

Natural Lifestyle

LOVE LIFE, LIVE WELL — NATURALLY

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March/April 2023



Best for digestion

Our holistic
guide to better
gut health

Spring skin transition

How to wake up
dull and winter-
damaged skin

BLOOD SUGAR
BALANCE

WHAT HAPPENS
WHEN YOUR
BLOOD SUGAR IS
OUT OF CONTROL

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Welcome

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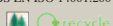
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There is a definite feel of springtime in the air and with it brings much hope for the year ahead. Indeed, January may be the first month of a year but when it's cold and dreary outside, it's hard to feel excited at the freshness of a new year.

Spring is a time when the days get longer, the sun shines a little bit more and we begin to shed the layers from winter. But how much consideration do you give to your skin and to the changing seasons? Months spent wrapped up, harsh winds, lack of

sunshine and moving in and out of central heating means our skin can arrive in the spring looking and feeling less than healthy. And so, in this issue of *Natural Lifestyle*, we turn the focus on the skin – both in relation to our external and internal health – and offer you all you need to know to get your skin looking healthy and feeling nourished. Turn to page 20 for all the advice.

Also playing a critical role in our overall health is the gut. In fact, it should not be underestimated quite how much of a role the gut plays in so many areas of our health, including our skin, but also our immune health and our mood. We have gathered a panel of gut health experts who bring you up to date with all the nutritional guidance you need to keep your gut – and your overall health – functioning.

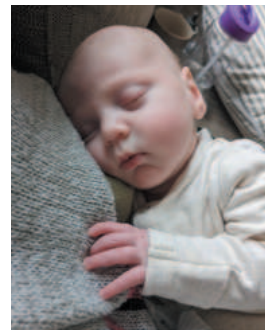
And now it's over to you, our readers: we love hearing from you about how natural health has supported your wellbeing, and about the role your health store plays in this. Maybe you have picked up a helpful health tip or have a positive story to tell; whatever your experience, I'd love to hear from you, and we will run the best comments in the next issue. Simply email me at rachel.symonds@targetpublishing.com

*Rachel Symonds,
Editor*

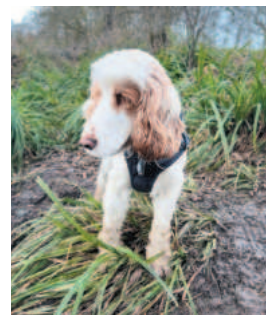


THE BEST BITS

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



Marketing Director, James, and his wife, Sarah-Jayne, welcomed baby Ellis Christopher into the world on January 21, weighing a healthy 8lb 7.5 oz.



The sun was shining on a day of adventures for *Natural Lifestyle* mascot, Gus, who headed out into the countryside with his owner, Editor Rachel.



Our Sales Exec, James, wrapped up for a break on the slopes in Sainte Foy.



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www.mynaturallifestyle.com



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THE POWER OF NUTRITION TO MANAGE THE MENOPAUSE

A new review has highlighted the importance of diet in managing menopause symptoms.

In the new scientific review, the British Nutrition Foundation looked at how diet and supplements can help with managing common menopausal symptoms, including hot flushes, night sweats and changes in body weight.

The foundation explains that the best change you can make to your diet to help manage common menopausal symptoms is to follow a healthy, balanced dietary pattern. And it's a bonus that this will also support bone and heart health too after the menopausal transition, when women have a greater risk of osteoporosis (weak bones) and heart disease.

The review, published in *Nutrition Bulletin*, looked at the role of dietary patterns and supplements (including vitamins, fatty acids, herbs and botanicals) in the management of common menopausal symptoms, such as hot flushes and night sweats, changes in bodyweight and shape, depression and anxiety, cognitive changes (or 'brain fog'), and sleep disturbances. It found that healthier dietary patterns (such as Mediterranean style diets) may help to reduce the frequency and severity of vasomotor systems, such as hot flushes, as well as helping to manage body weight or body shape changes that many of those going through the menopause experience.

Sara Stanner, Science Director at the British Nutrition Foundation, an author of the review, commented: "Going through the menopausal transition can be a challenging time, with both physical and psychological symptoms occurring for many that can have a negative impact on daily lives and quality of life. Our new review highlights that there may be small changes we could make to our daily eating habits to consume a healthier dietary pattern that could help us maintain a healthy weight and possibly help alleviate symptoms such as hot flushes."

Inside... HEALTH

MILES BETTER MEALS



Increasing numbers of people are discovering the environmental benefits of a meat-free lifestyle.

The Vegetarian Society has highlighted National Vegetarian Week, taking place between May 15-21 with a focus on how switching to veggie meals can reduce your carbon footprint and help the planet, making your meals better by miles.

The organisation highlighted how benefits to the environment are not just about the 'emissions' from the livestock themselves. It's also about land use, water use, animal feed production. Animal agriculture is responsible for more greenhouse gases than all the world's transportation systems combined. It also pointed out that plant-based proteins produce 70 times less greenhouse gas emissions than an equivalent amount of beef and use 150 times less land.

Richard McIlwain, Chief Executive of the Vegetarian Society, commented: "The very first National Vegetarian Week ran in 1992, the same year as the Rio Earth Summit, which saw the creation of the first ever UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Thirty years later, we are still battling to reduce emissions and yet every single one of us can take meaningful action by simply reducing or cutting out meat from our diets.

"In 2022's campaign, we inspired people to switch over 70,000 meat-based meals for veggie and plant-based dishes, saving over 100 tons of carbon, equivalent to the emissions released by driving a car around the earth's equator over 16 times! For 2023, we want to reach out to even more people encouraging a greater number of businesses, schools, local authorities, supermarkets and individuals taking part in the week. People often don't think their own actions can make much of a difference. But by joining the many thousands of people signing up for the week, we aim to demonstrate how, together, individual efforts can lead to real and meaningful change."

UK failing to meet nutrient requirements

New research has revealed that the UK is failing to meet the recommended daily requirements of eight key nutrients.

Research from the Health & Food Supplements Information Service (HSIS) reveals many people in the UK are lacking in eight key nutrients, with potentially harmful effects on their health.

The HSIS report – *Back to Basics: The Nutrients You Need, Served on a Plate* – looks at the challenges of meeting recommended nutritional intakes through diet alone. For instance, the HSIS report notes for an adult female to meet the recommended daily intake of iron (14.8mg for those aged 19-50 years), they would need to eat 1.057kg (1860kcal) of grilled, lean sirloin steak, 1.973kg (671kcal) of steamed broccoli, or 779g (1005kcal) chickpeas.

Co-authored by HSIS Dietitian, Dr Carrie Ruxton, and GP, Dr Nisa Aslam, the report looks at the role of vitamin D, folate, calcium, magnesium, selenium, iron, iodine and omega 3.

Dr Ruxton commented: "Over a third of Brits (36 per cent) skip meals because they are too busy, whilst fewer than a third have heard of the Eatwell Guide – the Government's recommended dietary guide."



Dr Aslam added: "Iron is also lacking in over half of girls aged 11-18 years and more than one quarter of women aged 19-64, which in time could lead to iron deficiency anaemia – a condition that causes tiredness and affects immune function. So, with our nutrition lacking in so many important areas, it's time to go back to basics with our diet.

"Red meat is a source of several highly bioavailable, key micronutrients including zinc, iron, iodine, vitamin B12 and vitamin D so, if you plan to cut it out of your diet, you need to plan for suitable nutrient-rich alternatives or top up with a multivitamin and multimineral supplement. In an ideal world, we should get all our nutrients from the food on our plates, enjoying a spectrum of colourful fruit and veg, oily fish, dairy foods, lean meats, beans, legumes, nuts, soya foods and red meat. However, busy lifestyles make this hard."

She recommends a multivitamin and multimineral supplement appropriate to your age group as well as a 10µg daily vitamin D supplement between October and early March.

Dr Ruxton also suggested an omega 3 supplement containing the fatty acids, EPA and DHA, if you are not eating at least one 140g portion of oily fish a week, such as sardines, salmon or mackerel.

