

Natural Lifestyle

LOVE LIFE, LIVE WELL – NATURALLY

www.mynaturallifestyle.com

May 2022



Holistic fertility help

Support your fertility with our essential guide

Natural bathroom

Clear the chemicals from your bathroom cabinet

ALL ABOUT AMINOS

THE NEED FOR AMINO ACIDS EXPLAINED

Plus • WHY COLLAGEN IS A MUST • SUSTAINABILITY IN THE KITCHEN • NATURAL LIFESTYLE GIVEAWAYS • LOW SUGAR SOLUTIONS

FREE

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Purity, for Mother and Child

Organic Source of Life Garden Prenatal Multi delivers comprehensive, essential nutrition for you and your baby...without yeast, pesticides or synthetic chemicals.

This unique formula contains organically grown vitamins and minerals suitable for reproduction, fertility, pregnancy and breastfeeding. Free of gluten and dairy, it is safe for both vegans and vegetarians.

You want to give your baby the very best start in life—and that means making Source of Life Garden Prenatal your multivitamin of choice.*

*Zinc contributes to normal fertility and reproduction. Folate contributes to maternal tissue growth during pregnancy. Vitamin B12, B6, B2 and iron contribute to normal red blood cell formation.



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Welcome



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So much of our modern way of living can have an effect on our health, for example, these days, we live often fast-paced, highly stressed lifestyles, with little downtime compared to our lifestyles a generation ago. Our diets can often be dominated by convenience and can lead us to over-consume the likes of processed food. All of these elements can impact our sleep, not to mention leaving us lacking in key nutrients.

And this hits so many aspects of our health; it lowers our immune system, making us more susceptible to illness, it can hit energy, leaving us lacking through the day, it can lead to bad concentration, poor skin, hair and nail health, and it also raises issues if you are trying for a baby.

And fertility is the focus of this issue of *Natural Lifestyle*, where we take a closer look at the factors that are involved when it comes to conception issues – for both man and woman. It's such an important topic to discuss, given we are seeing rises in the numbers of people suffering problems with fertility, but the good news is, so many factors that contribute to barriers to conception can be addressed by you. Whether it's managing stress, addressing nutritional deficiencies or shaping up your diet, our experts bring you all the advice you need to give yourselves the best chance of conception. You can read all about it on page 12.

Elsewhere in this issue, we have a collection of tasty recipes that are dedicated to being more sustainable, and there is something there to whet all appetites (you can find them on page 28), and we have a selection of natural health and beauty giveaways on page 27 – all you need for a healthy May.

*Rachel Symonds,
Editor*



THE BEST BITS

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



It was to the top of a mountain for Editor Rachel during a recent holiday in Ireland; the weather may have turned but the views at the peak of Croagh Patrick were just as stunning.



There's nothing quite like a coastal walk to cleanse the soul and refresh the senses, which is why James from our marketing team enjoyed a short break away to the north Norfolk.



Sunshine and sea air was in order for Sales Director, Ruth, as she, husband, Gil, took a break to the Suffolk coastal town of Aldeburgh.



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www.mynaturallifestyle.com

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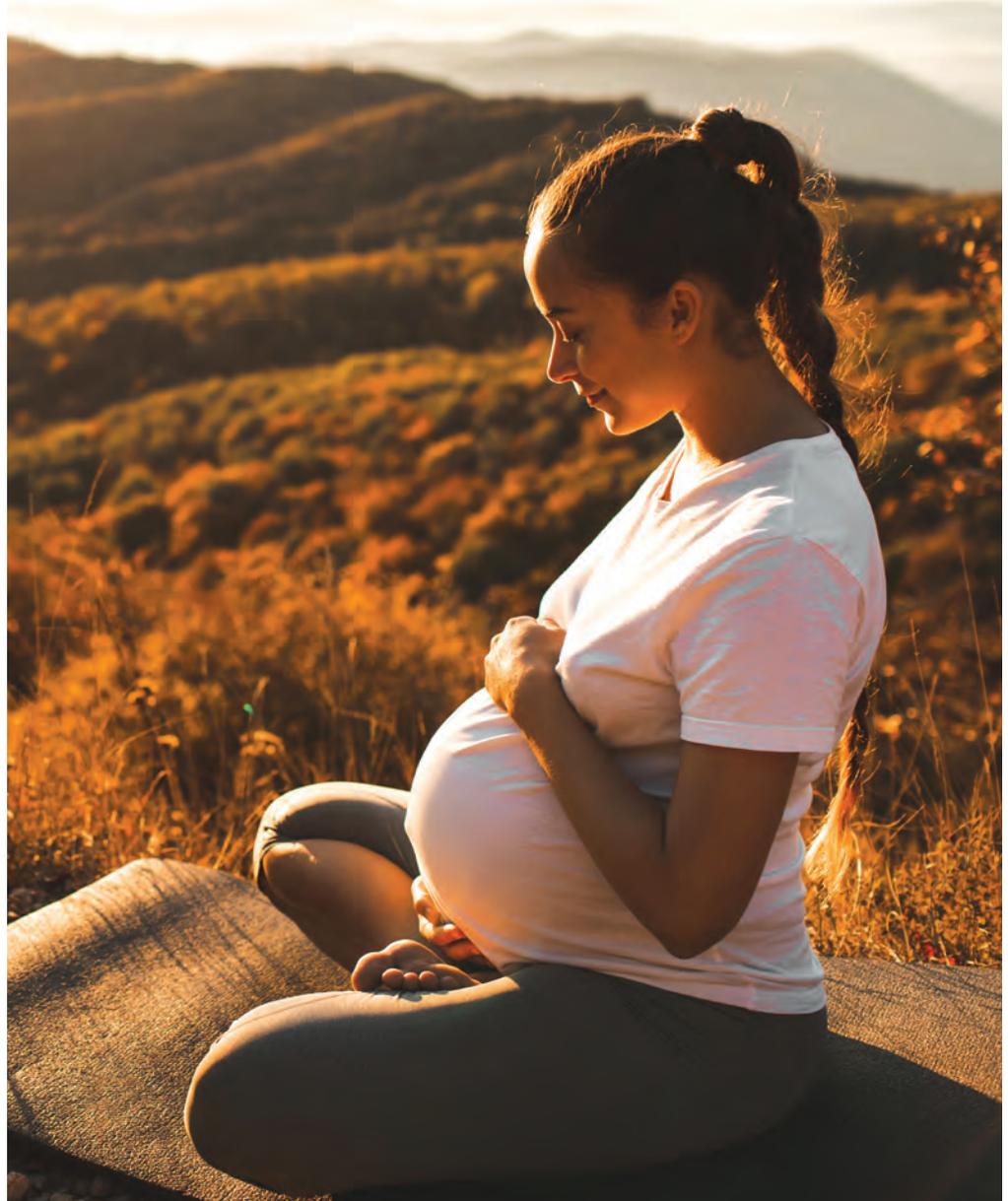
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HELP YOUR HAY FEVER, HOLISTICALLY

