

Natural Lifestyle

LOVE LIFE, LIVE WELL — NATURALLY

www.mynaturallifestyle.com

July 2021



Think brain health

Natural Lifestyle's
guide to healthy
cognition

Clean and green

Eco-friendly switches
for a greener you

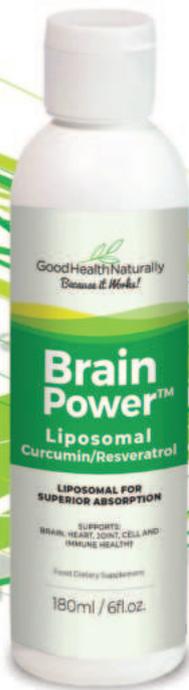
CRITICAL COLLAGEN

THE NEED FOR
COLLAGEN EXPLAINED

Plus FEEDING THE YOUNG • NATURAL LIFESTYLE GIVEAWAYS • YOUR
GUIDE TO B VITAMINS • SUN SAVVY ADVICE • INSIDE BEAUTY

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Welcome



The brain, that essential organ we need for life, we don't half put it through some challenges; excess stress, not allowing ourselves enough rest, poor diet, lack of nutrients, and too much alcohol are all factors within our control that can affect our cognitive function, both in the short and long-term.

And it seems that issues with brain function triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic are becoming a key concern; stress levels have undoubtedly risen during this period of uncertainty, diets have shifted (often for the worse as people seek comfort in food), many people have been less active, and we're not been outside so much. Given these are all important supports to keeping our brain healthy, it stands to reason that our collective cognition may not be at its best right now.

But as already highlighted, there is much within your control to care for this organ, and many changes are quite simple to make; for example, cutting back on refined sugar and adding in more wholefoods, reducing your alcohol intake and increasing water, and ensuring you are keeping the brain active are all important steps to take, as advised by our panel of experts on page 16.

Of course, these tips aren't just brain related; healthy eating, being active and ensuring you are getting enough important nutrients are the cornerstones of good health generally and taking responsibility for our own wellbeing has never been more important as we emerge from this difficult period. This is important for us all, no matter your age, but turning the focus on our young, in this issue of *Natural Lifestyle*, we have a selection of recipes to inspire you to make healthy, homecooked fare for your children – wholesome goodness from the earliest age. You can find these on page 32 and don't forget you can also bag yourself some prizes with our selection of giveaways on page 29.

*Rachel Symonds,
Editor*



THE BEST BITS

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



It was to the water for Editor Rachel as she tried her hand at paddleboarding for the first time, complete with a fall into the lake!



Do running routes get any more stunning when the sun is shining like this?



Natural Lifestyle's mascot, René, showed owner and designer, Clare, the way on a sunshine walk.

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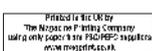
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NEOCCELL.



WALK YOUR WAY

The summer is the perfect time to get out and explore your local environment and the Ramblers is here to help.

The organisation is encouraging everyone to experience the joys of being outdoors with its Walk Your Way campaign, wherever you are, whether you're in search of calming nature or thrilling adventure. Whether you're an ambler, scrambler, experienced ramble or absolute beginner, the Ramblers will be offering ideas, challenges and tips to help you enjoy open skies, fresh air and the feeling of freedom that comes from walking in green spaces and the great outdoors.

There is a series of special Ramblers Walk Your Way inspiration packs covering the English regions and Wales and Scotland, which are free to download at www.ramblers.org.uk/walkyourway. The pack includes summer walking tips, a local sample walk route from the easy-to-search Ramblers Routes online collection of more than 3,000 walk routes across Britain, challenges to help walkers get more out of their walks and information about joining the Ramblers.

Tom Platt, Director of Advocacy and Engagement for the Ramblers, explained: "There's no one way to ramble. Join us and Walk Your Way this summer; a warm welcome and lots of inspiration and support awaits you to start your walking adventures!"

The Ramblers open the way for everyone to enjoy the simple pleasures of walking and steps up to protect the places we all love to wander. To help make your summer walking even more joyful, join the Ramblers from £3.05 a month and get a free neckwarmer until August 31 and while stocks last. Find out more at ramblers.org.uk/join

Inside... HEALTH

PREPARE FOR THE PERIMENOPAUSE



Nicki Williams

As women approach the menopause, balancing the hormones is imperative if you are to ease through the transition.

And Nutritionist and women's health expert, Nicki Williams, has four vital steps for hormone balance during perimenopause – eat, rest, cleanse, and move.

Nicki is the founder of Happy Hormones for Life, helping women of all ages to rebalance their hormones, reclaim their health and feel better than ever. She is also the author of the top-selling book, *It's Not You, It's Your Hormones – The Essential Guide for Women Over 40 to Fight Fat, Fatigue, and Hormone Havoc*. And she suggested:

- **Eat** – hormones need a variety of nutrients to function properly, so it's important to eat whole, nutrient-dense foods including protein, healthy fats, and complex carbohydrates. Lots of vegetables at each meal will help to crowd out not-so-healthy foods, and supply plant nutrients and fibre. Healthy fats (including avocado, oily fish, olive oil, nuts, seeds) will help to keep your blood sugar stable and feeling full between meals.
- **Rest** – managing stress hormones is vital for hormone balance. Factor in 15-20 minutes per day of relaxation or doing what you love; reading, cooking, walking, listening to music, dancing, yoga, meditation.
- **Cleanse** – certain chemicals that we are exposed to in our food and everyday products can disrupt our hormones, especially oestrogen. Avoid pesticides, plastics, and synthetic fragrances as these are some of the worst.
- **Move** – staying active is key to hormone balance but finding a balance that's right for you. Over-exercising can be a big stress on the body so can be counterproductive. Being more gentle with yourself at this time of life is helpful. Yoga, Pilates, and walking are all very good for your hormones!

SUMMER SIMPLICITY



When it's warmer, we can feel less like spending hours in the kitchen but it's important not to forget the importance of healthy eating.

And here to help is greenpan.co.uk, which has consulted with Nutritionist and health advisor, Emma Thornton, at A.Vogel, about what ingredients we should be wary of when shopping for quick and easy meals. She suggested:

- **Keep things simple** – be wary of products with long ingredient lists. This suggests that the 'food' has been manipulated far from its natural source. I recommend sticking to foods that have around five ingredients listed. Fresh is best.
- **Ditch artificial sweeteners** – artificial sweeteners are high on my list of ingredients to avoid, in particular, options such as aspartame or sucralose. Many of them are considered 'non-caloric'. This means they make it to the large intestine partially undigested, where they can go on to be metabolised by our gut bacteria. As a result, the gut bacteria can start releasing noxious substances, rather than the health-promoting short-chain fatty acids that we want. Plus, research suggests that certain artificial sweeteners may even be toxic to our good gut bacteria, killing them off, and completely throwing off the balance in the gut.
- **Know your oils** – poor quality oils can be easily hidden in processed foods. Poor quality vegetable oils, resultant trans fats, margarines, and butter substitutes should all be avoided in my opinion. These are generally pro-inflammatory as a result of the intense processes that these oils go through. Processes such as hydrogenation, for example, often use high temperatures to change the structure of the oil, whereas cold-pressed oils have been much more gently managed and retain their more natural form. Some good oils to look for are olive oil, avocado, and flaxseed oil. I'd also avoid low-calorie oils or sprays. Good quality fats are good for us, and we need them in our diet. Fats and oils should be just that; fats and oils. If they are somehow low calorie, it suggests that some of the natural fats have been removed and something else unnatural has been added in, in its place. Finally, I'd say to opt for organic oils wherever possible to help limit our exposure to unnecessary pesticides.

We love

ORGANII DRY BABY OIL – this moisturising oil is specially formulated for use on babies and children to nourish skin, keeping it soft and supple and is also ideal for baby massage. The oil contains organic sweet almond oil, which nourishes skin while helping improve skin thickness and strength. organic sunflower seed oil calms skin and creates a protective barrier and organic calendula extract helps reduce inflammation and makes it ideal for sensitive skin.

BIOKAP – lift the colour of your locks with this gentle and nourishing range of permanent hair dyes. Suitable for sensitive skin, they are free from PPD, ammonia and resorcinol, as well as being suitable for vegans.



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BREATHE EASY

Although normality is something many of us have been craving the last year, with restrictions lifting and life opening up, it's important to take your time in easing back in.

And that's where breathing exercises come in to help you slow down; the experts at Eastnine explain that as restrictions lift and the world opens up, many are returning to offices and social lives are busier than they have been for the past year. While this is a positive thing for some, others are feeling overwhelmed with the sudden change to the pace of life following months at home.

Eastnine coach, Davin Jones, recommends taking a moment

to practise regular breathing exercises to achieve a more centred mindset. This is because when we feel anxious, we often breathe using

mainly upper-chest and neck muscles. This reduces diaphragmatic breathing and stimulates the fight and flight response. Increased cortisol (stress hormone) levels, quicker heart rate, and compromised immune systems are requisites of individuals in a constant state of fight and flight. Breathing consciously from the respiratory diaphragm will up-regulate the rest and digest response and down-regulate fight and flight. Achieving this will harmonise hormone levels and leave the mind feeling more centred and present.

Here, Davin explains how to practice diaphragmatic breathing:

- Sit comfortably with the spine upright, stacking the head, ribs and hips, with the hips slightly higher than knees.
- Practice inhaling and exhaling for 10 breaths. Observe where you are breathing, keep note of this. Notice whether there is an area of the body that is easy to breathe into and where it is difficult.
- For diaphragmatic breathing, we want to try and spread the breath in all directions: the side body, front and back, stomach and chest. To do this, try and inhale into your lower side ribs first. See if you can accomplish this without forcing the breath.
- If you are having trouble breathing into the lower side ribs, first, try a Scalene Stretch. Place your right arm to the side at shoulder height and lower your neck in the opposite direction. Take six or seven full breaths and repeat on the opposite side.
- Return to the original breathing exercise to see if your breath is easier.

Inside... LIFESTYLE

Plan your post-lockdown fitness goals

With the sunshine here, gyms reopened and restrictions lifting, now is the time to put some fitness goals in place.

Many of us might be stuck in a bit of a lockdown fitness funk, having not been able to do our usual activities for so long, and so the experts at natural health brand, BetterYou, have offered a few simple fixes to put a pep in your step.