She added: "For women of reproductive age, a 400µg daily folic acid supplement is essential to reduce the risk of neural tube defects in babies, should they fall pregnant, whilst children aged six months to five-years-old can benefit from a vitamin A, C and D supplement. In fact, in a large study, those taking full-spectrum multivitamin-multimineral supplements had the lowest risk of any nutrient deficiency."

We love

NATURE'S ANSWER LICORICE ROOT

This vegan-friendly, gluten-free, kosher, GMO-free and cruelty-free liquorice root extract contains amorfrutins, compounds with anti-diabetic and anti-inflammatory properties. By using the Advanced Botanical Fingerprint Technology, Nature's Answer assures you the quality of each ingredient by identifying the purity of every botanical.

RICOLA REFRESHING LEMON MINT

Ricola sweets not only taste good, they are also vegan, and free from sugar, gluten and lactose. The sweets are available in eight flavours, come in a handy 45g box and are the perfect companion whether for the office, on the train or whenever you need a moment to give yourself a refreshing little boost.



Getting your beauty sleep

We need good quality sleep for our health and wellbeing but considering your skincare before you head to slumber is also really important.

The experts at Green People explain that sleep is as important for good health as diet and exercise; it improves brain performance, mood and physical health. Bad quality sleep, on the other hand, has been proven to raise the risk of many diseases and disorders.

And, they add, getting your beauty sleep is super important when it comes to your beauty routine. Just like the rest of your body, your skin repairs itself while you snooze. The benefits of getting quality sleep for your skin are endless and include fewer wrinkles (thanks to enhanced collagen production), a glowing complexion and brighter eyes. And here to help, we love the Age Defy+ Hydra Glow Sleep Mask, a pampering mask that can be left on overnight.

The essential fatty acids, omega 3, 6 and 9, found in the Age Defy+ Hydra Glow Sleep Mask are the building blocks of healthy skin and are crucial for keeping the skin barrier hydrated, plump and vibrant. Enriched with 35 beauty-enhancing actives, it's formulated with 91 per cent certified organic ingredients, including green macro algae to stimulate collagen production and caesalpinia spinosa for intense hydration.



SENSATIONAL SERUM

If your skin is in need of some nutrient-rich nourishment, look no further than Terranova's luxurious Organic Serum Skin Oil 768.

This unique blend features 14 carefully selected organic oils, combined with organic extracts of calendula and arnica.

As with every formulation within the Terranova range of nutritional and botanical supplements, Serum 768 works in an intensely synergistic manner, is precisely balanced, is safe and gentle and contains only active ingredients. All ingredients have been specifically chosen for their skin rejuvenating properties and work synergistically to provide a formula that is deeply nourishing to both healthy and dry skin and intensely restorative to skin that is aged, blemished or otherwise stressed.



Inside... BEAUTY

FOLKLORE-INSPIRED skincare

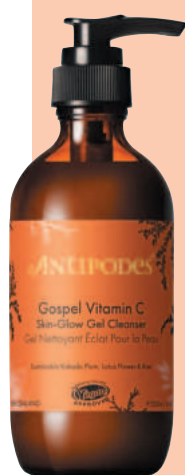
Two friends have joined forces to create a new skincare brand based on forgotten ancient remedies.

Childhood best friends, Mihaela Donska and Yoana Radeva, founded Mazillo, inspired by the history and folklore of their homeland, Bulgaria. The two grew up together, seeing their grandmothers prepare local remedies and hearing the legends behind them. They wanted to bring these forgotten practices to the 21st century.

The pair have created potent and effective formulas using cutting-edge techniques, including plant stem cells developed by a group of Bulgarian scientists. It has created a five-step skincare routine based on traditional recipes, with just under 90 per cent of Mazillo's formulas containing local ingredients, some of which are exclusive to the region.

They've also embraced modern skincare science to take these precious botanicals to a new level. Research shows that the stem cells in plants stimulate better cell turnover, repairing skin exposed to harmful environmental factors. Take the orpheus flower, for example. This plant can only be found in the Rhodope mountains in Bulgaria and is considered to have survived over 20m years thanks to its ability to endure long periods without water. As a result, its cells have a proven skin-lifting effect and decrease pigmentation. This is one of Mazillo's many unique ingredients and can be found in its Replenishing Moisturiser.

Other products within the range include the Gentle Cleansing Oil, Regenerate + Protect Essence Toner, Purify + Nourish Face Mask and Facial Oil.



THE NATURAL GLOW

Give your skin a brightening boost with this natural cleanser from Antipodes.

Gospel Vitamin C Skin Glow Cleanser is a vitamin C-rich face cleanser for brighter, healthy-looking skin.

The cleanser is made with kakadu plum, which has up to 100 times the vitamin C of oranges, along with antioxidant compound, Vinanza grape, and kiwi to offer brighter, healthier looking skin. Lotus flower, olive squalane oil and essential fats from New Zealand meadowfoam luxuriously soften skin and replenish the skin's essential lipid barrier.

This cleanser is suited to most skin types, especially oily and combination, and is ideal for dull skin.

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BLOOD SUGAR BALANCE

Bringing your blood sugar into balance is critical to a healthy you, as well as reducing your risk of concerning health conditions. Here's what you need to know to stay in blood sugar control.

You might be questioning why it's so important that you keep your blood sugar in control. But when you learn that out-of-control blood sugar is not only linked to increased risk of diabetes, but it can also affect your hormone balance, energy levels, and, in the long-term, leads to raised chance of worrying health conditions, including heart disease, it is clear to see why we must all pay closer attention to it.

Unfortunately, modern living, poor quality, often sugar laden diets, and being too sedentary all raises our risk of high blood sugar levels over a prolonged period.

BLOOD SUGAR EXPLAINED

Blood sugar relates to the level of glucose that is present in the blood and this is affected by a range of factors, primarily food, but also stress and lifestyle. The body works to manage blood sugar by releasing insulin, but when we consume too much poor-quality foods and have a sedentary lifestyle, for example, the body struggles to keep up and clear away the glucose. We then produce more insulin to keep up but this can raise our risk of insulin resistance.

The scientific name for high blood sugar is hyperglycaemia and at its worst, can lead to a range of symptoms, including food cravings, dips in energy, lack of focus and dizziness. It also raises the risk of type 2 diabetes.

The worst contributors in terms of food in raising your blood sugar levels are, unsurprisingly, refined sugar and carbohydrates, so choosing a low carb, more Mediterranean-style diet with plenty of good quality protein, is recommended. You will likely find the fewer sugary, carb-heavy foods you eat, the less hungry you will be. Also bear in mind that eating too frequently, such as snacking in between meals, can mean your blood sugar spikes.

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Lipoic Acid Complex

Nature's Answer Liquorice

NutraTea NutraGlycemia

PrizMAG
Magnesium Bisglycinate

HOLISTIC BALANCE

The good news is there is so much you can do – and quite quickly – to make your blood sugar more balanced, and this starts with diet.

The obvious focus – and one that brings the biggest change – is to cut right back on refined sugar and processed foods, which means white varieties of bread, pasta and rice, as well as sweets, cakes and biscuits, should go in favour of low GI foods, which help to balance blood sugar, and include some fruits, whole grains and non-starchy vegetables.

Focus on lots of veg and fruits such as dark berries, which won't spike your blood sugar. Try to cook from scratch so you can be sure what's in your food, and opt for healthy oils to cook with, such as olive or rapeseed. Protein is key so choose good quality meat, fish, tofu, nuts and seeds, as well as Greek yoghurt, cheese and eggs, as well as legumes and beans. Fibre, specifically soluble fibre, can aid blood sugar management. And try to slow down at mealtimes, eat mindfully, try not to snack and stay hydrated.

Chromium is a mineral that helps to balance blood sugar and so try to include foods containing it, including whole grains, brewer's yeast, broccoli, and tomatoes. You can also find chromium supplements in your health store. Other supplements that could be suggested include alpha lipoic acid, which can help with uptake of blood sugar to the cells, cinnamon and liquorice, which play a role in the insulin response, and magnesium, which also helps with blood glucose management.

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Natural Lifestyle Top Picks



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For more information visit Ricola.com or buy them directly from the onlineshop shop.ricola.com.



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HEALTHY

PROTEIN PLAN

Protein is an essential component of the human diet, required for many functions in the body, but it's important to get the right intake, from healthy sources.