Hay fever season is upon millions of sufferers but there is much you can do to minimise your symptoms, according to one leading expert.

Most hay fever sufferers react to grass pollen, which is in season from May to July. It is the most common allergy in the UK, with 95 per cent of hay fever sufferers allergic to it. And so allergens expert, Max Wiseberg, founder of the organic pollen balm barrier, HayMax, has provided some expert tips to help sufferers.

"Stopping the pollen getting into your body is a good strategy for dealing with symptoms," Max explained. "If it's not in your body, you can't react to it! Wear wraparound sunglasses when you're outdoors to help prevent pollen particles coming in contact with your eyes," he advised.

"Use an organic drug-free allergen barrier balm such as HayMax, which can be applied to the nostrils and bones of the eyes in the morning and throughout the day. Tie your hair up and wear a hat, cap or other head covering when outside to help prevent pollen particles being caught in your hair."

Max's other top tips include not drying your clothes on a clothes line outdoors, as pollen particles will be blown onto the clothes by the outside wind; dry them indoors instead.

He added: "When you return home, take a shower and change your clothes to remove any pollen particles that have become trapped on your skin and clothes and in your hair. Vacuum the house regularly (especially beds and fabrics) to remove pollen particles, and when you're dusting, damp dust, so that pollen particles are not redistributed into the air.

"If you own a pet then ensure that it is well groomed and shampooed as much as possible to remove pet allergens and pollen particles. And if you find that this is not enough, or a product that worked well for you in the past has now stopped working, you can create your own hay fever first aid kit. I suggest that your ideal natural hay fever first aid kit consists of only one natural antihistamine such as quercetin, an organic allergen barrier balm, only one natural nasal spray and eye drops."

Inside... HEALTH

Dealing with the diabetes epidemic

A leading nutritionist has offered her advice on reducing the risk of developing type 2 diabetes in light of research revealing the scale of the problem.

According to the Diabetes and Wellness Foundation, there are currently 3.8m people with diabetes in the UK and it is estimated that a further 500,000 adults have the disease but don't know it. In addition, for every 10 people that have diabetes, 90 per cent have type 2, which in many cases can be prevented.

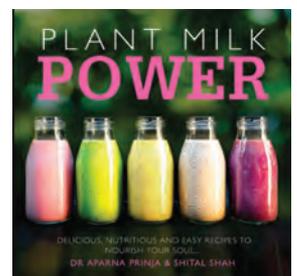
And so, Nutritionist and Fitness Instructor, Cassandra Barns, has listed signs that indicate you could have high blood sugar – and what you can do about it.

"It's important to say that none of these individual signs mean you definitely have high blood sugar, but they are indications that it's worth seeing your doctor, who will run some tests if necessary," explained Cassandra.

- **Feeling tired** – of course, feeling tired can have many causes, but it can be an indication that your body is not efficiently taking glucose (sugar) into your cells to use for energy, meaning your blood sugar stays high.
- **Feeling unusually thirsty** – when your blood sugar levels are high, water is pulled out of your cells into your bloodstream to dilute the sugar. So, you may feel very thirsty, even if you're drinking plenty of water – and may have to pee a lot.
- **Feeling very hungry, even if you've just eaten** – just like tiredness signals, you'll get hunger signals if glucose is staying in the blood and not being taken into your cells. Your body thinks it's because you haven't eaten!
- **A 'spare tyre'** – weight gain around the abdomen is an indication that your blood sugar levels could be high and is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes.
- **Thrush** – high blood sugar levels can change the bacterial balance in vaginal fluids and encourage the growth of candida, leading to thrush.

HARNESS THE POWER OF PLANTS

So many of us are eating a more plant-based diet, and now a new book is here to help you discover the varied benefits of plant milks.



Plant Milk Power has been penned by Dr Aparna Prinja and Shital Shah, and is an ideal guide for those looking to more dairy-free choices; whether you're a frequent exerciser, a mother-to-be, a businessperson, a retiree, or simply lactose intolerant, our bodies need different things.

Aparna, a doctor and nutritionist, and Shital, a private catering entrepreneur, collaborated to create their debut book on the back of a shared interest in encouraging healthy dietary habits. Whether it is a quick and healthy breakfast for individuals leading a hectic lifestyle, or those interested in plant-based foods, *Plant Milk Power* beautifully reinforces the need for fresh and natural ingredients to revitalise the body every day.

We love♥

THE GOOD GURU ORGANIC DIGESTKARE

Support your gut health with this supplement containing cinnamon and shiitake mushrooms, which are beneficial to help aid digestion and flush out toxins. It also offers organic fenugreek seeds, ginger, and black pepper powder.

MAGNESIL

This supplement offers the most bioavailable form of magnesium and copper, two critical minerals, with copper involved in the normal function of the immune system, and magnesium supporting muscle and nerve function.

