help skin feel moisturised and improve elasticity. In as little as four weeks, SKINGLO Rose Gold can help you to unlock the formula for exceptional skin – and *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of two.



LAMBERTS DIGESTIVE HEALTH BUNDLE

Established in 1982, Lamberts is one of the UK's leading suppliers of specialist dietary supplements to practitioners using nutrition and herbs in healthcare. Lamberts offers an extensive range of more than 200 products, enabling you to create a supplement regime that is perfectly tailored to you and your requirements. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of three Lamberts Digestive Health Bundles, worth over £70. This bundle is one not to be missed and includes Fenugreek 8,000mg, Biome Balance 25, N-Acetyl Cysteine (NAC) 600mg, Chromium Complex and Cherry Concentrate.

ENTER HERE Please indicate below which giveaway you are applying for, complete form and post back to us at 'Reader Offers', *Natural Lifestyle* magazine, The Old Dairy, Hudsons Farm, Fieldgate Lane, Ugley Green, Bishops Stortford CM22 6HJ. Closing Date: October 1, 2023. Or you can enter online – visit www.mynaturallifestyle.com

Please tick: ☐ Good Health Naturally ☐ SKINGLO ☐ Pure Encapsulations ☐ Lamberts ☐ BioCare

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Eating for longevity

Nutritionist and bestselling author, Gabriela Peacock, offers tasty dishes to help you to a longer and healthier life in her new book, *2 Weeks to a Younger You*.

Mini chocolate, matcha and nut butter cups Makes 24

Matcha is rich in powerfully antioxidant catechins, and together with bitter dark chocolate, create a sirtuin-stimulating superbomb dessert. These tiny, bite-sized cups look gorgeous on the plate and will keep in the refrigerator for around five days – not that you'll have any left because they're impossible to resist.

Ingredients:

- 280g (10oz) plain dark chocolate (minimum 70 per cent cocoa), or a dairy-free version, broken into bits
- 2tsp coconut oil
- 120g (4¼ oz) almond or macadamia nut butter
- ½-1tsp organic matcha powder, plus extra for sprinkling
- 2tbsp coconut or nut milk (almond, cashew)
- 1tsp agave syrup, to taste
- Sea salt

Method:

- Place 24 mini cupcake cases on a tray.
- Put a pan over a medium heat with a little water in the bottom and bring it to a simmer. Place a glass bowl over the pan, ensuring the water doesn't touch the bottom of it. Add the chocolate and coconut oil and let them melt, giving them a gentle stir every now and then. When fully melted, remove from the heat.
- Using a teaspoon, fill the bottom third of each mini cupcake case with some of the melted chocolate mixture (you'll use the rest later). Then put them in the freezer for 10 minutes.
- Place the nut butter, matcha, milk and a squeeze of agave syrup in a blender and blitz until smooth. Taste and add more agave syrup if you feel it needs it.
- Remove the mini cases from the freezer and add two teaspoons of the matcha mixture to each one, pressing them down as you go so the tops are smooth. Freeze again for a further five minutes. If the remaining chocolate has started to harden, just gently melt it again using the same method as above. Take the cupcake cases out of the freezer and use a teaspoon to fill them up to the top with the remaining chocolate. Freeze again for 20 minutes. Serve straight from the freezer (or store in the refrigerator) with a sprinkling of matcha and salt on each one.





Healthy Florentine pizza Serves 2

Look, we all love pizza – but sadly, it isn't allowed for anyone who is fasting. Sad face. But wait! This alternative has an egg on it! And artichokes (you have to get the ones in brine though, not oil, otherwise you might as well just order a takeaway pizza). Seriously, though, the base gets crispy around the edges, the tomato purée is rich in lycopene and there's even prosciutto – the closest you're going to get to pepperoni at this point. You're welcome!

Ingredients:

- 2 wholemeal tortillas
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 2 garlic cloves, grated
- ¼ red onion, thinly sliced
- 30g (1oz) jarred artichoke hearts in brine, chopped
- 30g (1oz) chestnut mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 2 slices of prosciutto, torn
- 2 organic or free-range eggs
- 65g (2¼oz) rocket
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F), Gas Mark 6 and line a large baking tray with foil.
- Wrap the tortillas loosely in foil and warm them through in the oven for five minutes. You can also heat them in a large, dry frying pan over a medium heat, flipping them after a minute or so, if you prefer. Then place them on the foil-lined tray.
- Mix the tomato purée and garlic together in a small bowl and then spread it over the tortillas, like a pizza base. Scatter over the onion, bits of artichoke heart, mushrooms and prosciutto, before breaking an egg into the centre of each tortilla.
- Season both and then carefully put them into the oven. Cook until the whites are set and the yolks are still runny – around 10 minutes. The prosciutto should have crisped up a bit at the edges, too. Nice.
- Remove from the oven and garnish with the rocket.

Vegan overnight oats

Serves 2

This is where breakfast gets creative. The oat mixture acts as the base, with an additional protein powder boost to keep blood sugar levels nice and steady. The good thing about this recipe is that you can decide what to add to the oats depending on where your mood takes you. I've included some of my favourite suggestions to get the ball rolling. For breakfast dodgers, this could also be an afternoon snack. I will fight anyone who says it can't.

Ingredients:

Base recipe:

- 45g (1½ oz) rolled oats (gluten free, if preferred)
- 120g (4¼ oz) coconut or nut yogurt (for example, almond)
- 3tbsp vegan protein powder
- 120ml (4fl oz) oat, coconut or nut milk (for example, almond)
- 1tbsp agave syrup

Blueberry, flaxseed and cashew nut overnight oats:

- 1 quantity base recipe
- ½ tbsp flaxseeds
- 20g (¾ oz) cashew nuts, chopped
- 100g (3½ oz) blueberries
- 1tbsp almond butter

Chocolate almond overnight oats:

- 1 quantity base recipe
- 1tbsp raw cacao powder
- 1tbsp chopped almonds
- 1tbsp dairy-free vegan friendly organic chocolate and hazelnut spread

Method:

- Prepare the base oat mixture by adding all the ingredients to a container with a lid and mix well.
- For blueberry, flaxseed and cashew nut overnight oats, prepare the base oat mixture as above. Stir in the flaxseeds and cashew nuts (keep a few over for serving), cover and leave in the refrigerator overnight. Serve the next day with the reserved chopped cashew nuts, the blueberries and almond butter on top.
- For chocolate almond overnight oats, prepare the base oat mixture as above. Stir in the cacao powder and chopped almonds (reserve a few for serving), cover and leave in the refrigerator overnight. Serve the next day with the reserved almonds and a dollop of vegan chocolate and hazelnut spread.

Taken from *2 Weeks to a Younger You* by Gabriela Peacock, published by Kyle Books, priced £25. Food photography: Kate Whitaker (lifestyle photography: Kate Martin).



natural relief

- ✦ Urinary tract infections can be very painful especially when visiting the toilet, and are becoming increasingly resistant to traditional treatments such as antibiotics.
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