You can find just about any food item these days with the word 'protein' emblazoned across the front, such is the nation's newfound interest in all thing protein-related. And while such heightened awareness is a good thing, considering we all need to ensure adequate protein on a daily basis, many products these days may contain high levels of this macronutrient but are accompanied with all kinds of other undesirable ones, including sugar and fillers.

So, what do you need to know when it comes to protein, what it is, why you need it and, most importantly, how you can ensure healthy sources?

PROTEIN POWER

Gone are the days when protein was only understood by the likes of bodybuilders and avid gym goers. Now, all types of people, with all kinds of lifestyles, have a better understanding of the need to up our intake.

According to the British Nutrition Foundation, on average, protein provides 17 per cent of dietary energy in the UK and is the second most abundant compound in the body, after water. A large proportion of the protein in the body is present within muscle (43 per cent on average) with significant proportions being present in skin (15 per cent) and blood (16 per cent).

But what is it? And why is it so important?

Protein is known as a macronutrient (often referred to as macro), and this means it is needed in large amounts on a daily basis. Protein, which can be found in every cell in the body, is required for many functions, including to help the body to grow and repair. Children need it for helping bones to grow, while we also need it to keep muscles healthy, to support our immune systems and for energy.

In terms of the science, amino acids are the building blocks of protein. When we take on proteins through food, they are broken down to amino acids, which the body then uses to make new proteins. Some of these amino acids are produced in the body, but some – specifically, nine – can only be obtained from the diet, which is why it's so important to have an adequate intake.

DO YOU NEED TO SUPPLEMENT?

The question as to whether food is enough to get an adequate intake of protein really depends on your needs and lifestyle. For example, if you take part in a lot of intense exercise, you may want to take a protein supplement and there are many quality ones – including plant-based – available in your health food store.

What we would advise is whatever supplement you choose, check the ingredients and avoid any with added sugar. If you are opting for a protein powder, these are often made from whey, or for plant-based, soya, hemp or pea. Whatever the ingredient, be sure of no added fillers, artificial sweeteners, those with GM ingredients, vegetable oils and thickeners.

TRY THIS

NaturesPlus Collagen Peptides

Planet Paleo Organic Bone Broth Sports Protein

Viridian Nutrition Balanced Amino Acid Complex

Terranova Nutrition Vollagen Complex

RICH FOOD SOURCES

There are many foods that contain protein, so placing a focus on healthy options on a daily basis ensures you're getting enough. Keep in mind that the Reference Nutrient Intake (RNI) for protein for adults is 0.75g protein per kilogram of body weight per day, which equates to 56g/day and 45g/day for men and women of average body weights (75kg and 60kg respectively).

As always, the starting point should be balance, getting enough protein, healthy carbs, fats and other micronutrients, adding in plenty of fruit and veg and cutting back on processed foods. In terms of rich sources of protein, consider meat, fish, dairy, such as milk, cheese and yoghurt, tofu, as well as pulses, including beans and lentils, chickpeas, eggs, and nuts and seeds. These are all easily incorporated into the diet, but when choosing meat, opt for lean cuts and keep red meat consumption within recommended limits.

CHECK

your

DIGESTION

Good health depends on a healthy gut, yet so many modern factors mean our digestion is below par. Discover how you can restore good gut health.

The gut truly is a window into our overall health. Not only does a poorly functioning gut play a part in low energy levels and less than healthy looking skin, but it plays a critical role in the function of our immune system. Modern day living means many people are experiencing digestive ill health, but there is much you can do to bring it back into balance.

Lindsay Powers, Nutritionist at Good Health Naturally, explained: "The typical Western diet, high in carbohydrates, refined sugar, unhealthy fats and low in fibre and nutrients, can wreak havoc on our guts, causing inflammation and a poor environment for our gut bacteria."

Alice Bradshaw, Head of Nutrition Education and Information at Terranova, explained: "According to recent figures, it is estimated that around 10-20 per cent of people in the UK have IBS, while many more may live with symptoms of the condition without a formal diagnosis. Stress is the number one trigger for digestive dysfunction due to its adverse effect on digestive secretions, neuromuscular function in the intestines and immunological health.

"In addition, fast paced lifestyles often do not allow enough time for proper eating habits. It has become the norm to eat irregularly and often at the office desk, or while walking down the street – habits which are not conducive to good digestive health. Dysbiosis, or an imbalance between beneficial and disease-causing microbes in the intestines, is an extremely common condition that can lead to a wide array of symptoms and disease. Candidiasis and small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) are examples of conditions driven by dysbiosis."

Tracy Breuning, Technical Advisor and Education Liaison at ADM Protexin, which has Bio-Kult and Lepicol brands, went on: "Western society's move away from more traditional ways of eating and towards a more convenience-led lifestyle is likely to play a large part in our deteriorating gut health. We consume a lot more processed and fast foods, eat more sugar and less fibre, and ingest very little fermented food (which provide beneficial bacteria for the gut) which had (until recently) all but disappeared from the Western diet.

"One newly emerging area of research is looking at the way our gut health, and, in particular, the health of our microbiome, may be influencing our ability to cope with stress via the gut-brain axis. Other lifestyle habits such as irregular sleeping patterns, little physical activity and excessive alcohol consumption can impede our ability to maintain a healthy digestive system."

Poor digestive function

The most obvious sign digestion isn't up to scratch is an upset tummy, but there are other symptoms that need to be kept in mind.

Phil Beard, Technical Educator at Viridian, advised: "The most obvious signs that we may have an issue is if we feel bloated after eating, constipation, diarrhoea, and heartburn to name just a few. Have you ever needed to grab some digestive relief after eating? Well, this is a clear sign you may need some help. Constant issues may be a sign there is an underlying issue, so finding a way to fix it and improve your gut health will improve your quality of life.

"With many of us prioritising convenience over quality, we are often not thinking about what eating on the move does to our digestive system and relying on pre-packed food. By not preparing your gut for digestion, it may upset the ability to digest everything we eat."

Leyla El Moudden, Enzymedica UK Director of Education, added: "Any discomfort within two hours of eating, such as heartburn, bloating, excessive burping, tiredness, constipation, itching, aches, pains or loose, watery stools could be a sign your digestion is not working properly. The main reason is a lack of digestive enzymes due to your genetic make-up, lifestyle, health or diet. If we eat food that our ancestors were never exposed to historically, our bodies have to evolve and adjust."

Tracy went on: "Some of the lesser-known signs that our digestion is not working could include lethargy, skin complaints, brain fog, food intolerances, frequent coughs and colds, thrush or candidiasis, hay fever symptoms and headaches."

Poor gut health can also lead to low levels of nutrients.

"Research shows there may be a link between low vitamin D and IBS, as there seems to be a significant number of IBS sufferers with low vitamin D worldwide," Lindsay commented. "Poor digestive health and issues such as low stomach acid and enzyme production or dysbiosis can also lead to poor nutrient absorption and metabolism of essential vitamins and minerals. Older people, for example, may be at risk of low B12 as stomach acid is needed to absorb B12 from food, and it declines as we age."

And Tracy added: "The gut microbes synthesise nutrients such as B vitamins, vitamin K and short-chain fatty acids so an unhealthy gut microbiome may find this difficult. Studies show that other micronutrients which may be deficient in poor digestive health are calcium, vitamin D, folic acid, selenium, zinc, magnesium, and iron."

SHIFT YOUR DIET

What you eat plays a big part in your gut health, so, what do you need to know in terms of the worst culprits, and the changes you could make to your diet?

Lindsay advised: "Everyday food choices have the potential to disrupt gut health, such as gluten, dairy, eggs and soy. Gluten is highly problematic as it has the potential to damage the gut mucosal barrier and increase intestinal permeability, known as leaky gut. Foods high in lectins can cause digestive disruption. These naturally occurring proteins found in plants, which protect them as they grow, can bind to the gut wall and cause damage. Foods high in lectins include beans, peanuts, tomatoes, potatoes, aubergine, wheat, and other grains. You can also remove these foods from the diet whilst healing takes place."