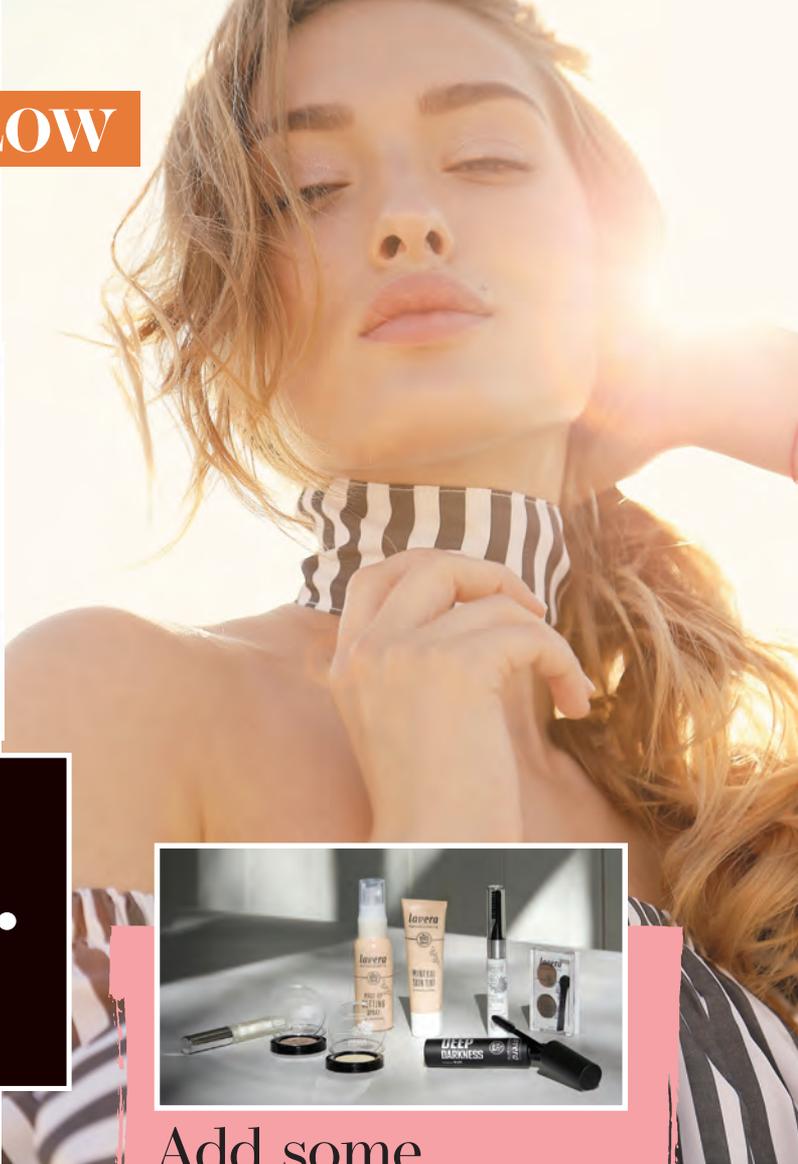
GET THE NATURAL GLOW

You don't need to sit in the sun to get a summer glow, thanks to Green People's Gradual Tan Moisturiser.

Offering you a natural sun-kissed look all year-round, you can use daily to build up a natural tan on your face and neck. Rich in prebiotics, antioxidants and omega fatty acids to protect, balance and nourish, it's infused with natural scents of mandarin, orange and ho wood to give you a glow without the 'fake tan' smell.

This formulation used dihydroxyacetone, derived from sugars which work with amino acids in the outer layer of your skin to form an even brown colour without the chemicals.

And don't forget to exfoliate too with the Fruit Scrub Exfoliator, which delivers instant radiance and gently buffers away dead, dull and dry skin to reveal a smoother complexion.



Inside... BEAUTY



Essential summer addition

With Aromatherapy Awareness Week around the corner, have you thought about how essential oils can support you? Here to help is SOIL Organic Aromatherapy, a brand born from a passion to bring the health and balancing benefits of essential oils to homes across the globe. The fertile soils and high rainfall of the family farm in Zululand, South Africa, combined with the rich local heritage of medicinal plants, formed the perfect foundation from which to develop and refine the oils – known for their integrity, purity and traceability.

And perfect in time for the summer is Organic Bug Away. The all-natural blend of eucalyptus, citronella, lavender and clove bud organic essential oils will help repel insects.

SOIL Organic Essential Oil Blends can be diffused into the air, used in an oil burner or added to a carrier oil for topical application and massage.



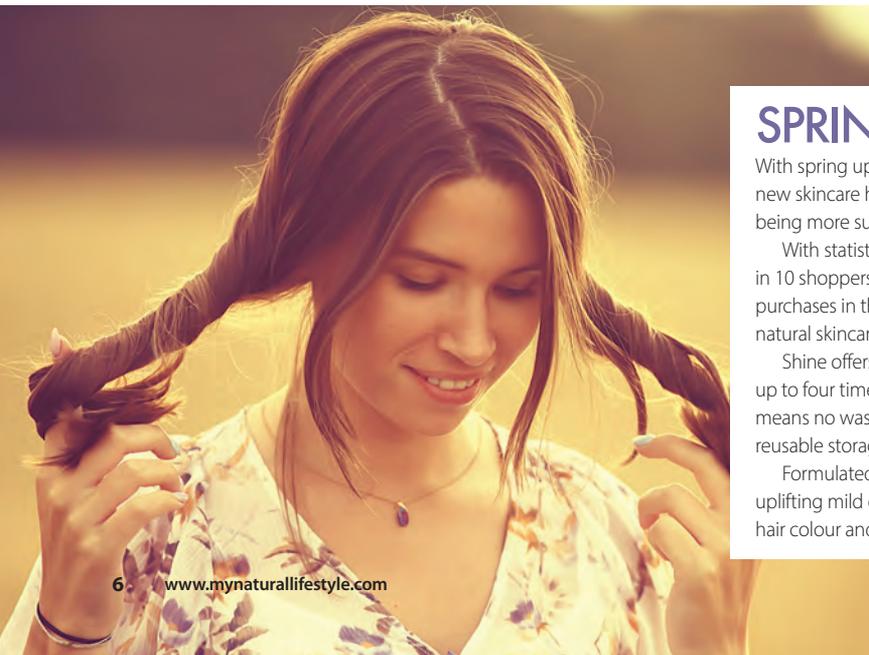
Add some natural colour

Nourish your skin when using make-up with these new additions to Lavera's range.