• **Refine your routine** – we are genuinely creatures of habit, so switch your mid-morning caffeine fix for a scrumptious smoothie or nightly Netflix to a few minutes on the mat with a yoga session. Aim to sleep smarter too, go to bed when you're tired and wake up at the same time every day. Rethinking your routine may help to lose the lockdown weight, see where you can begin to build healthy habits, optimise your time, and enhance your energy.

• **Supercharge nutrient levels** – how often have you tried to workout, only to find that you are just way too tired? Sadly, eating a balanced diet doesn't guarantee we're getting the energy-supporting nutrients we need and if we're always feeling lacklustre, we're less likely to hit the gym and more likely to make poor food choices. Getting enough B vitamins and iron is vital for energy production and metabolism and daily supplements can help to fill any nutritional gaps, making you feel more alert, without the inevitable crash that comes with other energy boosters. Though, be smart when choosing your supplements and be kind to your gut. Ingested supplements can often cause digestive discomfort, nausea, and constipation so pill-free supplements that are gentle on the digestive system are the best option for effective absorption.

• **Be consistent** – as a rule, we should be getting at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity every week. We're often told that mornings have an edge, but the truth is, there is no 'best time' of the day to exercise. There are positives and pitfalls to both morning and evening workouts, but it's the consistent among us that will see the best results in the long-term. Schedule your sessions where you're least likely to skip them and be realistic with your time. Setting 20 minutes aside is much easier to do than 60 minutes, and far less daunting too.

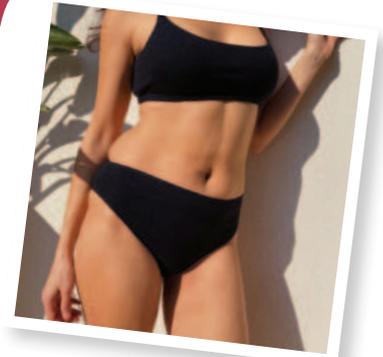
• **Rehydrate regularly** – in the UK, we should aim to drink six to eight glasses or 1.2-1.5 litres of water each day to replace normal water loss through breathing, sweating and digestion. Our bodies use water in all cells, organs, and tissues to regulate temperature, lubricate joints and flush out toxins, in addition to boosting brain function and keeping our heart healthy. Though what you may not realise is that upping your water intake can not only help you to lose weight, but gain an athletic edge, too. When it comes to training, dehydration makes us feel tired and depletes our energy levels, meaning we're less likely to exercise effectively. Replacing the sweat we lose with water, even on rest days, pays dividends in how we feel and perform by maintaining blood pressure, improving blood flow, and delivering oxygen and nutrients to working muscles.

DEDICATED TO THE PLANET

We love the eco conscious fitness range from the people at Dedicated, mixing function with positive change.

The brand prides itself on quality, affordability and low impact pieces, with all of its activewear and swimwear made from organic cotton or recycled material and without the use of toxic pesticides or chemicals.

Not only that but by using organic cotton, it uses up to 91 per cent less water, 62 per cent less energy, and emits 46 per cent less CO2 compared to conventional cotton farming. And by working with recycled plastics, Dedicated bypasses the oil extraction required to make virgin polyester. The production uses 59 per cent less energy and emits 32 per cent less CO2. It also saves a significant amount of water compared to virgin poly production.



Sustainable small

We wear them every day so it's a good idea to make sure our underwear is good for us and the planet.

Here to help is Magi's range of super soft bikini briefs and bralettes, all made from sustainable hemp.

Hemp is a great choice as it's more breathable and needs 80 per cent less water to grow than traditional cotton, it's antimicrobial and anti-odour, is one of the strongest natural fibres so it lasts a long time and gets softer each time you wash it.

No better reason to invest in some new underwear.

BODY CONFIDENCE

Love your body, it's the most amazing thing you'll ever own!



Let the freshness explode

Protect against odour with the Ben & Anna Vanilla Orchid Deodorant Cream in an eco-friendly tin. Flowery-sweet vanilla awakens the senses while the beneficial properties of marigold naturally soothes the skin. The vegan formula is non-sticky, and the lightweight packaging makes it perfect for taking with you on the go. Try the original and the best natural deodorant today!

www.benandanna.co.uk | £7.95

For natural healthy-looking skin

Scrub up and indulge yourself with the benecos Shower Scrub to leave your skin silky smooth and soft. This natural and organic Body Scrub uses apricot kernels to gently buff away and banish dry skin while elderflower extract helps to protect the skin against free radicals, leaving behind healthy glowing skin with an invigorating burst of fragrance.

www.benecos.uk | £5.95



Clean and confident

Freshen up your intimate area in the shower with this little bottle of goodness. The certified organic formulation of the Organyc Intimate Wash is infused with soothing chamomile, calendula and aloe vera to gently cleanse and calm the intimate area while helping to avoid irritations. It is ideal for sensitive skin and the gentle formulation is suitable for daily use to keep intimate skin happy and feeling fresh and confident all day long.

www.organyc.uk | £8.49



Pamper your skin

Looking for a plastic free alternative that also looks after your skin. Why not try the Fair Squared Green Tea Body Lotion. It has a combination of Fairtrade olive oil and grape seed oil, which gives this body lotion a light and moisturising texture and easily absorbs into the skin. It is rich in natural vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids, and antioxidants, which prevent premature ageing and help rejuvenate the skin.

www.fairsquared.co.uk | £12.75



Rejuvenate the skin you are in

One bar for your hair and body. 100% care. 0% plastic. The lavera Basis Sensitiv 2in1 Hair & Body Cleansing Bar is enriched with aloe vera and plant-based keratin to gently cleanse the skin and hair without drying it out. This little eco-friendly bar is kind to sensitive skin and scalps while the foamy lather gently cleanses and provides instant moisture and care.

www.laverauk.co.uk | £6.95



CLEAR YOUR COMPLEXION

Prepping your skin for make-up is key to a polished look, and one top make-up artist is here to offer her tips on how.

From rock stars to royalty, celebrity make-up artist, Alice Theobald, (pictured, left), has buffed, blended, cleansed, creamed and groomed a plethora of famous faces and she has teamed up with Nelsons Arnicare to offer her top tips for looking and feeling your best.

- **Complexion preparation is key** – make-up will cover a multitude of sins, but a little TLC in the form of skin prep goes a long way. Less is more when it comes to looking naturally flawless! My homeopath introduced me to arnica decades ago, long before I got through the doors of beauty school. It's an absolute staple in my kit and you can always find some in my bathroom cabinet. I very much believe in treating the skin rather than covering it!
- **Exfoliate** – whether you prefer peels, scrubs or brushing, get rid of those dead skin cells and let your new skin shine through.
- **Beautify that bruise** – whilst having a bruise is never the end of the world, they can take a lot of make-up to disguise. Moreover, they can be rather painful! Reach for your Nelsons Arnicare to reduce any bruising. The fragrance-free formula gives a natural finish under studio lighting, a great multipurpose product!
- **Sun-kissed** – I love a sun kissed finish and for some jobs a tan is actually part of my brief. To prevent excess tan grabbing to dry areas of the face and body, (such as elbows, knees, hands, feet, eyebrows and the hairline), I apply moisturiser to those areas, to prevent the tan clinging. I then get my tanning mitt and evenly apply the chosen shade of sunshine.



Inside... BEAUTY

Hail the Kale

Protect your skin from the effects of everyday pollution with the help of this indulgent range from Nourish London.

The Kale skincare range introduces the vitamin-rich, powerful antioxidant and protective strengths of this superfood to your skin. Key ingredients includes kale extract, a rich source of powerful antioxidants and with a unique enzyme system which protects skin cells from environmental damage, whilst maintaining skin elasticity and suppleness.

It also contains griffonia extract, which protects from UV-induced cell damage and environmental stressors and rose of Jericho extract to soothe and hydrate the skin, aid cell renewal and protect the skin against environmental stressors.

The range includes our favourite, the Kale Enzymatic Exfoliator, a multi-tasking three in one treatment (a cleanser, exfoliator and mask). There is also Anti-Ageing Eye Cream, specially formulated for the fine skin around the eyes, and 3D Cleanse; this unique colour changing facial wash lifts impurities to reveal healthy and radiant skin.

All Nourish London skincare is vegan, alcohol-free and excludes unfriendly chemicals, such as synthetic colours, TEA, DEA, parabens, phenoxyethanol, sulphates, mineral oils, and PEGS.



Scrubbing up naturally

Three of the best...

Your skin needs regular exfoliation and here to help, we bring you our top three facial scrubs.



WILD SCIENCE LAB ROOT + FRUIT POWER SMOOTHIE SKIN POLISH

– this vitamin and plant packed face polish blends skin friendly ingredients such as vitamin C and bamboo extract with evening primrose oil, meadowfoam seed oil, carrot, grapefruit and orange oils and organic coconut oil. Massage onto dull and lacklustre skin to help restore a smooth, glowing and balanced complexion.

GREEN PEOPLE FRUIT SCRUB EXFOLIATOR

– brightening and nourishing, this sweet-smelling scrub expertly buffs away dead skin cells using ultra fine bamboo and bentonite clay particles. A concentrated formula, it also uses organic orange blossom, antioxidant cranberry, cypress, bergamot, black pepper and ground apricot kernels. Mandarin and bergamot scented, it also blends nourishing shea butter and skin firming hibiscus, with the added benefit of being 90 per cent certified organic, cruelty-free, vegan friendly, clean and eco-friendly and kind to sensitive skin.



Q+A APPLE AHA EXFOLIATING GEL

– a clever combo of naturally occurring AHAs, malic, lactic and glycolic acids, along with apple fruit extracts make this facial exfoliator a winner when it comes to bright, fresh and glowing skin. Perfect for all skin types, the gentle but super effective formula eases away dead skin cells, helping to unclog pores, stimulate collagen production and encourage cell turnover, whilst leaving skin smooth, soft, moisturised and protected.



WELLBEING FOR MIND AND BODY

A new skincare range inspired by the daughter of an organic skincare pioneer has been developed to encourage wellbeing and self-care.

Alexandra Kay is a new, natural wellbeing collection inspired and created by the daughter of Green People's founder, Charlotte Vohtz. The capsule collection of delicately blended essential oils offers a natural way to benefit from aromas that calm and comfort the body and the mind. All blends are 100 per cent natural, eco-friendly, cruelty-free and vegan.