Phil added: "The Mediterranean diet should suffice for many but in more extreme cases of IBS or small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO), a low FODMAP diet may be needed. This removes certain fibres that are hard to digest which, if someone with IBS or SIBO has, can't digest and cause gut upsets like pain and bloating. Following this dietary plan will reduce the amount of fermentable carbohydrates and fibre leading to less fermentation of food in the gut and ultimately, reduced bloating and pain."

And what is the best gut-friendly diet to advise?

Tracy suggested: "Eating foods high in dietary fibre and resistant starches will keep bowel movements regular, helping to eliminate toxins from the body, and will feed beneficial bacteria. I encourage clients to eat two portions of fruit and at least five portions of vegetables (a rainbow of different colours) a day and switch to wholegrains such as brown rice, oats, and buckwheat, to increase fibre intake. Prebiotic foods such as Jerusalem artichokes, onion, garlic, asparagus chicory, leeks and slightly under-ripe bananas are particularly beneficial as they are selectively fermented by beneficial bacteria in the gut to help their growth.

"Foods containing L-glutamine, collagen, and polyphenols are often used in response to gut inflammation, due to their role in supporting the epithelial barrier. Foods high in L-glutamine include eggs, red cabbage and grass-fed meat and dairy. Foods rich in polyphenols include berries, green tea, and red wine."

Leyla went on: "I would say the food group that initiates most problems is a protein – gluten, beans or lentils, for example. Once this begins to cause problems, further digestive reactions can occur in foods that never posed difficulties before, such as with fruit and vegetables.

"The best thing to support the body's natural health is to move away from processed foods as much as possible. Try to incorporate a range of fresh, colourful and varied fruit and vegetables, high fibre foods and healthy fats such as olive oil, coconut and avocado. Avoiding cooking methods that substantially alter the structure of food can help gut health – so no deep frying at high temperatures and no microwaving which changes the molecular structures of foods, thus rendering them more open to digestion problems."

Gut health support

Supplements to support the gut can be beneficial.

Phil suggested: "Peppermint oil is a brilliant carminative remedy that can help ease dyspepsia and if in a delayed release capsule can help with IBS like symptoms, leading to carminative effects and reducing pain and bloating. Digestive enzymes help break down macronutrients and fibre. By supplementing with them, it may improve some symptoms like bloating and dyspepsia. Some natural protease enzymes (nutrients that breakdown protein) like bromelain extracted from pineapple and kiwi, which contains actinidin, another protease enzyme, can help improve the digestive process. Betaine hydrochloride is a supplemental form of hydrochloric acid and when we have low levels, it alters our pH. By supplementing with this, it may improve the pH of the stomach and improve digestion."

Alice added: "Digestive botanicals such as fennel seed, ginger rhizome, cardamom pod and gentian root have a considerable role to play in battling gut reactions. For example, gentian and ginger stimulate the release of protein-digesting compounds in the stomach, while fennel, ginger and cardamom relax the intestinal muscles, which may help relieve abdominal spasms and cramps and may help release trapped wind. Supplements may offer symptomatic relief. A key example is magnesium, which can relieve constipation."

Lindsay added: "If there are leaky gut issues, healing herbs such as slippery elm and marshmallow root are recommended to soothe irritation and inflammation in the digestive tract. L-glutamine or butyric acid can also be used to help improve gut barrier function. Curcumin can support those with IBS and IBD, as its anti-inflammatory properties can calm the digestive tract and aid healing. Curcumin can also improve the function and integrity of the intestinal wall. Other valuable nutrients include collagen, vitamins D3, A and C, plus magnesium and zinc, to support areas such as gut motility and the integrity of the gut lining."

Probiotics are important, with Tracy recommending: "One of the largest trials to date for live bacteria supplementation and IBS-D utilised Bio-Kult Everyday Gut. After the four-month trial, 34 per cent of patients were symptom free, with abdominal pain and frequency improved by 69 per cent. Finally, some protocols may include *Saccharomyces boulardii* as part of a gut healing process. This species of yeast has been shown to be effective in eradicating potential pathogenic (or unhelpful) microbes."

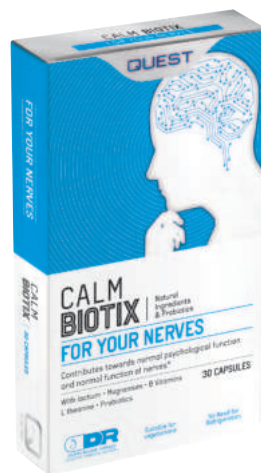
Alice went on: "Microflora supplements which provide both *Lactobacilli* and *Bifidobacteria* may significantly benefit the environment of both the small and large intestine. Among other properties, these helpful bacteria enhance digestive processes and make the intestines inhospitable for disease-causing organisms."

Leyla added: "An excellent habit for any person at any stage of their digestive health journey would be to take a natural digestive enzymes supplement. Whole-body nutrition, hormonal balance, metabolism and immunity are all critical health systems that rely on digestive enzymes and healthy gut microbes to stay in healthy balance. Digestive enzymes and probiotics are the two must-have supplements in every home."

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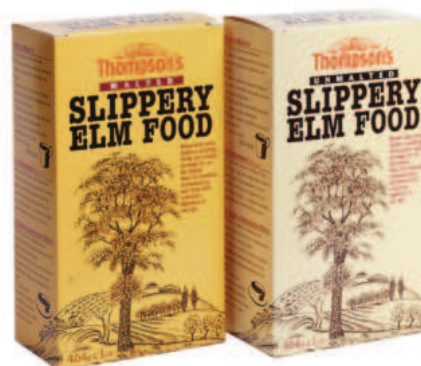
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1) Comparative Evaluation of Guna®-Flu n.1 vs vaccine For The Influenza Syndrome Prevention in Pediatrics a prospective, multicentre, randomized, controlled study M. Colombo, G. Rigamonti, M.I. Danza, a. Bruno la Medicina Biologica 2007/3; 3-10

2) Upper Respiratory Infections Prevention in Children with Guna®-Flu n.1 a multicentre, controlled, randomized study C. Supino la Medicina Biologica 2002/3; 19-23

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Ask the experts

DRY SKIN SALVATION

by Meghna Patel

What causes dry skin, and can you advise how to improve it?

Cool weather can be harsh on the skin and cause skin problems, often irritating the delicate exposed areas of skin on our face and hands. 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.

Dry skin affects the whole family so make sure you have plenty of good quality moisturiser to hand for daily use after showering, plus natural moisturising lip balms that are easy to keep in jackets. Use hand cream when needed and especially before bed. It is also important to keep very well hydrated so drink plenty of water, or hot water with lemon or mint can be a more enjoyable way to maintain your water intake.

You may need to modify your skincare routine to help with dryness and discomfort. A good starting point is to identify what parts of your routine may be exacerbating these conditions. For example, avoid petrochemicals and fragrant-loaded cleansers, emollients and wipes (keep away from SLS, perfumes, parabens, phthalates, and mineral oils). Watch out for hidden irritants, such as chemicals, fragrances in detergents, and dyes in clothing. These can cause irritation, dryness, chafing, and rashes.

Which natural ingredients can you recommend to help nourish dry skin?

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



Q I have heard the gut can be linked to UTIs – why, and how I can reduce the risk of suffering?

Martina Della Vedova explained: What we know so far about microbiome diversity is that it can protect us from getting infections, all kinds of infections. Having a diverse flora is a definite pro for better all-around health at any age.

The main difference between people that get recurrent UTIs and people that don't is the make-up of their gut microbiome: people that don't get recurrent UTIs have a much more diverse flora and specifically have flora that produces short chain fatty acids. These metabolites are essential to keep a healthy terrain for beneficial bacteria to grow and discourage harmful ones.

The more diverse microbiome, the more chances for beneficial bacteria to win the space and resources against pathogens, meaning less risk to get infections starting and developing. Bladder and vaginal flora have different environments that require different conditions compared to the gut flora but are still profoundly impacted by the health of it.

Looking after our urinary tract means not only looking at *E.coli*, the most common bacterial infection, but also at our microbiome as a whole. Patients who use antibiotics on a regular basis show a higher risk of infection recurrence, in fact, they can find themselves in a vicious cycle that pushes them to use antibiotics to treat an infection, and at the same time, get a weaker immune system and higher antibiotic resistance.