The new and extended Colour Cosmetics range uses the finest organic minerals and plant ingredients, which is certified natural and organic by NATRUE.

The range includes four mineral skin tints, two new luscious lip products, including six shades of velvet matt lipstick and four juicy tinted lip balms, an eyebrow powder duo, mineral eyeshadows and an endless lash mascara, along with a two in one micellar make-up remover and setting spray.

The products are not tested on animals and do not contain potentially harmful preservatives such as parabens, SLS, phtalates, paraffinium, or petrochemicals.



SPRING SHINE

With spring upon us, it's a good time to adopt new skincare habits – and this can include being more sustainable.

With statistics suggesting that almost nine in 10 shoppers have become greener in their purchases in the last five years, the people at natural skincare brand, Shine, are here to help.

Shine offers a luxury refillable shampoo bar and tin, aptly named Shine Bar, which lasts up to four times longer than a standard bottle of liquid shampoo, and the bar formulation means no wasted product, no plastic bottles and no mess, while the handy refillable and reusable storage tin makes it perfect for travel at home or abroad.

Formulated using 99 per cent natural ingredients, this solid shampoo boasts an uplifting mild ginger and lemon aroma and contains quinoa to help prolong the life of hair colour and keep hair looking healthy.



Look Good, Feel Good

We've picked the must have natural and organic essentials for your hair, body and skin

GO WITH YOUR FLOW

The award-winning Organyc Sanitary Pads moderate flow have been made with a 100% certified organic non-woven cotton top sheet and a highly absorbent 100% certified organic cotton internal core, these soft and breathable pads are anatomically designed to adapt to the contours of your body. The certified organic cotton is hypoallergenic and suitable for women with irritable and sensitive skin. These sanitary pads have protective wings and secure adhesive strips to give you maximum security. Available from health stores and online. www.organyc.uk £3.99



ON-THE-GO GLOW

It's easy to achieve a natural looking, sun-kissed tan, perfect for spring. The lavera Self Tanning Lotion is a lightweight creamy gradual tanning lotion that glides effortlessly across the skin for a streak free finish. The replenishing and nourishing vegan formula with organic sunflower oil and organic macadamia oil moisturises the skin, leaving it feeling super soft, delicately bronzed and healthy, as if kissed by the sun! Available from health stores and online. www.lavera.co.uk £16.95



HAIR CARE, WE CARE

Are you looking for a hair treatment that gently cares for each strand of your hair from root to tip? Look no further than Ayluna's Plant-Based Hair Treatment! Revitalise dry and damaged hair with a protective glaze of organic plant extracts, making your hair feel and look healthier than ever! Available from health stores and online. www.ayluna.co.uk £12.90



FLAWLESS BASE, FLAWLESS FACE

The benecos Natural Mineral Powder is formulated to even your skin tone, smooth imperfections and keep oily skin at bay. Available in four flattering shades, the vegan and cruelty-free formula is packed full of natural ingredients that blend easily to create a flawless, matte complexion. Available from health stores and online. www.benecos.uk £6.95



SKIN CARE MATTERS

The lavera Basis Sensitiv Moisturising Cream will keep your skin soft, hydrated and moisturised throughout the warmer months. This light moisturising cream with caring and soothing organic aloe vera and jojoba quickly absorbs into the skin, delivering intense moisture and hydration to guard against dryness and counteracts any feeling of tight skin. Available from health stores and online. www.lavera.co.uk £11.95



PACKED WITH LOVE

Upgrade to a natural and vegan deodorant that will transport you to a tropical paradise! The sweet scent of coconut combines with the fruity aromas of pineapple and conjures up a feeling of summer and vacation on your skin. Effective protection against odour and wetness, Ben & Anna deodorant sticks have a solid consistency thanks to shea butter and soda. They go on smooth, never sticky and they leave your skin feeling great. Available from health stores and online. www.benandanna.uk £6.95



WHEN SUGAR STRIKES

Sugar has hugely detrimental effects on our health and wellbeing, making it vitally important you cut back – and it's never been easier.

Sugar is addictive, and the levels of consumption affecting the Western world is reaching epidemic proportions; it is found in so many food and drink products these days, and in our quick convenience culture, it's so easy to over consume on a daily basis.

In fact, many of us are far exceeding the recommended dietary limits in the UK; adults should have no more than 30g of free sugars a day (roughly equivalent to seven sugar cubes), children aged seven-10 no more than 24g (six sugar cubes), and those aged four-six no more than 19g (five sugar cubes). To put into perspective how easy it is to overload, the NHS reminds that a can of cola can have as much as nine cubes of sugar.

And the effects of this? For a start, too much sugar can make you put on weight, damage your teeth, affect your moods and concentration, lead to congested skin, lower immunity and disrupt your gut, among much more.



DIFFERING SUGARS

There are different types of sugars, some worse than others, and it's important you understand the differences so you know what to cut back.

The type of sugars most adults and children in the UK eat too much of are those added to food or drinks. These include sugars in biscuits, chocolate, flavoured yoghurts, breakfast cereals and fizzy drinks. You should also be aware of sugars found in honey, syrups, nectars and unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juices and smoothies. Although these sugars occur naturally, they still count as free sugars.

However, the sugar found naturally in milk, fruit and vegetables does not count as free sugars.

In terms of what sugar can be labelled as, this includes glucose, fructose, sucrose and maltose. The refined type of sugar is usually called sucrose and should be avoided.

TRY THIS

Ricola Lemon Mint
Swiss Herbal Sweets

The Ginger People
Gin Gins Spicy Apple
Ginger Chews

NutraTea Nutra Glycemia

VerMints Organic Mints
Wintergreen

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

The Government recommends that these free sugars should not make up more than five per cent of the energy (calories) you get from food and drink each day.

While we have already highlighted above the recommended limits, there's no guideline limit for children under the age of four, but it's recommended they avoid sugar-sweetened drinks and food with sugar added to it.

Products are considered to either be high or low in sugar if they fall above or below the following thresholds:

- High: more than 22.5g of total sugars per 100g.
- Low: 5g or less of total sugars per 100g.