The collection makes its debut with three essential oil blends; Time to Smile, an uplifting essential oil to revitalise the mind and boost happiness, Time to Relax, a comforting pure essential oil blend to help you relax and unwind, and Time to Sleep, a calming evening blend of pure essential oils to prepare you for a restful sleep.

With personal experience of living with the chronic illness, Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, Alexandra has created the range of natural wellbeing products to deliver a moment of comfort and harmony, with 10 per cent of net profits going to support the charity, Ehlers-Danlos Support UK.

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Guarana, Couch Grass, Black Pepper, Kelp

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Licorice, Astragalus,
Ashwagandha,
Rhodiola, Mace



BETTER WITH B

Learn about the range of B vitamins, and why we need them for our health and wellbeing, in mind and body.

B vitamins are a group of nutrients that play a critical role in our health, and without them, certain functions in the body cannot be performed. But we also know that as essential as they are, many people can be lacking

in adequate levels.

And while we can get good amounts from a variety of foods, in modern times and with often lacking diets and certain groups of people having additional requirements, it can be a good idea to supplement with some B vitamins, whether as an overall B complex that offers a range of nutrients, or with specific B vitamin supplements.

So, what do you need to know about B vitamins and how can you boost your intake?

ADEQUATE LEVELS

To ensure you are getting plenty of B vitamins on a daily basis, you should always start with your diet, introducing foods rich in the range of nutrients.

Green leafy veg is one of the best ways to get an intake of a range of B vitamins, so try to regularly consume spinach, kale and cabbage. Nuts and seeds too contain certain B vitamins, B6 can also be found in oats and soya beans, while milk and eggs boast B2 and B12.

For those who do eat meat, poultry contains B6, and meat and fish generally has B12, as does cheese, which is why vegans can be lacking. You will also be able to find foods such as cereals and breads that have added B vitamins, but we would always recommend you opt for foods with these naturally occurring nutrients – and also be aware of what else is in the ingredients list in terms of additives.

When choosing a supplement, talk to your health food store about what's right for your needs, diet and lifestyle, and be sure to tell them if you are taking any medication.

ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

There are a range of B vitamins and a number of them are considered essential in that they play a critical role in the health of our organs and body systems.

Let's look at the specific B vitamins closer in terms of why we need them:

- **B12** – this is essential for our nervous system, and without enough, we can be lacking in energy. Vitamin B12 is involved in helping the body make red blood cells and releasing energy from food. Natural sources can be found in red meat, and so vegans and vegetarians can be low and are advised to supplement.
- **B6** – another really important one, this B vitamin helps the body to use and store energy from protein and carbohydrates in food, as well as helping form haemoglobin, found in red blood cells, which carries oxygen around the body – making it very important for energy.
- **Folate** – this vitamin, also known as B9, is well-known for its role in pregnancy, being known to reduce the risk of neural tube defects in unborn babies. Women should take a supplement in its manmade form, folic acid, prior to conception and during the first trimester. It also plays a role in the formation of healthy red blood cells.
- **B1** – this can often be referred to as thiamine and is required for the body to break down and release energy from food, as well as keeping the nervous system healthy.
- **B2** – also called riboflavin, this vitamin plays a role in skin and eye health.
- **Pantothenic acid** – this one has several functions, including helping the body to release energy from food.
- **Biotin** – its official name is B7, and is required to make fatty acids, not to mention supporting hair health.

TRY THIS

BetterYou Boost B12 Oral Spray

Terranova Nutrition Advanced Synergy B-Complex

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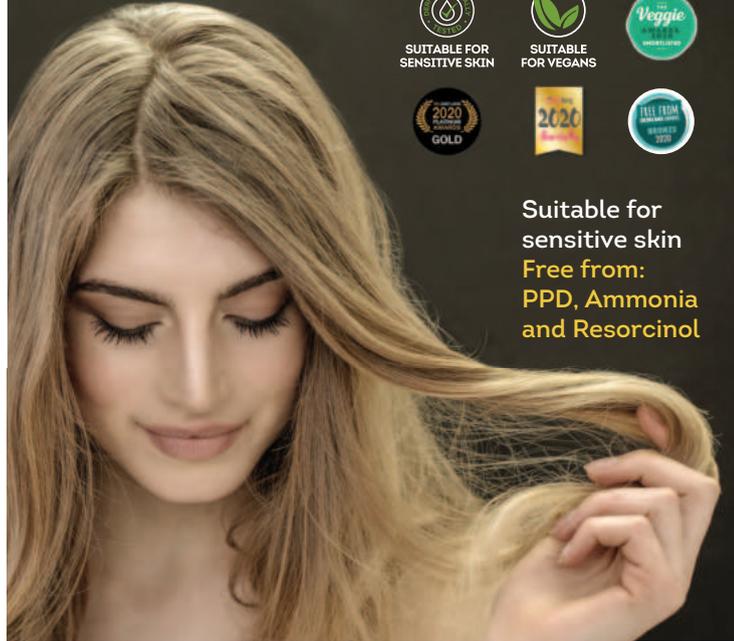
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NATURAL LIFESTYLE'S Top Picks



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Contains collagen (7500mg) glucosamine (1000mg) and chondroitin (800mg) ... a unique 3-in-1 formula for those with mobility and arthritis issues. Beautivite: Provides 100% pure collagen and a natural route to younger-looking skin, stronger nails and healthier hair.



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Vitamin B-Complex

Terranova's top selling product internationally, Vitamin B-Complex with Vitamin C is a powerfully active, yet gentle and balanced formulation featuring balanced levels of B vitamins, vitamin C, magnesium, adaptogenic plants, synergistic wholefoods and more. As with all Terranova products containing these nutrients, the folate and vitamin B12 are in their active and highly bioavailable forms, methylfolate and methylcobalamin, and it is 100 per cent additive-free, and 100 per cent vegan.

www.terranovahealth.com



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YOUR FLEXIBLE FRIEND

Collagen is essential to keep things supple and flexible, whether talking about the joints or our skin. Here's how you can make sure you're not lacking.

It's likely you've come across collagen before when choosing facial care products, given it's often a key ingredient included in anti-ageing creams. This is because collagen plays a critical role in supporting skin health as we get older, but its effects go much further than that. Collagen is necessary for skin health in a range of ways, but is also really important for our joints, helping to keep them supple and flexible. However, as with other nutrients, as we get older, we produce less naturally, meaning we should be keeping an eye on our levels through food and supplements.

TOPPING UP

Our body naturally contains collagen so when we are younger, we usually have adequate amounts and don't notice any adverse effects in our skin or joints. But the older we get, the lower our levels, hence why it is so involved in the anti-ageing beauty industry – and why we can start to see wrinkles and lost flexibility.

We should also remember there are factors that can speed up the loss of collagen; smoking, poor nutrition, including excess sugar, stress and dehydration are all known contributors. Also bear in mind that exposure to UV rays can deplete collagen.

Luckily, there are a range of ways you can increase your levels naturally.

Starting with our diet, certain foods contain collagen, including soymilk and cheese, dark green leafy vegetables, eggs, and red fruits and vegetables. Increasingly popular is bone broth, which contains high levels of collagen.

If you also want to supplement, there are factors to take into account. Collagen supplements usually come in powder form, which can be added to water or juice and are an easy way to top up your intake. Look for those that contain bioactive hydrolysed collagen peptides, known to be well absorbed and utilised in the body, and make sure they don't contain additives.

We should also consider plenty of vitamin C-rich foods and potentially a supplement as vitamin C is needed for collagen production.

WHAT IS COLLAGEN?

Many people aren't aware of just how important collagen is and why.

Let's start with the fact it is the most abundant protein in the body, and there are different types found in different parts of the body, including the skin, joint tissue, bones and even blood vessels.

Collagen works almost as a building block, providing structure in these areas and acting as connectors, for example, connecting joint tissue to the skeleton.

In relation to the joints, collagen is a key component of cartilage, which is needed for protection and lubrication, acting almost as a cushion against bones. Without collagen, we can lose this cushioning and experience inflammation, reduced mobility and joint pain.

And turning to the skin, collagen is a key component of the dermis, which is what gives it its plump and elastic appearance. When our natural levels of collagen are depleted (through age and lifestyle factors), it can lead to wrinkles as this protein isn't there to keep the skin looking plump.

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Drink Mix

Arthrovite Collagen Plus
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CHECK YOUR COGNITION

Rates of brain conditions are known to be rising, yet there's much we can do to slow down cognitive decline, as our experts explain.

We live in a society where rates of brain disease such as Alzheimer's are rising, and according to some experts, rapidly so. There are many factors that contribute to this, but research tells us that how we choose to live our lives, and our nutritional status, plays a critical role in how well the brain ages.

Mike Wakeman is Pharmacist and Head of Product at Neubria, which specialises in brain supplements, and explained: "Whilst incidence of true mental illness and conditions associated with deterioration of an ageing brain, such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease, are rising rapidly, there is also a recognition that looking after your brain isn't simply a case of disease prevention. There is now an appreciation that caring for the brain will help

us function optimally from a cognitive perspective in our daily lives."

Catherine Gorman, Nutritionist and Health Coach at Good Health Naturally, added: "Figures show there are at least 850,000 people with dementia in the UK, and that number is expected to exceed a million by 2025. Alzheimer's accounts for 70 per cent of all cases. In 2015, dementia overtook heart disease and stroke as the UK's biggest cause of death. Indeed, a woman's chance of developing Alzheimer's is now greater than her chance of developing breast cancer. Mild cognitive impairment is believed to affect between 10 and 20 per cent of people aged over 65."

We should also consider the additional load the pandemic has placed on our brains.

Amy Hipwell, Technical Advisor at Viridian Nutrition, explained: "More recently, there has

been a surge in cognitive health issues. One of the reasons is due to a higher amount of stress in the environment. On this note, with the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a sharp rise in cases of cognitive issues. The hippocampus part of the brain appears to be particularly vulnerable to Coronavirus infections, thus increasing the probability of post-infection memory impairment, and acceleration of neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's disease.