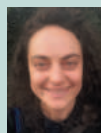
Another factor that impacts the quality of our terrain, or in other words the environment in the gut for our microbiome to thrive on is diet. The less sugars, processed foods, simple carbs and the more fibre, hydration and anti-inflammatory foods, the better chances we give to our flora to serve us at its best.



About the experts



KERI BRIGGS is a Senior Nutrition and Technical Advice Specialist at Lamberts Healthcare. She has a BSc in Human Nutrition and has worked for Lamberts Healthcare since 2000, firstly as a Technical Advisor and now as Senior Nutrition and Technical Advice Specialist.



MARTINA DELLA VEDOVA obtained a Masters 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.



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.



THERESA CUTTS is a nutrition expert and an independent nutritional consultant to the supplement brand, AllicinMax.

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Ask the experts

PLAN YOUR PLANT-BASED NUTRITION...

By Keri Briggs

What nutrients can we lack if following a plant-based diet and why are they so important?

A vegan diet needs to be well planned to ensure that vitamin B12, iron, the omega 3 fatty acid, DHA, and vitamin D3, which are more difficult to obtain from a fully plant-based diet, are not under consumed.

Vegan sources of iron are the non-haem variety, which is poorly absorbed and often found alongside other compounds which inhibit absorption. Symptoms of low iron include tiredness and poor immune function, fatigue, chest pain, fast heartbeat or shortness of breath, headache, dizziness or lightheadedness, cold hands and feet and inflammation of the tongue.

Another nutrient which can be lacking in vegan diets is DHA. This omega 3 is commonly found in oily fish but is impossible to obtain at a sufficient level in a vegan diet, as most plant-based sources provide ALA, which is converted to DHA. The minimum recommendation for brain function and vision is 250mg of DHA per day. An individual would need to consume 12,500- 50,000mg of flax seeds to allow for a sufficient level of DHA from conversion of ALA. Lack of this nutrient can cause symptoms such as dry eyes and problems including poor memory or concentration. The omega 3s are also useful for heart and skin health.

B12 is a water-soluble vitamin that needs to be included in the diet on a regular basis. B12 is not found naturally in plant-based foods and the best sources for a vegan diet would be fortified items such as cereals, yeast extracts and some milk alternatives. Studies have shown up to 86.5 per cent of vegetarians are deficient in B12 and vegans are at an even higher risk. Low B12 can lead to issues with low energy, low mood and depression. It is also heavily involved in the production of neurotransmitters, including dopamine, serotonin and GABA, which play a role in mood regulation, motivation, sleep and relaxation.

Vitamin D is a nutrient most people struggle to obtain from their diets and the main source is from the effect of

sunlight on the skin. Between September to April in the UK, people will make little or no vitamin D. Low vitamin D is closely linked to low mood and anxiety and has been proposed as a potential reason for seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Other symptoms of deficiency include muscle and back pain, poor immune function and fatigue.

Can you suggest a healthy plant-based diet that helps to bridge any nutrient gaps?

A good vegan diet, which should help to reduce the risks of deficiency, should include a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, including green leafy vegetables, dried fruits and seaweeds, nuts and seeds, fortified foods such as milk and dairy alternatives, cereals and yeast extracts and flakes. A wide variety of foods providing amino acids should be combined to ensure that all these nutrients are consumed. Foods such as tofu, tempeh, beans and legumes will all provide good levels of proteins. Iron-rich foods should be combined with foods rich in vitamin C and eaten away from tea and coffee to further aid absorption.

Would you recommend we supplement, and if so, what do you consider to be the most important?

Supplementation is sometimes a good idea for times when it is difficult to plan the diet fully or for those who are just starting on a vegan regime. Even experienced vegans should consider adding a supplement that includes B12 and vitamin D3.

Generally, a good vegan multivitamin and mineral will contain these, along with iron and other essential nutrients. A vegan omega 3 or DHA supplement should also be added. The UK Government now recommends that all adults and children use at least 400iu (10ug) of vitamin D per day in the winter. This is the minimum that should be consumed by vegans, who will also need to ensure that they consume D3 (not D2) from an algal or lichen source.

Q I am experiencing symptoms of long Covid – is there anything I can do to support my health through diet and lifestyle?

Theresa Cutts advised: The symptoms of long Covid are many and varied, with people reporting lack of taste and smell to fatigue, digestive upsets, sore eyes to irritability and more.

Eat a varied diet with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, wholegrains, lean protein and healthy fats. Stay hydrated with water and herbal teas, and keep caffeine containing and sugary drinks to a minimum.

A small study was carried out using stabilised allicin capsules. Allicin, the active compound that is produced when garlic is crushed, is often not present in garlic supplements. A total of 52 volunteers took five capsules a day and noted their symptoms before and after taking the study; 94 per cent of the participants reported an overall decrease in symptoms and 71 per cent reported an increased wellness score.

Vitamins D, C and the mineral, zinc, all play a role in proper functioning of the immune system, so worth adding to your regime too. You might also like to add a multivitamin and mineral supplement and a friendly bacteria supplement to support a healthy gut microbiome. Research suggests that around 70 per cent of our immune system is dependent on a healthy microbiome.

Speaking to the team in your local health food store is a great place to start for plenty of information about how to get the best out of your diet and plan your supplement regime.

"An incredibly supportive college with such inspiring lectures"

Jo Lee, Nutrition Graduate, details her positive experience training with CNM.



If you're curious about health and nutrition, consider studying with the College of Naturopathic Medicine. Even if you don't want to practice, you'll leave feeling so in awe of your incredible body and you will be equipped to take the very best care of it. You're never too old to learn something new!

I started to suffer from a very bad back and nerve pain. Some days, I found it hard to walk or sleep; it was soul destroying. I got through the days with over-the-counter pain relief and spinal injections and I constantly looked pale, with dark rings under my eyes. My focus on food began when juicing had become fashionable, and I went on a week-long juicing retreat. The positive impact that nutrition had on my body soon became clear.

I decided to try acupuncture and explore nutrition and lifestyle changes. I started to feel so much better, and this was a real light bulb moment for me. I then made the decision to study nutrition, so I began looking for courses. I found CNM on a Google search and went to meet a college representative to discuss the course in more detail. I was so excited at the thought of starting and signed up for the three-year diploma as soon as I could.

After years of studying via distance learning, I was ready to meet other students on a regular basis and I loved the fact that CNM involved time at the college with other students. I was so lucky to study with an amazing group of people. Every lecture inspired me to learn more about the subject. I also loved the final year student clinics; even though they were nerve-

wracking at the beginning, the clinics gave me the confidence to be able to practice on my own. We had incredible clinical support from our clinic supervisors and peers.

The course has helped me to focus on my health and realise the importance of healing my body in a holistic way. I've been able to get to the root cause of my ill health, rather than just silencing my symptoms, which has been so powerful. I now have the skill set to help others and empower them to take charge of their health, which is an amazing feeling.

Since graduating, I've set up a private clinic at home called Vitalife Nutrition. I create recipes and meal plans for other clinics and therapists. I'm constantly learning new things, following the latest research and reading everything I can about nutrition. I love helping clients understand how their body works and empowering them to take the first step towards positive change.



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Nourish skin from within

As we head into spring, we shed the winter layers, but how much thought do you give to the need to detox your skin from the colder weather? Here, our natural beauty experts explain how.

Spring can be a time of freshness in many ways, and clearing out old toxins that may have accumulated during the colder weather, when we can eat less healthy food and can be more sedentary, is a great idea. Such a detox can involve our internal health, but also our skincare regime – both of which may need a good cleanse and a shift in routine as we move into the spring.

Elizabeth King, Weleda Skincare Expert, explained: “Just as we begin to reach for lighter layers of clothes in the spring, so the same applies for our skin care. We often need less and can begin to move from the heavier creams that protected us during the cooler months to lighter hydrating lotions, while keeping a facial oil on hand for the cooler spring days. In early spring, while the skin adjusts and copes with the fluctuating temperatures, the skin can feel a little sensitive and vulnerable, with a tendency to over-react and suffer redness.”