THE ALTERNATIVES

When you are cutting back on sugar, the easiest place to start is by reducing the amounts of processed foods and sweet treats you buy as these will generally have refined sugar added to them.

Instead, try to make your own healthier foods, whether it's a savoury sauce or a sweeter snack. Opt for the likes of raw food snacks, which are made primarily with fruit and nuts, and always choose unsweetened cereals, such as muesli or granola – better still, make your own and sweeten by cooking with coconut oil.

There are sugar alternatives that you can cook with; xylitol is a plant-based sugar alternative, that is known to also be beneficial for oral health. Stevia also comes from plants and is a good choice.

Fizzy drinks should also be cut back on as they can be loaded with sugar, not to mention being bad for your teeth and gums. Try plain water instead, or herbal teas that have their own natural sweetness to them. And don't forget that alcoholic products also contain a lot of sugar.

Also get used to reading ingredients labels so you can be sure it doesn't include excessive amounts – the higher up the ingredients list sugar is, the more it contains. When choosing anything labelled low sugar, be aware that other ingredients are added for sweetness that are undesirable, such as aspartame, which is used as an artificial sweetener and is no good for us.

TASTY SUGAR FREE SWEETS

Your guilt-free treats!



Vegan



Palm oil free



Lactose free



Gluten free

Ricola

SWISS  MADE

Find out more at Ricola.com



Microflora Complex

Terranova's Microflora Complex is a unique formula combining beneficial bacteria, digestion-friendly fibres and a synergistic Magnifood Complex to support and enhance digestive wellness. The specific strains of microflora selected for this formulation are amongst the most researched for efficacy and stability, meaning that the beneficial bacteria reach the intestines and survive in the presence of gastric acid and bile. Additionally, the strains are grown on soya and therefore 100% dairy free. Free from wheat, gluten, yeast, dairy and preservatives, Microflora Complex is stable at room temperature and does not need to be refrigerated making it versatile for use at home or away. 100% vegan.



www.bionature.uk.com

Hay Fever? Dust or Pet Allergy?

May marks the start of the grass pollen season – hell for 95% of hay fever sufferers. HayMax organic drug-free allergen barrier balm is proven to trap all types of pollen, as well as dust and pet allergens, in independent university studies. 80% said HayMax works! Used by celebs and Olympic athletes. Over 50 awards. Wow! Suitable for children and adults, including pregnant and breast-feeding mums, drivers, during sports and exams. 100% natural, non-drowsy, carries the Vegetarian Society Approved vegetarian trademark, is certified organic by the Soil Association and has attained The Allergy Friendly Product Award from Allergy UK.



www.haymax.biz

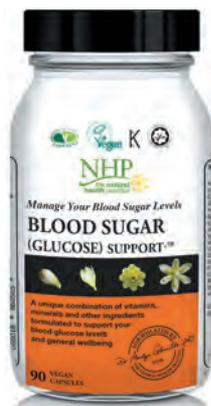
Helping to manage your blood sugar levels

A remarkable combination of 18 nutrients and herbs in one supplement designed to support your blood glucose.

- Chromium contributes to the maintenance of normal blood glucose levels.
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 - Cinnamon shown to improve insulin sensitivity in research and has a fat burning effect.
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Nutrients in their most bioavailable form to aid absorption. Vegan and Vegetarian Society registered, Kosher and Halal approved. Available in all good healthstores.

www.naturalhealthpractice.com



Tasty, sugar free sweets

At Ricola, we attach great importance to combining natural Swiss herbs and superior taste. That's why we produce tasty sugar free sweets in a variety of different flavours. All our sweets are vegan friendly, lactose, gluten and palm oil free. So whether you're on the train, in the office or taking a walk, sometimes it feels good to just take a moment and give yourself a little boost to set your mouth and mind on a more positive path.

www.ricola.com



Organic DigestKare

Organic DigestKare help provide enzyme support and relieve the symptoms associated with digestion such as gas and bloating. Cinnamon and shiitake Mushrooms have been used to aid in digestion, flush out toxins and break down body fat and waste. Organic Fenugreek Seeds are known to protect the stomach from acid reflux and stomach infections that are brought on by bacteria. Organic Shiitake Mushroom - Contains large amounts of fibre per gram which helps to flush out the digestive system. Organic Cinnamon - Has properties that can provide relief for indigestion. Organic Ginger - This is great for gastrointestinal disorders. Organic Black Pepper Powder - Speeds up the metabolism.

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www.thegoodguru.com



Endopure Pipettes

600mg, 1200mg & 1800mg CBD oil - 10ml

Endopure is excited to launch our new CBD Pipette range which joins our very popular Spray & Dropper ranges. We know everyone has a preference on the delivery of their CBD oil and by adding our pipette range, we offer that full choice to our customers. It still contains the same blend of CBD flavour our customers love. Made with EU organically certified hemp, Non-GMO and Suitable for vegans. Quality & Compliance: All our products undergo extensive independent analysis for toxicity and product standardisation offering you the ultimate superior quality product.

www.ttspharma.com



Amino acids Checklist

Are you getting an adequate intake of essential amino acids? Here's how you can be sure you're not lacking in these critical components to our health.

We often talk about the importance of vitamins and minerals for a range of health functions, but less talked about are amino acids. However, this doesn't make them any less important. To the contrary, there are some key amino acids that are essential, meaning we need to obtain them through diet and supplements as our body can't make them.

But why do you require them and how can you obtain them in adequate amounts to avoid deficiency?

WHAT ARE AMINOS?

Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins, and we need them to be able to function properly. While there are many, with varied functions, there are nine that are considered essential, which means our body doesn't have the ability to make them, and so we need to obtain via the diet or through supplements.

Among the essential amino acids, there is leucine, methionine and tryptophan, and they will be created when you consume protein, which is then broken down into an amino acid.

In terms of specifics as to what amino acids are needed for, this includes supporting immune function, for repair, building muscle (which is why supplements are common for sportspeople), and for sleep and mood. There are also the likes of leucine for regulating blood sugar, and lysine, required for energy.