"As well as this, the pandemic has caused no end of issues for many people. Losing jobs, working from home, not being able to see friends and family to name but a few, all contribute to a person's overall cognitive health. Recent findings from Public Health England showed that all demographic groups examined (age, sex, race/ethnicity, income) experienced increases in distress after the onset of the pandemic."

SUPPLEMENTS FOR THE BRAIN

Our brain requires a constant supply of nutrients, and while we should focus on obtaining these from the diet, supplements are also recommended.

"It is worth taking a good multivitamin and mineral to ensure intake of micronutrients critical for good brain function. However, a multivitamin alone is unlikely to contain other nutrients for optimal function, such as choline and coenzyme Q10, lutein and zeaxanthin, crucial for good cognition but challenging to obtain sufficient quantities from the diet alone," Mike advised.

Dr Marilyn Glenville PhD, a leading nutritionist and author of *Natural Solutions for Dementia and Alzheimer's*, highlighted essential fats for all.

"Supplements of omega 3 can be helpful as DHA, one of the major omega 3 fatty acids in the brain, seems to have the most protective effect against Alzheimer's. DHA helps prevent plaque forming in the brain, which is present in Alzheimer's, and help improve cerebral blood flow and reduce inflammation, making them important in the fight against Alzheimer's and vascular dementia."

She added: "Other nutrients include an amino acid called acetyl-L-carnitine as it increases brain receptors that would normally deteriorate with age so helpful for memory loss and dementia. People with Alzheimer's have been found to have a shortage of the neurotransmitter, acetylcholine, critical for memory and brain function. Choline is a starting block for

acetylcholine and contained in high amounts in egg yolks and found in soya and nuts."

Catherine went on: "Serrapeptase, a proteolytic enzyme, can help reduce inflammation around the body, including the brain. Vinpocetine, a compound derived from the periwinkle plant, can support healthy brain blood flow, memory, concentration and overall cognitive function. The brain is full of receptors for vitamin D; deficiency has been linked to cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's and higher blood plasma levels of vitamin A are associated with better memory performance."

In supporting the gut, Kim Plaza, Technical Advisor at ADM Protexin, manufacturers of Bio-Kult and Lepicol brands, suggested probiotics.

"In a recent clinical trial, 12 weeks of supplementation with a multi-strain live bacterial supplement was shown to positively affect cognitive function and metabolic status in patients with Alzheimer's disease. Specifically, *Bacillus subtilis* PXN 21 strain was also recently shown to reduce toxic protein aggregation in an experimental model of Parkinson's disease."

She also raised zinc, commenting: "Zinc is important for cognitive function (being essential for the regulation of neurons and synapses in the brain) and deficiency may cause alterations in attention, activity,

neuropsychological behaviour and motor development. Zinc is involved in insulin control and deficiency may contribute to type 2 diabetes.

"Another group of nutrients that may prove to be beneficial is B vitamins, found to lower the amino acid, homocysteine. It has been suggested that the reduction of homocysteine through B6 supplementation reduces brain atrophy in those with mild cognitive impairment. Vitamin B12 deficiency has also been associated with cognitive impairment and could potentially be useful for those wanting to maintain good cognitive health."

Amy pointed towards botanicals, including brahmi.

"Bacosides are the active ingredient in brahmi, which have been shown to exert antioxidant effects in the brain, supporting performance after the onset of cognitive decline and aiding the function of nerves and neurotransmitters. Research has shown that brahmi can help achieve significant improvements in memory and attention tests," she explained.

"Lemon balm works by improving brain levels of the neurotransmitter, gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), exerting anti-anxiety and calming effects without making you feel drowsy. Ginkgo is a well-known tree native to China. Ginkgo works on neurodegenerative conditions and overall brain health, including Alzheimer's, vascular dementia, cognitive impairment, and mixed dementias."

MANAGE YOUR RISK

When it comes to cognitive conditions, Dr Glenville explained: "The terms dementia and Alzheimer's are often used interchangeably but dementia is actually an umbrella term for up to 100 different types of disease, of which Alzheimer's disease is just one."

"Accounting for 50-75 per cent of cases, Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia. Caused by plaques and tangles developing in the brain, vascular dementia causes between 20-30 per cent of dementia cases but is rarely seen in the under-65s. Someone with vascular dementia will be suffering with a problem connected with blood supply (and so oxygen) to the brain. The research suggests that there is a 20- to 30-year interval between first development of amyloid plaque and onset of dementia. So, no matter what age you are it is never too late to change your diet and lifestyle."

Kim went on: "An increase in cases of dementia has occurred over the past few decades and estimated cases are expected to rise by 204 per cent by 2050 to 152m globally. It is thought that this expected rise is due to ageing populations, however, diet and lifestyle factors are also thought to play a role. Many non-dementia related conditions, such as depression, cardiac dysfunction, cardiovascular disease, Parkinson's disease, insulin resistance, chronic inflammation, and hormone dysregulation are also suggested to be associated with cognitive frailty."

"The third and fourth decades of life are suggested to be a particularly 'sensitive period' of life, where efforts to prevent, detect and control some modifiable risk factors for cognitive decline are likely to have the maximum positive impact upon brain health; for example, obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol."

And while we can't stop ageing, there are steps to slow cognitive decline.

"We are all living longer, and age is the biggest risk factor. It is suggested cognitive function peaks in our 20s and a rapid decline can take place in our 60s. Many people notice a natural deterioration in memory and thinking as they get older," Catherine explained.

And Kim pointed out: "Research shows that our genes are responsible for approximately a quarter of the variability in cognitive abilities as we age. This means that three quarters of the influence over our cognitive ageing is via potentially modifiable factors, including some lifestyle factors we might control ourselves, such as diet and exercise."

Try this

- ★ Bio-Kult Mind
- ★ Natural Health Practice Advanced Brain & Memory Support
- ★ Motion Nutrition Power Up
- ★ Viridian Nutrition Peak Focus
- ★ Synaptaid Advanced Brain Support

LIFESTYLE CHECK

Kim pointed out the effect of a poor lifestyle.

"Evidence suggests that sedentary behaviour is significantly associated with an increased risk of dementia. Prolonged inactivity may alter glucose and lipid (or fat) metabolism and how our body processes them, as well as levels of inflammation. These aspects have been identified as possible risk factors for cognitive impairment and exercise has been considered a protective factor," she explained.

There are a range of ways to support your brain health:

- **Exercise:** Mike explained: "Plenty of physical exercises, a healthy diet, but also seeking to exercise the brain by engaging in pursuits that keep the mind active, such as being socially active, since, as the pandemic has shown, social isolation can sometimes be associated with conditions such as depression that can prevent enjoyment of life to the full."
- **Sleep:** "Sleep is one of the most important factors to support optimal brain function. An average of seven to nine hours of sleep is needed each night to prevent fatigue and tiredness. Research has shown that adequate sleep helps to improve memory and learning, increase attention and creativity, and aid in making decisions," Amy explained. Dr Glenville added: "The best sleep position for clearing out this plaque is on your side."
- **Brain activity:** Catherine explained: "It is crucial to keep the brain active, it really is a case of use it or lose it. Stimulate it with activities such as reading, crosswords, sudoku, learn an instrument or another language. Ensure there is plenty of social interaction with friends, groups and societies. Frequent engagement with other people helps strengthen neural networks, slowing decline."

FEEDING THE BRAIN

How nutritionally healthy you are is critical to the brain.

"Poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyle can have a huge impact on our cognitive health. For example, cognitive development during infancy and childhood is most sensitive to nutritional habits. During this critical stage of life, the child's brain is developing at a rapid rate. If a child is malnourished or does not receive the vital nutrients necessary for cognitive function, it may result in cognitive deficits, slower learning, poor school performance, increased likelihood of ADHD development and behavioural issues," Amy advised.

"In addition, a diet high in sugar can significantly deplete your child's energy levels and disrupt mental concentration and focus. It is therefore critical for children to receive adequate nutrition during development, to avoid impaired cognitive function."

Mike added: "A poor diet, lack of exercise, and the possible result of obesity/being overweight create a vicious cycle of problems, causing chronic inflammation that can profoundly affect the brain. Over time, this is thought to form the origin of many conditions affecting cognitive development and health."

Considering the gut is critical too: "Our gut microbiome houses trillions of microorganisms and they are in constant communication with our immune system. An imbalanced microbiome is described as dysbiosis and has been implicated in the development of some of the more severe cognitive conditions such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease," Kim advised.

"Our microbiome may play a role in cognitive health; proposed to be via the microbiota-gut-brain axis, this is a two-way communication between our brain and our gut."

Looking at dietary changes, switches are pretty straightforward.

"Studies show a number of nutrients, including antioxidants, vitamins, polyphenols, and essential fatty acids, may reduce the risk of cognitive decline. So, it is important to eat a diet rich in vegetables, low sugar fruit, such as apples and berries, and healthy fats, including olive oil, coconut oil, avocados, nuts and seeds, legumes, oily fish and seafood," Catherine suggested.

Dr Glenville went on: "Making sure you keep your blood sugar in balance is also important as blood sugar and insulin have been so closely linked with an increased risk of Alzheimer's that it has been suggested that Alzheimer's should be called type 3 diabetes."

Kim continued: "Evidence suggests that processed meats, refined carbohydrates and fried food is associated with poorer cognitive performance, whilst wholegrain foods are associated with positive cognitive function. It could be that the fried foods and processed meats promote inflammation throughout the body and in the brain."

And Amy added: "It might also be worth looking at your caffeine intake. Caffeine is a stimulant and promotes the central nervous system stimulation, however, it blocks adenosine, which is an inhibitory neurotransmitter in the brain that makes you sleepy. As caffeine competes for the same receptors as adenosine, it can cause over stimulation of the brain."

Mike pointed towards the Med diet: "The one diet that has been demonstrated to benefit brain health is the Mediterranean diet, with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, oily fish and healthy omega oils. This will have benefits not only for the brain but also for the heart and immune system, and it is generally anti-inflammatory."