Meghna Patel, founder of Mahi Naturals, which distributes the Hope's Relief range, added: “In spring, there is an increase in moisture levels in the air, warmer temperatures, and more sunshine. Skin can become oilier as it transitions, which could cause breakouts and flare-ups. Warmer temperatures can increase sebum production and sweat, which can clog pores.”

The science of your skin

When you consider that the skin is the body's largest organ, it's clear why we should care for it. But how does it fall into poor health in the first place, and what signs might you experience outwardly?

Lucy Parry, Senior Brand Specialist at Lamberts Healthcare, explained: “The skin is the largest organ of the body and is certainly one of the most complicated, containing sweat glands, hairs, sebaceous glands, blood vessels, and nerves. It is our first line barrier with the outer environment, continuously interacting with external factors and acting as both a physical barrier and immunological barrier, regulating body temperature and facilitating vitamin D synthesis, amongst many other roles.

“It's also important to note that the skin supports a diverse collection of microorganisms, colonised by bacteria, fungi, viruses and mites. Being both the largest organ and so active, it is really unsurprising to see just how many nutrients have an impact on skin health.”

And we must remember how big a part our diet plays.

“The outward appearance of the skin is an excellent way to assess our inner health. So, the proverbial saying that ‘you are what you eat’ really does hold true, with increasing evidence highlighting that the diet and the nutrients consumed can significantly affect the health of your skin,” Lucy explained.

“With that said, unfortunately it is well-established that a poor diet can have fundamental effects on the overall health of the skin, affecting its structure and potentially leading to signs such as inflammation and breakouts. Unfortunately, there is also research that suggests an imbalance in nutrition, coupled with poor eating habits, are important causes of skin ageing.”

When it comes to spotting if your internal health is affecting your skin, there are some obvious signs.

Lucy advised: “Interestingly, many nutritional deficiencies of the B vitamins can be detected through the health of the skin. For example, cracking at the corner of the mouth may be an indication of a B2 and B6 deficiency, as can red, greasy skin at the side of the nose. Furthermore, it is well-established that a pale-yellow tinge to skin may be indicative of a vitamin B12 or B9 (folate) deficiency.”

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- ★ Antipodes Gospel Vitamin C Cleanser
- ★ Silicea Kollagen Plus
- ★ Terranova Serum 768
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SKIN-FRIENDLY DIET

The basics apply to diet and skin, including easing off sugar and processed food and adding in lots of fruit and veg, and plenty of water.

Lucy recommended: "A balanced, varied diet that comprises sufficient protein, healthy fats and antioxidants is key when it comes to skin health. A high sugar diet can contribute to the breakdown of collagen and elastin – two proteins found in the skin. Whilst collagen provides strength and structure to the skin, elastin provides elasticity. Damage to these two proteins may make the skin drier, more fragile and affect its firmness.

"It may be worth considering a Mediterranean-style diet, which

emphasises a variety of fruits, whole grains and healthy fats, such as nuts and seeds, which contain omega 3 and 6 fatty acids. The gut microbiome has a huge influence on a person's overall health, extending to the skin. As an unhealthy gut may significantly impact the health of the skin, a diet rich in fermented foods (such as sauerkraut, kimchi and kombucha) and fibre (such as wholemeal bread, bulgur wheat and brown rice) may also be beneficial.

"It may seem obvious, but it is also important to stay well hydrated throughout the day, given that there is research to suggest that reduced hydration can lead to decreased skin elasticity and translucency."

Up your nutrients

There are key nutrients needed for healthy skin and supplements can ensure you aren't missing any. But what do the experts advise?

Lucy suggested: "There is evidence to suggest that the omega 3 fatty acids may help to moisturise the skin from within, thus improving its outward appearance in terms of hydration. Furthermore, omega 3 fatty acids have been known to demonstrate anti-inflammatory actions in various inflammatory diseases, such as psoriasis and eczema.

"Drawing upon the omega 6 fatty acids, it may also be worth considering an evening primrose oil supplement to maintain healthy skin. The oil derived from evening primrose seeds is rich in gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), an omega 6 essential fatty acid. Our bodies can actually make GLA from linoleic acid (the omega 6 fatty acid present in vegetable oils), but this conversion is sometimes slow or partially blocked. As such, a GLA supplement can be very useful, especially where most diets do not contain enough of this fatty acid."

Also consider antioxidants for the skin.

"An antioxidant nutrient, vitamin C is essential for the synthesis of collagen, a major component of the skin," Lucy explained. "Our daily requirement for vitamin C is higher than any other water-soluble vitamin, given that it is rapidly excreted by the body. As such, vitamin C ideally needs to be taken in small amounts throughout the day and

night, which is not always convenient, and hence a time release formula may be relevant for those considering supplementation.

"Vitamin E, another antioxidant, has also long been associated with skin care, helping to protect sebum secreted by the sebaceous gland and stabilise it. This is especially useful when excess sebum is being produced (often leading to oily, acne prone skin). Astaxanthin is a red pigment that accumulates in marine organisms, including freshwater algae, salmon, trout, shrimp, and lobster. There is research to suggest that the antioxidant activity of astaxanthin is unrivalled by that of any other carotenoid due to its unique molecular structure. As astaxanthin is not widely found in the diet, an astaxanthin supplement that uses a natural material derived from *Haematococcus pluvialis* (a unicellular green alga) is often recommended for skin health. This may help to improve skin texture and smoothness, whilst also increasing skin elasticity.

"Finally, a supplement that provides a rich source of anthocyanins, sourced from grape seed and bilberry extracts, is extremely relevant when it comes to skin health. Scientists studying these particular plant compounds have focused much of their work around the role they play in helping to support collagen, hence regular use may help to prevent a loss of hydration, whilst also improving skin elasticity."

GENTLE ON THE SKIN

The skincare market is huge, with products for every kind of skin type, condition and price point, but natural and organic is always the better way to go.

Elizabeth explained: "We are nature, and just as what we eat greatly influences our health and vitality, so does our choice of skincare influence the vitality and health of our skin. Choosing natural and organic skincare may mean that your skin is less likely to suffer from sensitivities that some synthetic chemical ingredients can prompt, such as skin redness and irritation. For example, instead of a skin-drying detergent like SLS, a product containing a natural plant-based cleansing ingredient like sodium cocoyl glutamate or disodium cocoyl glutamate is well suited for sensitive skin, and biodegradable for our sensitive planet!"

She added: "The nasty side-effects can often be more than skin deep, some synthetic chemical preservatives found in skincare like parabens, phthalates, and triclosan are all proven 'hormone disruptors' and so should certainly be avoided."

Meghna added: "There are so many and, fortunately we are being made aware of them so that names of some of the ingredients are now very familiar, like parabens and SLSs (chemicals that artificially create a lather in a product) but there are still some common ones like silicones that are used in many skincare and haircare products. Silicones are often used in creams, serums and primers to make the skin 'feel' smooth or the hair 'shiny', but, in reality, they are not benefitting the skin or the hair merely artificially creating the way you want the skin and hair to feel if it was in an improved condition. Silicones are contaminating our waterways and affecting marine life and now raising alarm bells as to the cumulative effect on our biosystems."

Natural wonders

In terms of the best natural ingredients to choose, there is something for every skin type and need.

"Pomegranate is top for stimulating the regenerative processes in ageing skin and counteracting oxidative stress. This is thanks to the antioxidant power of the punicic acid found in pomegranate seed oil and the cell-protecting polyphenols of pomegranate juice," Elizabeth recommended. "Calendula is naturally rich in saponins, flavonoids and carotenoids, combined with other skin-soothing and anti-inflammatory heroes, chamomile and viola tricolor (wild pansy) to help repair dry, rough skin, maintain its essential barrier function and increase the skin's resilience."

Meghna went on: "Calendula reduces inflammation and soothes the skin, active manuka honey, which has antibacterial, soothing and healing properties, and aloe vera, which stimulates cell regeneration, has antibacterial, wound healing properties and acts as a potent emollient. These ingredients have lasting benefits and won't wash off easily with water."

And in terms of a suggested routine, Meghna advised: "A gel-based foaming cleanser can help to remove daily build-up and ideal ingredients to look for in serums and moisturisers would be niacinamide, vitamin C and aloe vera, which are calming and antioxidant. Make sure you use a daily SPF too as the sun gets stronger."