There are also branched chain amino acids, better known as BCAAs, which are popular among athletes as they can support better performance and also muscle recovery. BCAAs are simply amino acids that have a chain branched off from its molecular structure.

BOOST YOUR INTAKE

The good news is amino acids can be found in a wide variety of foods, and so if you are following a generally healthy, balanced diet, you are likely to be getting enough.

Foods to consume that contain amino acids are animal proteins, which are considered complete proteins, and include meat, seafood, eggs, and dairy products, although you can also find them in tofu. Other plant-based sources, such as beans and nuts, do contain some amino acids but are considered incomplete proteins as they don't offer all of the essential amino acids.

If you don't consume such foods, or if you have additional needs for amino acids, such as those who do a lot of sport and those who are vegan, then a supplement may be worthwhile. Do speak to your health food store about your specific needs, and if you are vegan, and they can recommend the correct supplement for you.

TRY THIS

Natural Health Practice
Amino Support
Lose Your Belly

Terranova Amino Freedom
Protein Digestion Complex

Good Health Naturally
Healthy Flow

NaturesPlus Bio Advanced
Liver Support

Fertile facts

Planning for a baby requires a healthy conception programme for both woman and man, and so here, *Natural Lifestyle* brings you the ultimate holistic fertility plan.

Having a baby can be something many people take for granted in the sense that when a couple decides the time is right, they begin trying and pregnancy ensues. However, in reality – and especially in our modern world – this isn't always the case, with rising numbers of people experiencing problems.

As Katy Grieshaber, Nutrition Advisor at Viridian Nutrition, explained: "Infertility is an increasing problem that affects couples attempting pregnancy. It is estimated that 15 per cent of couples worldwide have trouble becoming pregnant. When infertility was investigated, it was evident that female infertility contributes to 35 per cent of overall

infertility cases, 20 per cent of cases are related to both women and men, 30 per cent involve problems only on the part of men, whereas 15 per cent of infertility cases remain unexplained."

Sarah Fergus, Nutrition and Sales Specialist for NaturesPlus, went on: "Since beginning my practice as a Nutritional Therapist in 2015, I have been working with mainly ladies experiencing fertility issues. These days, there seems to be a much higher incidence of fertility issues. Now, we may be seeing this more as people become more aware and are speaking out about their fertility journey. People are also waiting until later in their lives to start a family, after the age of 35 in females and 40 in males, when reproduction rates begin to decrease."

Barriers to conception

There are many factors involved in having a baby, and it's important to highlight that if you have any concerns, speak to your GP first. But in terms of areas that may need consideration, Keeley Berry, Molecular Biologist and NPD Manager at BetterYou, explained: "For women, issues affecting ovulation is the most common reason for infertility. This includes conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), thyroid problems, or premature ovarian failure, where the ovaries stop working before the age of 40.

"There are other conditions that can affect female fertility, such as scarring from surgery that alters the reproductive system, cervical mucus problems that can affect sperm motility, and reproductive conditions such as fibroids, endometriosis, and pelvic inflammatory disease. From a medicinal perspective, some drugs can make it difficult to conceive. For example, long-term use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen, may have an impact, chemotherapy, and antipsychotic medications.

"For men, there is very little understanding as to why infertility can occur. However, some theories revolve around sperm quality and count, which may be as a result of damage to the testicles through infection, physical injury, cancer, congenital defect, and undescended testicles."

Sarah went on: "Hormonal imbalance tends to be the root cause of many issues of fertility. Hormonal imbalances must be treated with care, we need to find out what is causing this imbalance, rectify it and retrain the body, establishing balance or homeostasis."

Katy went on: "Many contributing conditions could lead to infertility, such as ovulatory dysfunction, male factor infertility and tubal diseases. However, an influx of further investigation has highlighted the contribution lifestyle has to infertility. The influencing factors that have been ascribed are diet, physical activity, psychological stress, socioeconomic environment, cultural factors, BMI, smoking, alcohol, caffeine, and psychoactive substance. Infertility can also be influenced by genetics, age, medication, surgical history, exposure to environmental toxins and systemic diseases."

Conception diet

Eating a generally healthy diet is crucial for both, but there are some specifics to consider.

"When it comes to diet, eat clean – know where your food comes from and eat as close to the field as possible (I don't mean physically packing up the kitchen and heading for the countryside. Try to avoid highly processed, unidentifiable foods," Sarah advised.

"Eat a wide range of colour, not only are you getting key vitamins, you are also increasing antioxidant levels. Food intolerances is an area that may need to be looked at, the inflammation that comes with food intolerances can send your body into increased immune and inflammatory response."

And Katy suggested: "A Mediterranean diet is rich in dietary fibre, omega 3 fatty acids, plant-based protein, and vitamins and minerals, resulting in a positive impact on male and female fertility. Fertility is achieved through the high consumption of fruits and vegetables, olive oil, unrefined carbohydrates, low-fat dairy and poultry, oily fish, and red wine, with low consumption of red meat and simple sugars, within the Mediterranean diet."

From the female side, Katy added: "Folic acid is an important part of planning for a healthy pregnancy. All women of reproductive age are recommended to consume 400mcg of folic acid each day, in addition to consuming food with folate from a varied diet, to prevent major birth defects of the baby's brain and spine (known as neural tube defects). Before conception, increasing protein may improve carbohydrate-insulin balance, important in treating infertility due to lack of ovulation that some women may endure. Finally, it is recommended that women regulate their insulin levels. Insulin plays a significant role in reproductive and ovulation functions and the production of sex hormones."

When considering man and woman, Sarah explained: "Zinc has to be considered as one of the most important nutrients for fertility in females and males. Zinc helps fertilisation and egg development and improves sperm formation and quality. Zinc can be found in beef, lamb, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, asparagus, lentils, quinoa. B complex helps promote egg health and sperm quality. Selenium is also a powerful antioxidant. It is best known for its essential role in sperm formation and motility. As it is a powerful antioxidant, it is said to offer protection against chromosomal damage, a contributing factor to birth defects and miscarriages. Selenium can be found in Brazil nuts, salmon, asparagus, turkey, chicken, eggs."