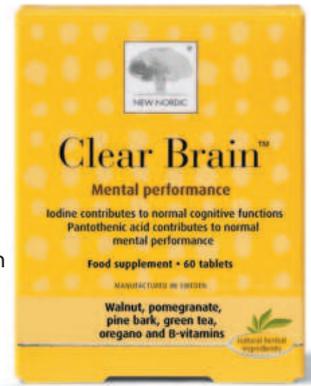
NATURAL LIFESTYLE'S Top Picks



Support your brain performance

The brain is the largest and most important part of your nervous system. It receives and coordinates signals from your senses, movement and memory. New Nordic developed Clear Brain and it's based on a natural extract combination, vitamins and minerals to support brain performance. The content of iodine contributes to normal cognitive functions. Pantothenic acid contributes to normal mental performance. Riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B6 and B12 reduces fatigue and contribute to the normal function of the nervous system.

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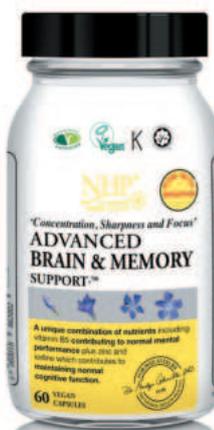
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www.motionnutrition.com



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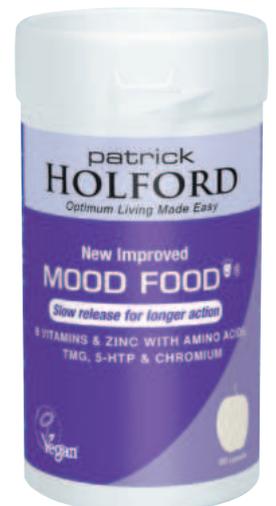
www.naturalhealthpractice.com

Mood Food

Mood Food supports the 'Feel Good Factor' and is suitable for customers with stressful lifestyles. Designed by pioneer nutritionist Patrick Holford, this unique, natural formulation has been created to support chemicals in the brain as well as nervous system activity. 5-HTP and Tyrosine are both effective in helping to improve mood. The combination of vitamins B6 and B12 as well as Folic Acid contribute to the normal functioning of the nervous system and help reduce tiredness and fatigue. Vitamin B12 also contributes to homocysteine metabolism as does the vitamin B3. Zinc is included for normal cognitive function.

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www.holfordirect.com



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 8 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. This medicinal mushroom has several supporting actions in the brain, including boosting 'nerve growth factors' that can stimulate regeneration of brain cells. Lion's Mane has been found to significantly improve brain function in individuals suffering from 'cognitive impairment' in just a few weeks.

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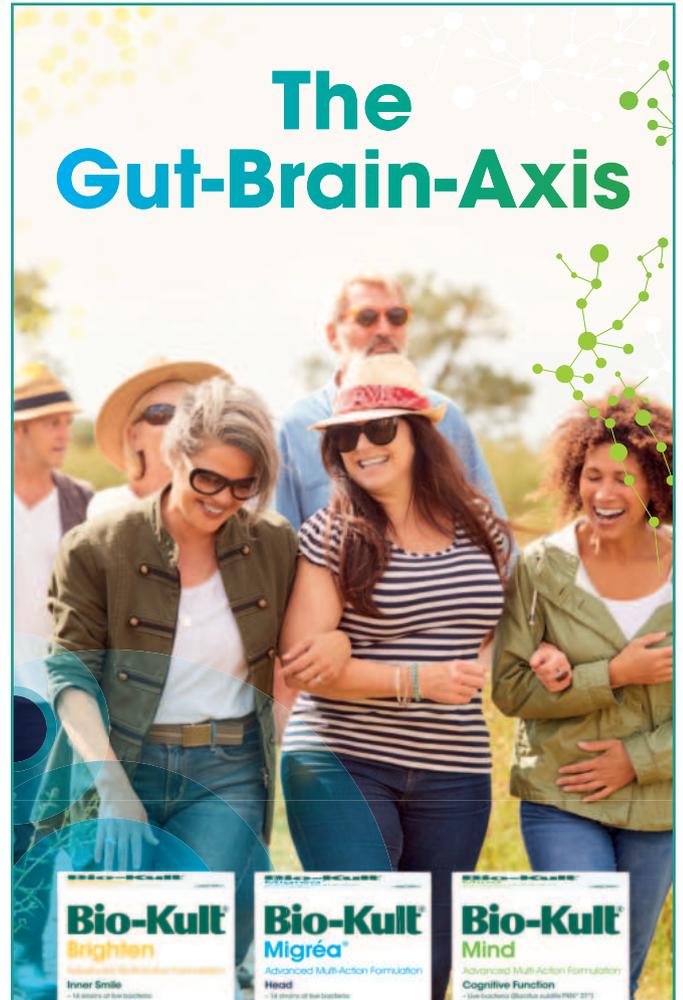
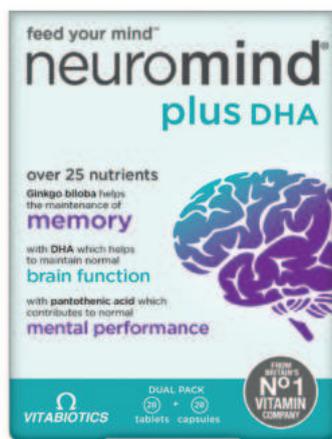
immune system and support the gastrointestinal system naturally. Individual supplements support digestion, tiredness and stress, cholesterol balance, menopause and multi-vitamins. All are GMO free. Try Gunabrain: with its mix of N-Acetylcysteine, Selenium, Manganese, Coenzyme Q, Green Tea, Indian Ginseng, designed to support brain health and function. Italian company Guna has been successfully developing and promoting natural health treatments for 35 years. Check out the full GUNA Lifestyle range online at www.gunalifestyle.co.uk

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Neuromind Plus dual pack contains a high purity Omega-3 capsule providing DHA which helps to maintain normal brain function[1]. It also includes iron, zinc and iodine which support normal cognitive function, plus pantothenic acid which contributes to normal mental performance. Plus vitamins B6 and vitamin C which contribute to the normal functioning of the nervous system.

[1] The beneficial effect is obtained with a daily intake of 250mg of DHA

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Ask the experts

RESTART YOUR ENERGY...

by Emily Simpson

How big of a problem is low energy and what are the most common reasons we can experience it?

As we begin to look forward to 'freedom day' and a summer of socialising, spending more time with family and friends will be hugely beneficial for our mental wellbeing, but now we face the challenge of rebuilding our energy levels after leading more sedentary lifestyles.

Stress, anxiety, and disruption to our usual routine can all have a damaging effect on our sleeping patterns and impact our natural body clock, leaving many of us feeling sluggish. A lack of energy and lethargy can also be due to a lack of key nutrients in our diet. B vitamin and iron deficiencies are two very common causes of fatigue, and these nutrients can often slip through the net when it comes to our 'wellbeing radar', meaning that we often mask these dips in energy by reaching for caffeine and other energy-boosters.

Can it lead to any other associated health issues or long-term health complaints?

Getting enough sleep is important for both physical and psychological recovery. When we do not take enough time to recharge on a night, it can alter our body's biochemistry, making it more difficult to fall asleep long-term. In the short-term, it can impact our decision making, reaction

times whilst driving, and changes in mood.

Lack of vitamin B12 can also impact our neurological functions that govern our mood and body, such as paralysis, confusion, depression, and the onset of an unsteady gait. More physical complaints are noticed when we have chronic deficiencies of iron. This deficiency can increase our risk of heart and lung conditions such as an abnormally fast heartbeat and heart failure.

Can you recommend a healthy plan to boost energy?

Keep energy levels high by trying to get plenty of sleep – healthy adults need seven to nine hours per night. Sticking to a sleep schedule and disconnecting from electronic devices 30 minutes before bed can also help improve sleep quality.

Our diet plays a key role in fuelling the body and it's important to follow a healthy, balanced diet containing complex carbohydrates, healthy fats and proteins. Drinking six to eight glasses of water daily will avoid dehydration, which can leave you feeling fatigued, and exercising, even just for a short period of time, helps your cardiovascular system work more efficiently, releasing endorphins which help elevate mood. I would also advise taking a multivitamin supplement containing vitamin B12 and iron to boost levels of nutrients you may be lacking.

Q I've found the pandemic experience has left me feeling down. What natural approaches would you recommend before I consider visiting my GP?

Mike Wakeman suggested: Don't worry; you are not alone! Many people have found the consequences of the last year resulted in a downhill lifestyle, with less exercise, increased alcohol intake, poorer sleep, and a less than optimal diet, all of which can lead to low mood. This is reflected by the significant increase in numbers of antidepressant prescriptions over the past year. And whilst it's always advisable to seek medical advice around mental health issues, there are positive changes to lifestyle and diet that can positively impact mood.

For example, in Canada, clinical guidelines mean you are likely to be recommended exercise as a first-line intervention, with yoga or light

therapy as second-line additional support. St John's wort is also recommended as first-line treatment, but extra care is needed when taking this alongside other medications, whilst increasing omega 3 fatty acid intake forms second-line support.

Evidence also suggests that insufficient vitamin D intake is associated with low mood. Hence, exposure to healthy levels of sunshine along with a good supplement is a beneficial way to ensure levels are topped up. A healthy Mediterranean style diet can also help provide a rich array of micronutrients and high levels of essential compounds known as polyphenols, which can help elevate mood. However, a quality supplement can also combat any micronutrient deficits. Those containing botanicals such as saffron, curcumin, ashwagandha and rhodiola, all known to help combat stress or elevate mood, are worth seeking out.

About the experts



EMILY SIMPSON is Nutritional Expert and Product Development Technologist at pioneering natural health brand, BetterYou. A scientific scholar and first-class Biological Sciences graduate, Emily studied at Durham University before starting her career within the Product Development department. She has been pivotal to the success of BetterYou's first consumer trial for Turmeric Oral Spray.



INGRID JAMIESON is Marketing Manager at natural beauty and wellbeing company, Pravera, which has the lavera, ORGANii and Benecos ranges in its portfolio.



MIKE WAKEMAN is Pharmacist and Head of Product Development at the supplement company, Neubria.



DARREN ROBINSON is Commercial Director at Steens Honey and has over 10 years' experience in the UK health food trade, having previously headed up the sales team at Meridian Foods. Darren's passion for honey has come from a farming upbringing and spending summers stealing honey from hives with his bare hands!

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Ask the experts

NATURAL SUN SAFETY GUIDE...

by Ingrid Jamieson

What can be contained in conventional sunscreen products that aren't desirable for the skin?