Elizabeth added: "Begin the day with a cool facial splash or a cleanser to start the day. Don't forget daily eye care, and continue with your favourite day cream, remembering to extend it down the neck to your décolletage, so that this delicate area can be in tip top condition for the summer strappy vests. In the evening, spend a little longer on your cleansing routine. Consider a creamy or oil-based cleanser to be sure you are effectively dissolving day's make-up and dirt. Follow with your serum, and complete with night cream concentrating just on the areas that require it most, for example, forehead, cheeks, and neck."

Natural Lifestyle Top Picks



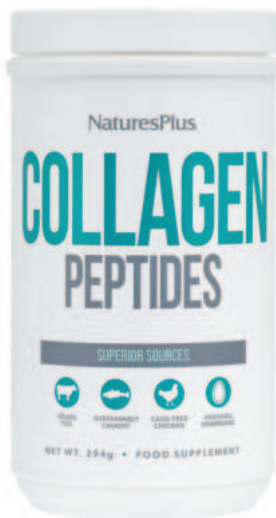
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Springtime aromatherapy

Introduce some of the best spring essential oils to your wellbeing routine.

Spring has finally sprung, and with it has come a little sunshine and a whole lot of greenery as new grass begins to make an appearance and seasonal flowers start to bloom. So, to celebrate the change in season, let's re-energise and refresh your house with some mood enhancing essential oils and turn your home into an uplifting springtime haven! There are many ways you can enjoy and benefits from essential oils around the home, and don't worry if you don't have a diffuser or oil burner yet, there are still lots of ways you can benefit from the natural aromas and therapeutic benefits throughout the house.

A house refresh

Why not give your drawers and wardrobe spaces a refresh by putting a few drops of essential oil onto a cotton-wool pad or tissue and placing it carefully inside? Now, every time you open the drawer, a light breeze of beautiful natural fragrance will waft your way.

A blend of bergamot, lime and lavender oil creates a wonderful fresh fragrance with naturally uplifting properties, or if you prefer a woodier aroma and balancing effect, try a mix of frankincense, cedarwood and may chang.

Next, why not replace the synthetic air-fresheners used around the house with something more natural. Some of our top picks for springtime would be pine, fir, lemon, geranium, or grapefruit essential oils. These refreshing oils work nicely together so you can mix them any way you like. Simply add to an oil burner or diffuser to create a wonderfully fragrant home. If you don't have a diffuser or oil burner, you can try placing a few drops onto cotton wool balls and position them discreetly around the house. If you have any dried flower arrangements, you could place the drops of oil on them instead.

Stay warm

Whilst it's starting to brighten up outside temperatures can still feel on the low side, warming up in the evening with an aromatherapy bath can help to not only warm our bodies but also soothe or revitalise the mind, depending on your essential oils of choice. For a deeply relaxing and balancing bath, try an equal blend of geranium, lavender, and sandalwood essential oils, or for something more refreshing and uplifting, try citrus essential oils such as bergamot, grapefruit or mandarin. Make sure you blend any oils into an unfragranced base, such as a bath oil or bubble bath to disperse the oils into the water safely before use.

Lift your energy

The aroma of pine or fir essential oil conjures up images of green forests with beautiful fresh air, so it will come as no surprise that these are both excellent oils to invigorate and energise flagging energy levels. Grapefruit and lemon are both reviving and refreshing essential oils that guarantee to pep you up, whilst also being wonderfully cleansing and blendable.

By adjusting the number of drops of each essential oil, you can create a wide range of variations on the general theme of a blend, so be adventurous because this is how you learn to produce a nice balanced aroma. Other energising oils that awaken your senses during springtime include bergamot, eucalyptus, lemon, juniper berry, lemon, lemongrass, lime, orange, peppermint, rosemary, and spearmint.

Reader offer

Natural Lifestyle has teamed up with Absolute Aromas to offer readers the chance of winning a Springtime Home Bundle, including the Aroma-Bliss Ultrasonic Diffuser, alongside both of the Citrus and Floral 3 Packs of Essential Oils – the perfect starter kit for your home this spring. The Aroma-Bliss Ultrasonic Aroma-Diffuser gives you the ability to create a calming mood or reviving atmosphere in any space, pairing perfectly with the essential oil packs which contain the most popular Citrus and Floral Essential Oils, ideal for the spring season. See page 26 to enter.



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NATURAL LIFESTYLE Giveaways

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



FINDHORN FLOWER ESSENCE EROS LOVE DUO GIFT BOX

Natural Lifestyle has teamed up with Findhorn Flower Essence to offer readers the chance of winning one Eros Love Duo Gift Box. The box comprises Eros Room Mist, made with the essential oils of rose and sandalwood. This is a natural room mist of aromatic waters blessed with the energetic imprints of nature. Spray in the four sacred directions of the room you wish to clear and bless. Eros Flower Essence for Love can help you to relax, enjoy and be in tune with your body. This essence is believed to contain the energetic vibration of balsam, elder, gorse, grass of Parnassus, holy thorn, rose alba, sea pink and sycamore.



SYNAPTAID

SYNAPTAID is a first-of-its kind supplement for supporting brain function and combating processes known to cause cognitive impairment. The 'brains' behind SYNAPTAID is Dr John Briffa, a practising medical doctor, journalist and author with 30 years' experience in natural medicine. SYNAPTAID contains a blend of eight botanicals and nutrients, each of which has a role to play in supporting and assisting memory, concentration and mood. Just one of SYNAPTAID's active ingredients is lion's mane, which has several supporting actions in the brain, including boosting nerve growth factors that can stimulate regeneration of brain cells. Natural Lifestyle is offering readers the chance of winning one of three.



ENZYMEDICA DIGEST GOLD

Digest Gold is an enzyme formula designed to break down all the parts of a typical large meal, such as fat, fibre, protein and carbohydrates. Each capsule unlocks nutrients and provides relief from occasional gas, bloating and indigestion. Powered by Thera-blend, the enzymes in Digest Gold are active throughout the digestive tract, maximising your health benefits. ATPro provides essential ingredients to boost your cellular powerplant and give you more energy with every meal. Natural Lifestyle is offering readers the chance of winning one of 10.



LAMBERTS ESSENTIALS BUNDLE

Established in 1982, Lamberts is one of the UK's leading suppliers of specialist dietary supplements to practitioners and pharmacists using nutrition and herbs in healthcare. The company offers an extensive range of over 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 Essentials Bundles, worth over £100! Including Vitamin D3 1000iu, Super Strength Antioxidant Complex, Biome Balance 25, Glucosamine Complete and Multi-Guard Methyl, voted *Health Food Business* magazine's Best VMS 2022, this bundle is not one to be missed.

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PLANT-BASED VIBRANCY

Vegan specialist, Harriet Porterfield, inspires us into the kitchen with this selection of plant-based dishes from her new book, *Eat the Rainbow*.

Magical morning almond butter oats with stewed blueberries Serves 1

Get up and go with this warming bowl of almond butter oats and stewed blueberries. These oats are loaded with natural plant protein from almond butter and flaxseeds, making it an ideal breakfast pre-workout or when you have a busy day ahead. There is something magical about nutty almond butter with juicy stewed blueberries, it's a combination you have to try. Adding a little chocolate on top is optional, but highly recommended.

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

Stewed blueberries:

- 130g (4½ oz) fresh blueberries
- 3tbsp water

Protein oats:

- 50g (1¾ oz) rolled oats
- 1tbsp flaxseeds
- 1tbsp maple or agave syrup
- 350ml (12fl oz/1½ cups) full-fat coconut milk or other dairy-free milk of choice
- 1tbsp almond butter

Toppings:

- 1tbsp flaxseeds
- 1tsp cacao nibs
- 3 squares dark chocolate, grated
- ¼ banana, chopped
- 1tbsp almond butter

Method:

- First, make the stewed blueberries. Put 100g (3½ oz) of the blueberries with the water in a small pan and cook over a medium heat until bubbling (the remaining blueberries are for decoration). Reduce the heat and cook for five minutes, until the blueberries are starting to burst. Transfer to a small heatproof bowl to cool down.
- To the same pan, add the oats, flaxseeds, maple or agave syrup, coconut milk and almond butter and heat gently over a low-medium heat, stirring, for five to seven minutes. When thick and creamy, transfer to a heatproof bowl and top with the flaxseeds, cacao nibs, dark chocolate, banana, almond butter and the stewed blueberries and decorate with the remaining fresh blueberries.