Simple steps

There are some daily switches to ensure your body is able to conceive. "Exercising frequently is good for both body and mind, helping to keep you mobile, strong and flexible, which will be beneficial during pregnancy. Exercise is a great way of releasing endorphins, which can help boost mood and reduce stress, which can also have a detrimental impact on conception," Keeley advised. "Reducing alcohol consumption and smoking less will also play a role in this."

Sarah went on: "Try yoga, Pilates or whatever it is you enjoy. Try complementary therapies like homeopathy and reflexology."

Fertility supporters

Certain supplements are really important during this time where you need both bodies to be well nourished, giving you the best chance of conception.

Keeley recommended: "Vitamin D is a vital nutrient for many bodily processes, and many of us can run the risk of being deficient without realising. Being overweight is one of the risk factors for vitamin D deficiency, which in itself can impact our fertility. There is also evidence to suggest vitamin D plays a role in reproduction through the regulation of sex hormones, and the symptoms associated with PCOS and endometriosis. When it comes to selenium, there seems to be a correlation for women between low levels and length of time it takes to conceive. For those that are strictly plant-based, you may benefit from additional selenium intake via supplementation."

Katy suggested: "Women are recommended to supplement with folic acid during pre-conception to prevent neural tube defects. Vitamin B12 assists the reproductive system and is associated with higher birth rates. It works with folic acid to improve reproductive success. Both chromium and alpha lipoic have proven effective at increasing insulin sensitivity in women with PCOS, and alpha lipoic acid is a powerful antioxidant within all human cells to minimise any risk of cellular damage, and regenerating other antioxidants – vitamins C and E, coenzyme Q10 and glutathione.

"Iron is required for red blood cell formation, transport of oxygen to tissues, nucleic acid metabolism and acting as a cofactor for many enzyme reactions. And vitamin C protects folic acid and vitamin E from oxidation and improves fertility in women with luteal-phase defects."

Sarah added: "Omega 3 fatty acids are essential for healthy cells and how our cells communicate in our body. Omega 3s are highly anti-inflammatory and aid in healthy hormone response. They have been seen to boost sperm motility and morphology. And magnesium just helps everything to work better, including your stress response."

For men, Katy went on: "L-Carnitine is known to increase fatty acid transport, required for sperm energy production. L-Arginine is required for replication of cells, making it essential in sperm formation and mobility. It works to improve function of spermatozoa (sperm). And coenzyme Q10 functions as an antioxidant, which works to prevent lipid peroxidation of sperm membranes. Studies have shown a significant improvement in semen parameters, in particular, sperm count, motility, and morphology with coenzyme Q10."

Keeley continued: "For men, zinc has great benefits for sperm health, with low levels known to cause sperm abnormalities due to its role in cellular processes. For women, low intakes of zinc have correlated to longer conception times compared to those with adequate zinc levels in the body. Folic acid is essential for ensuring correct foetal development, particularly of the neural tube during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. However, low levels of folate in the body may be associated with poor sperm quality in males."

Manage deficiencies

Some nutrients are critical for fertility and healthy pregnancy, and can be lacking in our modern diet.

"Nutritional deficiencies play a huge role in fertility," Sarah commented. "Vitamin and mineral intakes are critical when trying to create a healthy environment for a healthy pregnancy. For example, nutrient intake in females will support menstruation and ovulation, thyroid function, energy production and immune function. In men, studies have shown supplements may increase sperm count and motility and morphology."

Katy added: "Vitamin D and calcium play a prominent role throughout developmental stage of fertilisation and the continuing development stages within conception and pregnancy. Therefore, a diet low in vitamin D and calcium could contribute to infertility."

And Keeley pointed out: "There are several risk factors that can impact fertility, including weight, diet, smoking and alcohol consumption, environmental factors and stress. There are key nutrients connected to fertility, such as adequate iron and folic acid intake, along with other nutrients such as B vitamins, vitamin D and iodine that are required for supporting the regulation of hormones throughout the body."



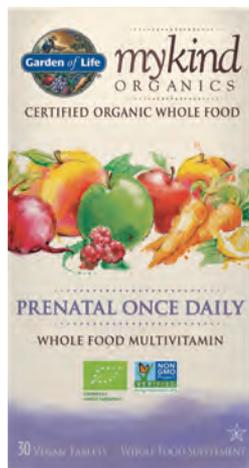
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NATURAL LIFESTYLE'S Top Picks



MyKind Organics Bespoke Whole Food Multivitamin

Garden of Life's mykind Organics Prenatal Once Daily is a bespoke whole food certified organic multivitamin that is also Non-GMO Project Verified. The convenient 'one a day' multivitamin has been formulated for women during pre-conception, pregnancy and lactation, and provides over 100% of your recommended nutrient intake of 16 vitamins and minerals, including natural state vitamin D3 and iron, plus 600mcg natural folate in its natural and biologically active form. Garden of Life mykind Organics's patented Clean Tablet Technology uses only food ingredients no binders or fillers. Independently certified gluten free, vegan and kosher. Available from www.kinetic4health.co.uk



Organic MultiVitamin

The Organic Multivitamin for WOMEN has been specifically tailored to boost your overall health and wellbeing. Its unique formula of micronutrients from ingredients such as moringa, shatavari root, Kale powder and turmeric may help to reduce tiredness and fatigue, and boost your immune system. The Organic Multivitamin MEN provides an advanced formulation of vitamins and minerals specifically created to meet your daily demands. This unique combination of premium ingredients such as ashwagandha, turmeric and moringa may help to reduce inflammation, fight fatigue. When taken alongside a well-balanced diet these multivitamins are your number one support for a healthy lifestyle. www.thegoodguru.com



Terranova Prenatal Multivitamin Complex

Terranova Prenatal Multivitamin Complex is a comprehensive vitamin and mineral complex that's been formulated for women who are planning on getting pregnant, are already pregnant and for breastfeeding mothers. Contains a high amount of necessary vitamins for pre-, post- and during pregnancy such as folate, calcium and vitamin E. Made from all natural antioxidant rich superfoods and botanicals. Highly bioavailable, synergistic complex of botanicals and superfoods. Gluten, dairy and soy-free. Suitable for vegetarians and vegans. www.terranovahealth.com

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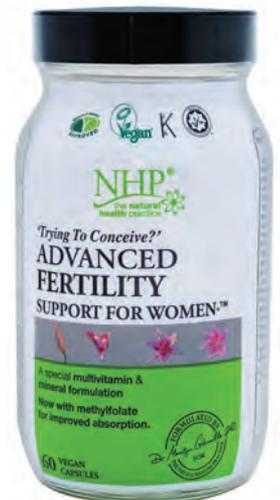
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Ask the experts

LONG COVID

Q When I dye my hair, my scalp sometimes starts to itch – can I still colour my hair and what brand should I use?