Thanks to years of being warned about the sun's harmful UV rays, we either stay out of it or cover ourselves in high factor sun lotion and roast ourselves for hours; 78 per cent of Britons said they were sunburned last year due to not using sun cream, not applying enough or not applying correctly. Too much sun exposure can take its toll on our skin by damaging the skin cells and eventually ageing our skin.

Conventional sunscreens can contain harmful chemicals, such as oxybenzone and octinoxate. When these chemicals are exposed to sunlight, reactions occur, with the skin causing inflammation, irritation and allergic reactions.

There is a lot of buzz about toxic ingredients in sunscreen, and rightly so. Everyone should consider their skin to be sensitive and focus on sensitive skin sunscreen. Most people use sunscreen to allow them to stay in the sun longer without worry of skin damage. Some studies have reported there could be health concerns with the ingredients in sunscreen, outweighing the benefits of their skin protection.

So, when we step outside this summer, we need to take care of our skin and keep it protected from the harmful UV rays by applying a natural mineral sun protection cream. The brilliance of a natural mineral sun cream is we don't have to wait 20 minutes until we can enjoy the sun, it starts to work as soon as it is applied to the skin.

Can you offer healthy sun safety advice to keep the skin protected?

Natural and organic mineral sun creams contain zinc oxide and titanium dioxide and are among the safest ingredients for protecting the skin from the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) rays.

UV rays penetrate the skin and damage tissue, speeding up the aging process and drying the skin out. These rays also increase the risk of skin cancer. Sunscreens containing zinc oxide reflect the sun rays and filter out UV rays, keeping them from penetrating the skin and causing cell damage. They have an effective natural formula combined with blends of the finest natural and organic ingredients to help protect the skin from sun damage caused by UV rays.

There are many types of sunscreen to choose from, with most people focusing on the higher number SPF to maximise sun exposure. However, there is more to it than just the SPF number when it comes to choosing the best sunscreen for you and your family.

And what advice can you offer for after we've been in the sun in terms of caring for skin?

After a long British winter, the nation is getting excited now the sun is finally starting to appear, and we can enjoy its warm rays. A bit of sunshine is good for our body and soul, makes us happy and upbeat. But too much sun exposure can take its toll on our skin by damaging the skin cells and eventually ageing our skin. Sunburn doesn't just happen when you are on holiday. In the UK, the sun is strongest between March and October and your skin can burn even when you are not expecting it, such as during a walk or sitting in your garden, and even if it's cool or cloudy, your skin can burn.

Facial moisturisers with an SPF of at least 15 protect the skin from the sun's harmful UV rays while hydrating the skin too and a body scrub to remove dead skin cells and the build-up of sweat, salt and sand keeps skin soft and supple. A facial mist is ideal to give your skin a burst of freshness and a boost of hydration during the day. They also help your make-up stay put and cool you down if you are feeling a little heated.

Q Can you offer me any advice on choosing a quality and authentic manuka honey?

Darren Robinson advised: If you have heard about the amazing nourishing properties of manuka honey and want to incorporate it into a healthy lifestyle, then it is important that you choose a product that contains all of the properties that an authentic manuka honey can contain.

The manuka bush is a fickle beauty; *Leptospermum scoparium* (to give it its Latin name) is indigenous to New Zealand and is so highly prized because of its long-lasting antibacterial, anti-fungal and natural healing properties. So, when choosing a manuka honey, it is important to choose one that retains all of this goodness. Raw, unpasteurised honey will ensure that none of the enzymes have been destroyed.

There are a number of grading schemes that indicate how much of the good stuff the honey contains. For the ultimate reassurance, look for New Zealand packed honey that carries the UMF (Unique Manuka Factor) grading scheme. This ensures that the honey is definitely sourced from *Leptospermum scoparium* and that it contains the long-lasting properties of true manuka honey. The higher the UMF number, the higher the levels of the good stuff. The higher the UMF rating, the rarer the honey is and consequently the price can be higher.

For daily usage to support general wellbeing and your immune system, you should look for a UMF 10+ or 15+ honey. For the fastest results and targeted usage, you should look for a UMF grade of 20+ and higher.



Angela MacRitchie

“My health journey has taken me from crutches to competing in a triathlon. Studying at CNM helped me do it”

Angela MacRitchie, CNM Graduate in Naturopathic Nutrition, Herbal Medicine, and Naturopathy, explains how her training transformed her life.

I was a county gymnast at the age of 19 when my knee swelled up and I could only walk with crutches. Over the next 20 years, I had six operations, took heavy painkillers and was often bed-ridden with pain. After the sixth operation, my consultant said: “No more operations, I’m referring you to the rheumatology clinic.”

Prescribed a cocktail of powerful anti-inflammatories, which, despite making me feel very unwell, brought down the swelling dramatically. It meant that I could dispense with crutches, though I was still in pain. I was told I’d be taking anti-

inflammatory drugs for life, so I began to investigate natural alternatives.

When I explained to the rheumatologist the natural changes I was making, he was unimpressed. I told him I had challenged myself to

do a triathlon in two years’ time, to which he replied: “No chance.”

But my body increasingly began to wake up again and respond. Two years later, at the age of 46, I successfully completed my first triathlon. I’m now 48. It’s been four years since I’ve taken any medication. My knee is fine, I’m pain-free and enjoy more mobility than since I was a teenager. The only reason I haven’t done more triathlons is because I’ve been studying for three Diplomas at CNM: Nutrition, Naturopathy and Herbal Medicine.

I learnt amazing facts at CNM, which really helped my health. It turned out my blood had no rheumatoid factor markers, so rheumatoid arthritis was never the problem.

It was tough studying for three Diplomas and working full time, but everyone at CNM helped me. I now have three clinics offering my clients complete wellbeing packages. As a Naturopath, I know the importance of giving the body what it needs for healing and returning to balance and

inspiring people to make positive change in their lives.

I don’t have the words to express how much studying at CNM has changed my life.

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Guide to greener living

Simple switches to your home and beauty regime can add up to a lot for our planet.

The beauty and home cleaning industries are worth billions of pounds, and between them, account for a huge amount of packaging the nation throws away on a daily basis. But with ever-growing awareness around taking responsibility for our individual carbon footprint, it's becoming easier to take control and cut back on consumption of products that are less than healthy for the planet, not to mention for your health.

With regard to beauty and cleaning products, there are two facets to their impact on the environment. One is around the ingredients used to make the products, which, if they included a long list of chemicals, can have an impact on the planet. Then we need to consider what the products are packaged in and how that packaging has been made.

While there is undoubtedly a problem with the cleaning and beauty industries in terms of their environmental impact, change is happening if you want to make it, and there are many simple switches you can make to reduce your impact on the planet.

As a general guide, Andrew Thomas, Founder and CEO at BetterYou, which launched its Better Planet Project, advised: "Look out for items with a social conscience. Whether it's the ingredients inside the product or the packaging holding it, the key factor is whether it has been chosen with an environmental consideration.

"Before purchasing, ask yourself, are the ingredients sustainably sourced? Does it have the best packaging for the job? And whilst it can be difficult to gauge the carbon footprint of a product, where possible, buy British, as this is likely to indicate the carbon output is less than those products shipped from overseas."

Try this

- ★ Alter/Native Pink Grapefruit Shampoo 5L Refill
- ★ Ben & Anna Vanilla Orchid Deodorant Cream
- ★ Good Health Naturally B4Health
- ★ Woobamboo Kids Toothbrush
- ★ Natracare Safe To Flush Moist Tissues

Clean up plastic use

Plastic is not in itself a bad product – in fact, its benefits as being durable is also the reason it is criticised, because it doesn't break down easily. Therefore, reducing our single use plastic consumption is what we need to focus on.

In terms of packaging choices, Andrew explained: "When it comes to packaging, the best material is the one that does the best job, that keeps the product safe and efficacious for the duration of its shelf life. It may be glass, metal, or plastic, what is important is its provenance. If card is used, is it from wood sourced under FSC approval? If it's plastic, is it recycled? If it's virgin plastic, has it been sourced sustainably, for example, from plants? And whatever it is, is it 100 per cent recyclable?"

"It's also essential that we don't vilify all plastic as the problem is not plastic itself, it is how we view plastic. We have allowed ourselves to believe that plastic packaging serves no further purpose once we consider its job to be done and as a 'throw away' society, we need to change this way of thinking – until we do, we will always have a problem with packaging, plastic or otherwise."

He added that there are different materials that can be used for packaging, including planet-friendly plastic made from sugarcane, but he added: "Of course, any environmental packaging initiative is flawed if there is no circular element after use, that's why all our packaging solutions are 100 per cent recyclable."

Hold the flush

It's important to consider how you dispose of beauty and cleaning items, especially if you opt for wipes, which can be less than environmentally-friendly.

As Natracare, which boasts its Safe to Flush Moist Tissues, points out, wipes are one of the most multifunctional products to use in a home, but do we really know what's in the wipes we're using and the impact it has on the environment?

According to Made Safe, mainstream wipes are manufactured to create a soft, yet durable texture, using polyethylene terephthalate (PET) or polypropylene (PP) and cotton woven together with plastic resins. Since plastic can never fully biodegrade, it only breaks into smaller and smaller pieces – releasing hundreds of thousands of microplastics into the environment.

Its PR and Communications Officer, Sharna Waid, explained: "Plastic is hidden in an unbelievable number of products we use today, especially in our homes. But let's face it, disposable wipes are convenient, so the easiest way to reduce our plastic footprint (and avoid harsh chemicals) is to make simple swaps to products that are proudly transparent with their ingredient and materials."

Opt for biodegradable or compostable wipes to avoid plastic; they will instead be made with natural materials like cotton or bamboo. And consider investing in reusable make-up remover pads and face cloths, so you are ultimately throwing less away.

GREENER BEAUTY

There are many reasons to choose natural beauty products as they will be free of some of the most undesirable chemicals, which are no good for your health or that of the planet.

"Conventional toiletries are laden with chemicals which could be damaging to your health. Toxic chemical laden ingredients, such as SLS, sulphates, parabens, silicones and synthetic fragrances and colours, can aggravate the skin, causing skin irritations, redness and sensitivity and may cause further health problems," explained Ingrid Jamieson, from Pravera, which has brands including lavera, ORGANii and Benecos in its range.