No-bake berry chocolate tart

Makes 1 tart (serves 8-10)

This secretly healthy tart is packed with wholefoods, fresh berries and good-for-your-body ingredients. Berries and chocolate are a match made in heaven and this tart combines the fruity flavours of blackberries and blueberries with a scrumptious cocoa hazelnut tart shell. It's no bake, gluten-free and really easy to make.

Prep: 20 minutes

Chilling time: 1½ hours

Ingredients:

Tart shell:

- 150g (5½ oz) gluten-free oats
- 50g (1¾ oz) raw buckwheat
- 100g (3½ oz) hazelnuts
- 4tbsp cocoa or carob powder
- 150g (5½ oz) Medjool dates, stoned
- 2tbsp coconut oil, melted, plus 1tbsp for greasing

Filling:

- 360g (12¾ oz) fresh blueberries and/or blackberries
- 60g (2oz/¼ cup) caster or granulated sugar
- 2tsp agar agar
- 1tbsp cornflour (cornstarch)
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 350ml (12fl oz/1½ cups) full-fat coconut milk

Toppings:

- 100g (3½ oz) fresh blueberries and/or blackberries
- 2tbsp raw buckwheat
- 50g (1¾ oz) dark chocolate

Equipment needed:

- 23cm (9in) tart tin

Method:

- First, prepare the tart shell by putting the oats, buckwheat, hazelnuts and cocoa in a food processor or blender and blending until the mixture resembles fine sand. Add the dates, one tablespoon water and the two tablespoons coconut oil and blend again until combined. The mixture should press together easily in your fingers: if it's too dry, add another tablespoon of water and blend again.
- Grease the tart tin with the coconut oil and press in the mixture to form the tart shell. Set aside in the freezer to firm up for at least 15 minutes while you prepare the filling.
- Put the blueberries and/or blackberries, half the sugar, the agar agar, cornflour and lemon juice in a medium saucepan over a medium heat and cook for five minutes until bubbling. Transfer to a food processor or blender and blend for a few seconds just to combine everything (don't blend it completely smooth). Sieve the berries over the pan, pressing the mashed berries with the back of a spoon to capture the juice (should be around 240ml/8fl oz/1 cup). Save the leftover pulp for spreading on toast or as a topping

for oatmeal.

- Add the coconut milk and remaining sugar to the pan and heat gently for about 10 minutes, stirring often with a whisk. Once thickened, remove from the heat

and stir well again to ensure everything is smooth. Pour into the chilled tart shell and set aside in the fridge to firm up for at least one hour. Top with more fresh berries, raw buckwheat and dark chocolate.



Sunshine heart tarts

Makes 6 mini tarts

Nothing embodies joy and sunshine in a fruit more than a lovely sweet lemon and a lemon-flavoured treat is always a joy to devour; these little tarts are no exception. The cheery heart-shaped tarts are made with a date and buckwheat crust filled with a super tangy and smooth lemon curd. You don't even need to turn the oven on. All your guests can enjoy them as they're nut, gluten and refined-sugar free.

Prep time: 10 minutes, plus chilling

Cooking time: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

Date and buckwheat crust:

- 350g (12oz/2¾ cups) buckwheat
- 180g (6oz) stoned dates
- 3tbsp solid coconut oil, plus extra for greasing

Curd:

- 3tbsp maple or agave syrup
- 3tbsp coconut oil, unmelted
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- 240ml (8fl oz/1 cup) tinned full-fat coconut milk
- Grated zest and juice of 2-3 lemons
- ¼ tsp ground turmeric, or to taste
- 3tbsp cornflour (cornstarch)
- 1tsp agar agar

Toppings:

- 1tbsp pared strips of lemon rind
- Toasted flaked (slivered) coconut
- 2 slices of lemon, cut into tiny segments

Equipment needed:

- 6 mini heart shape tart tins

Method:

- First, prepare the crust by blending the buckwheat to a rough flour in a food processor. Add the dates and coconut oil, pulsing until combined. Add 75ml (2½ fl oz/⅓ cup) water, a tablespoon at a time, until a dough is formed. It should stick together easily without being too wet.
- Grease the tart tins with a little coconut oil and press the dough evenly into the tins. Leave to chill in the freezer while you make the filling.
- Make the curd filling. Put the maple syrup, coconut oil, vanilla and coconut milk in a small

saucepan and bring to a gentle simmer. Add the juice and zest of two of the lemons and the turmeric. Taste and add more lemon juice if you like. If you'd like it more yellow, add a tiny bit more turmeric.

- Mix the cornflour (cornstarch) with three tablespoons cold water in a small dish to form a paste. While your curd is gently simmering, pour in the cornflour paste, stirring the curd as you pour. The mixture should thicken after a minute or two. Add the agar agar and simmer for another three minutes. It should have the consistency of thick custard. Take off the heat and leave to cool for a few minutes.

- Remove the tart shells from the freezer. Pour spoonfuls of the curd into the tart shells and set aside in the fridge to chill for one hour, or until the top has set. To serve, top with lemon zest, toasted coconut and tiny lemon slices. Store leftovers in the fridge. Best eaten within two days.

Cosy cauliflower and coconut curry Serves 4

Cook up a flavourful feast with this easy 30-minute curry of cauliflower, chickpeas and comforting coconut milk. Cauliflower is a wonderful veggie to use in curry as it soaks up all the flavours from the fragrant Indian spices. My belly is always excited when I've got a pot of curry bubbling away on the hob and the smell is wafting through the house. This curry freezes beautifully too, so it's a great choice for advance meal prep and batch cooking.

Prep time: 10 mins

Cooking time: 30 mins

Ingredients:

- 3tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2tsp freshly grated ginger
- 2tsp garam masala
- 1tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp ground coriander
- ½-1tsp chilli powder, to taste
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- 1tsp sea salt
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cauliflower, cut into florets
- 1 x 400g (14oz) tin chickpeas (garbanzos), drained
- 1 x 400g (14oz) tin chopped tomatoes
- 175ml (6fl oz/¾ cup) full-fat coconut milk

To serve:

- Handful of fresh coriander (cilantro)
- 1tbsp chilli flakes (optional)
- Lime wedges
- Real easy roti

Method:

- Heat the vegetable oil in a medium size pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and fry for five minutes until soft and fragrant. Add the garlic and ginger and fry for a further two minutes, then add the spices and the salt and pepper and stir to coat everything evenly and cook for another five minutes. Add a little water if it starts sticking to the bottom of the pan.
- Add the cauliflower, chickpeas and chopped tomatoes, cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Add the coconut milk and simmer for another 10 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning as required. Sprinkle with coriander, chilli flakes (if using), and serve with rice, lime wedges and homemade roti.

Real easy roti Makes 7-8

These roti are a must for any Indian meal and are surprisingly simple to make. Delicious with dahls, curries, pickles and dips.

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cooking time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

- 260g (9¼ oz/1¾ cups) atta flour (wholewheat flour), plus extra for dusting
- ½ tsp sea salt
- 2tsp vegetable oil

Method:

- Put the flour and salt in a sieve and shake into a bowl. Pour in 175ml (6fl oz/¾ cup) and the oil, a little at a time, and mix together with your hands (you may not need all the water).
- Once the dough has formed, start kneading for a few minutes until it becomes a soft, pliable dough. Add a little more flour if it's too sticky.
- Divide the dough into 60g (2¼ oz) portions and roll into balls. Flatten the ball out into a small disc shape, thinning the edges of the circle with your fingers. Sprinkle some flour on a large board or clean work surface and start rolling the dough into large round circles.
- Cook over a tawa pan or in a large frying pan (skillet) over a medium heat until bubbles form – about one minute each side.

Eat the Rainbow by Harriet Porterfield, £20, Leaping Hare Press.



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