"Many moisturisers and cleansers contain parabens or mineral oil that can dry the skin out, cause irritations and clog the pores and may lead to further health problems. Many bubble baths and shower gels are made with harsh detergents and foaming agents, which can cause allergic reactions and skin irritation. Using a natural and organic alternative which uses a mild washing surfactant derived from coconuts will provide a toxic-free experience to your daily shower or bath routine."

Sue Harrison, Head of Sales at Mahi Naturals, which has the Woobamboo and J R Liggett's brands in its range, went on: "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, which are used in many beauty, skincare and haircare products.

"Silicones are often used in creams, serums and primers to make the skin 'feel' smooth or the hair 'shiny'. 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."

She went on: "Silicones have and still are added as they immediately create the feel of smoother skin by simply filling in the holes and providing a smoother surface. Similarly in hair shampoos, conditioner and styling products, they coat the hair, leaving a layer on the top to give the hair the visual appearance of being in great condition. The reality is that it has no improvement on the condition of the hair or the skin."

Head to your health food store for the best natural and organic alternatives, which will be kinder to skin and to the environment.

MAKING SIMPLE SWITCHES

If you are conscious of your environmental impact, it is so much easier these days to make some simple switches – if we all made changes, as a collective, this adds up to a lot.

In terms of top tips, Andrew suggested:

- **"Ask questions"** – it's so easy for brands to stick a recycling logo on their label and think they've done their bit, but just putting an instruction of 'recycle me' is lazy and just not enough.

- **Be mindful** – take a mindful approach to the plastic that you purchase by looking out for recycled or sustainably sourced materials, such as plant-based plastic, and be sure to always check the recycling instructions before disposing of your waste. Most plastics are commercially recyclable, so I urge you to lobby your local authority and challenge them regarding their choice of recycling partner. It's madness to think that up to 80 per cent of the plastic we believe is recyclable is simply sent to landfill.

- **Vote with your wallet** – favour brands that best tick your sustainability value requirements. Demanding that brands be more socially and environmentally aware is a move for good and I believe because of this, it will stay.

- **Check ingredients** – check that products contain sustainably sourced ingredients, are palm oil and palm oil derivative free and – where possible – are vegan friendly. With around 70 per cent of personal care items containing one or more palm oil derivative and with 60 per cent of palm oil consumed globally being in the form of derivatives, it's never been more important to check the ingredients contained in some of our favourite beauty products."

And Sue went on: "Keep it simple and effective – as a general rule of thumb, the shorter the ingredients list, the better! Now, we have more choice than ever so swapping to more eco versions of all our household, personal care and beauty products shouldn't be difficult. Your local health store is a great place to start as you can browse easily and ask the knowledgeable staff for recommendations. There are also often testers or sachets or products available to trial before you buy."

Ingrid advised: "Choosing a natural and organic moisturiser, shampoo and conditioner, face cleanser and a deodorant will start you on the right track. Stick to brands that are certified natural and/or organic, that way you know you are buying truly natural and organic products. Adding natural and organic products to your make-up and skincare routine will help to go greener in your home.

"And choose packaging that is made from recycled materials. Many brands on the market are now seeking packaging that is made from recycled plastic. Also choose packaging which is cardboard and packaging that can be recycled."

Sue added: "To have great hair and skin condition comes with a mixture of good hair/skin products, balanced diet, water, exercise and rest, it is something that comes with time. Quick fixes often come at a cost to the environment.

"Look for zero waste packaging, recycling, recycled material, eco-friendly, sustainable sources, paraben-free, talc-free, no SLSs/SLEs, or any other known chemical. There are natural alternatives that can be used, gentler and with less negative effect on the environment. A greener product can include everything from its ingredient sources, the way it's made with less carbon production and packaging."

NATURAL LIFESTYLE'S Top Picks



Zao Essence of Nature

Zao, premium organic French makeup brand, has launched a Foundation Stick and Fluid Concealer in a comprehensive range of shades. The products are Certified Organic by COSMOS with 100% natural ingredients

and are Peta-certified Vegan and Cruelty Free. Zao uses sustainable, stylish and refillable bamboo packaging to reduce waste. The Foundation Stick is a versatile cream foundation in a stick format, delivering a natural lightly powdered finish that feels comfortable on skin. The Fluid Concealer delivers



outstanding coverage with its velvety texture, correcting dark circles and other small imperfections effectively, without settling into fine lines and wrinkles. www.zaoessenceofnature.co.uk



Mooncup®

Mooncup® is the original, multi-award-winning menstrual cup. Designed by women and made in the UK to the highest quality standards, the reusable Mooncup offers an end to the plastic waste, discomfort and expense of traditional disposable sanitary protection. With over 18 years' experience supporting customers to make the switch to healthier, greener and cheaper periods. Their exemplary advice service is run by medical health professionals.

As the leading menstrual cup

brand Mooncup® has been tried and trusted by millions worldwide. Thanks to Mooncup® users over 2.7 billion tampons and pads have been diverted from the waste stream. www.mooncup.co.uk



If You Care Parchment Sheets

Conveniently pre-cut parchment baking sheets Use If You Care Parchment Baking Paper for baking, roasting, reheating and wrapping. Each pre-cut sheet measures 12.5 in (31.75cm) x 16 in (40.6 cm). Made from unbleached totally chlorine-free (TCF) greaseproof paper so no chlorine or chlorine derivatives are dumped into our lakes, rivers and streams. TIP: Re-heat cold pizza in the oven on parchment paper. Cheese won't stick to the paper and clean up is minimal. Available in good health stores, garden shops, Ocado and Waitrose.

www.ifyoucare.co.uk

Natracare Plastic-free Ultra Extra Pads

The same trusted organic and natural period products, with a brand-new look! Natracare has been the number one choice for plastic-free panty liners, pads, and organic cotton tampons for thirty years. Using only the best natural materials like soft

organic cotton and plant cellulose, their products make you feel comfortably protected without unnecessary plastic and harsh chemicals. Their compostable Ultra Extra Pads are gentle on intimate skin, with an organic cotton top sheet and extra cushion layer. Natracare's beautiful new packaging reflects their commitment to protecting our planet, empowering people who have periods and campaigning for a better world.

www.natracare.com



Certified organic protection from UV rays and ageing in one handy tube.

Ideal for daily moisturising, ORGANii's SPF15 Facial Sun Cream effectively protects from UVA and UVB rays while moisturising and hydrating skin to reduce the appearance of wrinkles.

This mineral sun protection is formulated with with non-nano Zinc Oxide and Titanium Dioxide which create a protective shield over this skin, reflecting UV rays.



Skin-loving organic Argan, Coconut Jojoba and Karanja oils nourish the skin while Carrot Root Extract and Hyaluronic Acid aid cell regeneration and production and Vitamin E defends against free radicals. Plus it is certified organic, vegan and cruelty free too!

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AMAZING APPLE

Discover the researched health benefits of apple polyphenols.

Apples may be a popular fruit, but did you know they have a number of potential health benefits? Apple polyphenols are compounds found in apples and it's thought these compounds have a potent antioxidant activity and could lower cholesterol. They may also help to prevent oxidative stress, and therefore reduce the risk of chronic disease and slow down ageing.

Allergy support

Allergies are common and are thought to affect more than one in four people across the United Kingdom at some point in their lives.

An allergic response occurs in response to a foreign substance entering the body; the foreign particle is safe, however, the body responds by mounting an excessive immune response. Common allergy symptoms may include sneezing, nasal congestion, itchy eyes and skin rash.

Research suggests apple polyphenols have a beneficial effect against allergic rhinitis, commonly known as hay fever. In a study, 33 people with persistent allergic rhinitis experienced significant improvements in sneezing attacks and nasal discharge after taking either low dose or high dose apple polyphenol extract.

These results show the polyphenols in apples may provide relief from hay fever, which gives sufferers options other than medication for the management of allergies.

Skin health

Skin is the first line of defence for keeping our bodies protected from external stresses, ultraviolet rays, radiation, chemical stress, and bacterial infection.

In one study, the anti-allergic effect of apple polyphenol was evaluated in patients with atopic dermatitis – also known as eczema. Great improvements were shown in skin inflammation, cracking and itching of the skin in healthy people who received supplemental doses of 10mg per kilogram in bodyweight daily for eight weeks.

It can be concluded that apple polyphenols are a great natural remedy to relieve symptoms commonly found in people who suffer with eczema.

Understanding polyphenol content

The nature and content level of polyphenols present in food sources will be influenced by various factors. For apples, the variety, agricultural practices, harvesting, and if supplementing, the extraction process will be among the factors contributing to polyphenol concentration.

*References available on request.

May improve cholesterol levels

Apple polyphenols may contribute to heart health benefits by positively influencing cholesterol metabolism in subjects with a high body mass index.

In a study, 71 individuals received 600mg per day of polyphenols from either hops or apples, which was compared to a placebo over a 12-week period. The consumption of polyphenols from hops and apples were compared; the results suggest that the effects of the apple polyphenol containing capsules was superior to that from hops, reducing in both total and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol.

These results show that those suffering with cholesterol metabolism could benefit from apple polyphenols over the duration of 12 weeks.

Reader offer

ApplePhenon from Viridian is a potent source of polyphenols and rich in powerful oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPCs). This natural polyphenol supplement is extracted from native wild green apples and harvested at just the right point for highest potency. The mild extraction ensures these apples possess a unique chemical composition of OPCs, which are easily absorbed and utilised by the human body. Contains 100 per cent active ingredients, and vegan, *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of five. See page opposite to enter.



GIVEAWAYS

NATURAL LIFESTYLE

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



GOOD HEALTH NATURALLY LIPOSOMAL GABA WITH L-THEANINE AND ASHWAGANDHA

Good Health Naturally's GABA with L-Theanine and Ashwagandha offers powerful nervous system support. The advanced liposome technology delivers the ingredients faster and more efficiently than capsules or tablets. This unique formula is suitable for those wishing to promote a more calm and relaxed body during periods of anxiety and stress. Also supports a more restful night's sleep. Pleasant tasting straight off the spoon or mixed into liquids, for convenience and flexible dosing, and suitable for vegans, *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of three.



MOONCUP MENSTRUAL CUP

Mooncup is the original, multi-award-winning silicone menstrual cup trusted by millions worldwide. Made in the UK, and designed by women, made from soft, medical-grade silicone, it's so comfortable you can't feel it's there. It's also Vegan Society certified, and free from plastics, dyes and toxins. Thanks to Mooncup users, over 2.7bn tampons and pads have been saved from the

waste stream and you only need the one Mooncup for light or heavy days. *Natural Lifestyle* magazine is offering readers the chance of winning one of two.



SUN CHLORELLA A

Chlorella is a single-celled green algae that grows in fresh water. Scientists have discovered that chlorella may affect a part of the brain called the hypothalamus, which plays a big role in how we react to stress. They have concluded that chlorella has the ability to diminish the impact of stressors. Sun Chlorella A is one of the world's leading brands and is available in both tablet and powder form. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of three packs.

UNBELIEVABLE HEALTH BEE PREPARED

Supporting your immune system year-round is important, and helps with illness, allergies and more. Award-winning Bee Prepared immune supplements are formulated by nutritionists with highest quality plant-sourced ingredients with proven benefits which are not usually found in a regular diet or multivitamin. Propolis, one of the hero ingredients, is even shown to help breakouts and collagen production. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of two sets comprising one Daily and one Max Strength.



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: August 1, 2021. Or you can enter online – visit www.mynaturallifestyle.com

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The next game-changer in women's health

Discover how Forth could help you support your health and hormones.

Women's health is not getting the investment it needs, with many women struggling to get answers to issues related to hormone health – whether it's PMS or identifying symptoms related to perimenopause. In fact, a Public Health England survey found that 31 per cent of women reported experiencing severe reproductive health symptoms in the last 12 months, such as heavy periods, infertility, menopause, and incontinence. Unfortunately, this survey also reports that over 50 per cent of women who experience mild or severe reproductive health symptoms do not seek assistance.

To address this issue in women's health, a new and innovative product called Female Hormone Mapping has been developed by FemTech start up, Forth, founded by Sarah Bolt.



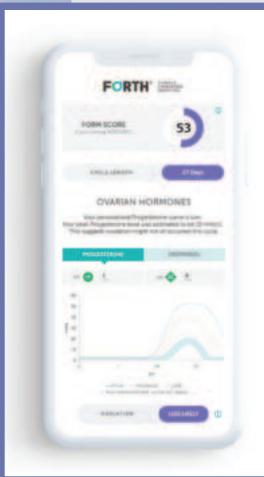
Women's health and hormones

Hormones aren't just about fertility, they play a huge role in women's health. The complex interplay between the four key hormones that fluctuate during a woman's menstrual cycle (follicle stimulating hormone, luteinising hormone, oestrogen and progesterone) have significant effects throughout women's bodies, as Dr Nicky Keay, Endocrinologist and Chief Medical Officer at Forth, explained: "Every biological system is dependent on these hormones: bones, muscle, nervous system, including brain function, skin, the cardiovascular and digestive systems. This is why female hormones impact all aspects of health, physical, mental and social."

The game-changer

Female Hormone Mapping is unique in that it combines blood analysis with artificial intelligence and clinical expertise to provide women with their own personalised hormone curve across an entire menstrual cycle. Each woman is unique, and this goes for her menstrual cycle as well. No woman has the same menstrual cycle, and no single woman's menstrual cycle is the same every month. So, trying to understand these hormone fluctuations and how they impact women's wellbeing has been difficult – until now.

Relating your hormone curves to symptoms logged at the time of doing the test enables us to provide a personalised and actionable report to help women improve their hormone health and overall wellbeing.



How Is Female Hormone Mapping different?

- It uses artificial intelligence to map your hormones across an entire menstrual cycle, taking samples on day 14 and day 21, rather than on day three, when hormones are least active. Testing hormones on day three of a menstrual cycle could miss issues related to female hormones that are not yet showing as clearly observable symptoms.
- It measures all four key female hormones and the complex interplay between the control hormones and ovarian response hormones.
- It provides women with insight into their hormone fluctuations across their whole menstrual cycle.
- It calculates a woman's ovarian responsiveness. As a woman gets older, her ovaries become less responsive to the two control hormones, FSH and LH, as oestrogen levels slowly decline. Female Hormone Mapping provides an ovarian responsiveness score so women can confirm, along with symptoms, if they have started perimenopause and how far along they are in their transition to menopause.

Reader offer

We are giving readers of *Natural Lifestyle* 15 per cent off their first Female Hormone Mapping test with the code FHM-NATURAL-LIFESTYLE. To learn more about Female Hormone Mapping and to order your first test, visit <https://www.forthwithlife.co.uk/female-hormone-mapping/>. Terms & Conditions: Female Hormone Mapping is a subscription test. The 15 per cent discount only applies to the first test, all subsequent tests will be charged at the full RRP of £129. You can cancel the subscription at any time. Excludes the cost of a phlebotomy test. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer.

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VIRIDIAN

NOURISHING THE YOUNG

Lucinda Miller guides parents through healthy dishes to appeal to your little one's tastebuds.





Raspberry banana pancakes

– SIX MONTHS-PLUS

Makes 6-8 mini pancakes

A gorgeous soft pancake suitable for babies who can feed themselves, even if they don't have many teeth! The ground almonds and eggs provide lots of healthy calcium, vitamin D, vitamin B12 and iron.

Ingredients:

- 1 banana, mashed
- 2 free-range eggs
- 50g/½ cup ground almonds
- 10-12 fresh or frozen raspberries, plus extra to serve
- Small knob of unsalted butter
- Can be stored in the fridge for two days, or in the freezer for up to three months.

Method:

- Place the mashed banana, eggs, almonds and raspberries in a medium bowl and mix well to make a batter.
- Place a non-stick frying pan over a medium heat and add the butter.
- Dollop heaped teaspoonfuls of batter into the pan, two to three at a time. Fry for one to two minutes on each side, or until golden brown. Repeat until you have six to eight mini pancakes.
- Serve with more berries and a drizzle of maple syrup.

Switches:

- **Nut-free** – swap the ground almonds for one tbsp tahini paste, cream cheese or silken tofu.
- **Dairy-free** – use dairy-free spread or olive oil instead of butter
- **Egg-free** – swap the egg for one heaped tsp chickpea (gram) flour and three tsp water.

Smoothie bowls

– SIX MONTHS-PLUS

Serves one adult and one child

Ingredients:

Strawberry cheesecake – a luscious bowl of goodness that is a whole meal in one! Decorate it with slices of banana and strawberry to make it look even more appealing.

- 4 strawberries, hulled
- 1 banana
- 25g/¼ cup fine porridge oats
- ¼ avocado, peeled and stoned
- ¼ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp cream cheese
- Squeeze of fresh lemon juice

Lemon and blueberry – blueberries are incredibly nutritious and full of polyphenols. Combined with bananas and kefir, they make a delicious, thick and creamy smoothie.

- ½ banana

- 50g/¼ cup blueberries
- 25g/¼ cup fine porridge oats
- 60ml/¼ cup kefir or Greek-style yoghurt
- Zest and juice of ½ lemon

Method:

- Place all the ingredients in a food processor and blitz for one minute until smooth.
- Can be stored in a sealed container in the fridge for 24 hours, or in the freezer for up to three months.

Switches:

- **Dairy-free** – swap cream cheese for cashew butter. And swap kefir for coconut yoghurt.
- **Gluten-free** – use gluten-free oats.



Strawberry pillows

– 12 MONTHS-PLUS **Makes eight large or 16 small pillows**

A real treat to bake at the weekends when you have a bit of time and a little helper at your side. The pastry is quick and easy to make, and the homemade strawberry and vanilla filling is so much healthier than shop-bought jam.

Ingredients:

- 250g/1½ cups spelt flour, plus extra for dusting
- 150g unsalted butter, grated straight from the fridge
- 3tbsp honey or rice syrup
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 50ml ice-cold water
- 8tsp strawberry and vanilla chia jam (see right)
- 1 free-range egg, lightly whisked with a fork, to seal and glaze

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4.
- Place the flour and butter in a bowl and rub together until they resemble breadcrumbs. Stir in the honey or syrup and the lemon zest, then slowly add the ice-cold water and mix with a knife until the pastry starts to bind.
- Turn out on to a lightly floured surface and gently work until you have a smooth dough. Try not to overwork it – visible spots of butter are fine. Wrap the pastry in a beeswax wrap or clingfilm and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.
- On a lightly floured surface, roll out the pastry to

a thickness of 2-3mm. Cut into 16 large or 32 small squares. Transfer half the squares to the prepared tray and blind-bake in the oven for 10 minutes. These will be the bottoms of the pillows.

- Remove them from the oven and dollop half to one teaspoon of jam on each square, then brush the edges of the pastry with a little egg. Place a second layer of pastry on top of each one, sealing the edges with a fork. Prick the tops with a fork, then glaze with the remaining egg. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes, or until the pastry is evenly browned.
- Remove from the oven and leave to cool on the tray for a few minutes, before transferring to a wire rack. Can be stored in an airtight container for three days, or in the freezer for up to two months. Defrost at room temperature.

Switches:

- **Gluten-free** – use gluten-free flour and baking powder.
- **Dairy-free** – use dairy-free spread instead of butter.
- **Egg-free** – use milk instead of egg.

Strawberry and vanilla chia jam

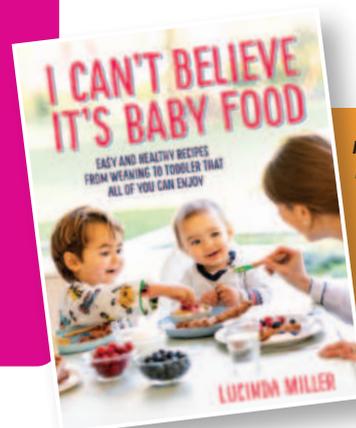
Makes half jam (100ml)

Ingredients:

- 90g/1½ cups strawberries, hulled
- 1tsp maple syrup
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1tsp chia seeds

Method:

- Place a saucepan over a low heat. Add all the ingredients and cook gently for five minutes, or until the strawberries have broken down into a pulp and the jam has started to thicken.
- Pour the jam into a warm glass jar and leave to thicken for up to 10 minutes.



I Can't Believe It's Baby Food! Easy, Healthy recipes for babies and toddlers the whole family can enjoy, by Lucinda Miller, published by Short Books, £16.99 hardback.

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