Sue Harrison suggested:

The most important thing you should do every time, before you colour your hair, is to do the patch/sensitivity test 48 hours before the colour application. Follow the instructions of the brand as they can differ and if you have no reaction, you can use the hair colour. Sensitivity to colour can develop over time so it is important to do this prior to each application. PPD paraphenylenediamine is one of the most aggressive ingredients used in a hair dye so it is best to avoid this and use a brand that is PPD-free

Resorcinol is also known to cause skin sensitivity. Hair colours contain nickel, commonly used under silver plate for costume jewellery that many people are sensitive or allergic to. By avoiding these known common ingredients in hair dyes, you are less likely to have irritation and will still have effective grey coverage.

THE LOWDOWN ON LONG-COVID...

by Alice Bradshaw

What are the most common signs of long Covid, and how much of a problem is it?

For many people, an infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus results in delayed recovery and a catalogue of symptoms that last considerably longer than the initial infection. Common symptoms include fatigue and breathlessness, brain fog, aching joints and a general feeling of malaise. This phenomenon has been termed 'long-Covid'. Post-viral fatigue has long been recognised as a side effect of a viral infection. It is an unpleasant experience for a sufferer and may impact family, relationships and even employment.

What is histamine intolerance and how could this be related?

An increasing number of health experts are exploring the relationship between long-Covid and histamine intolerance – a condition characterised by the inability to break down the normal amounts of histamine found in the body and ingested in certain foods. Histamine is a biologically active substance that is classified as an amine. It is found within the mast cells throughout the body and when released, has a multitude of effects, including regulating and modulating inflammatory and immune responses.

Some medical experts have started to speculate that the symptoms seen in long Covid patients could be triggered by the release of histamine in response to the viral infection.

Can you recommend a healthy diet and supplements that may help ease histamine intolerance?

A great many foods either contain histamine or promote a histamine response in the body. As such, a low histamine diet can be very restrictive and if pursued for an extended period of time, can result in nutritional deficiencies. A two- or three-week trial on a diet that limits the highest histamine containing foods should be enough to determine whether histamine is a problem for you.

The key foods to avoid include aged and fermented foods, preserved and canned foods and pickles, vinegars and dressings. Other culprits include alcohol, chocolate, tomatoes and spinach. There are many reputable sources of information on a healthy, low histamine trial diet online, but it's always best to work with someone qualified in nutritional sciences before making any drastic dietary changes.

Vitamin C, along with quercetin, nettle leaf, milk thistle and resveratrol, have all been studied for their effects on relieving symptoms of histamine intolerance and some people have had good results using a diamine oxidase enzyme (DAO) supplement with meals (as this enzyme naturally degrades excess histamine in the gut).

While using supplements and following a restricted diet may be helpful in the short-term, focusing on gut repair and general wellbeing will always be important in the management of histamine intolerance.

About the experts



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



Dr MARILYN GLENVILLE PhD is one of the UK's leading nutritionists. She is the author of a number of internationally bestselling books, including her new book, *Natural Solutions to Diabetes*.



SUE HARRISON started her career as a beauty therapist, aromatherapist and hairdresser. Her passion developed for natural, sustainable and eco-friendly products, and today, she is Head of UK Business Manager for Mahi Naturals, which has brands in its portfolio including the natural hair dye, BioKap.



SLAWOMIR GROMADZKI is an experienced health promoter, Herbalist, and UK-trained Public Health Specialist (MPH), currently working as a Nutritionist and New Product Development Coordinator for HealthAid.

Studying at CNM has opened my eyes



Louise Loughman

Louise Loughman, Herbal Medicine Student, details her journey to learning about the healing power of herbs.

I once thought health was so complex and that disease was the luck of the draw. CNM has taught me there are ways to support and nourish your body to give it the best chance at optimal health.

Having undergone cancer treatment aged 12, I became passionate about natural treatments for optimal health. My belief in the healing power of food drove me to dive deeper into natural health for illness prevention and recovery. After my cancer treatment, I became a client of a herbalist, who spent three years bringing me back to health after gruelling chemotherapy. It was during this time that I witnessed the incredible ability of herbs to bring the body back to balance without any added toxicity.

Today, as an adult, mother and wife, herbal medicine is the first choice for my entire family for any ailments, general immune boosting, or seasonal allergies.

CNM focusses on the whole person, not symptoms

CNM really focusses on the healing power of nutrition, herbs, homeopathy and acupuncture. The college's naturopathic approach to solving patients' ailments by

looking at the whole person, rather than just treating the symptoms, really resonated with me – this is the type of practitioner I want to be when I graduate. Other colleges I viewed did not emphasise this at all. I know that at CNM I will gain the best knowledge and skills to be an amazing practitioner so I can make a difference to my clients' health and life.

Wonderful atmosphere and fascinating subjects

Every lecturer I've had since starting CNM has made each subject so interesting and easy to learn. There is a huge practical element attached to the course, which really helps me to grasp the idea behind the theory. There is a wonderful atmosphere in the class and a real sense of unity amongst students.

After graduating from the Herbal Medicine diploma, I plan to continue my study with CNM in the areas of Nutrition and Iridology. My advice to anyone thinking of studying natural therapies at CNM is to go for it – you won't regret your decision.

Find out more at www.naturopathy-uk.com/courses-eu/courses-herbal-medicine/

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Ask the experts

YOUR SKIN HEALTH, FROM WITHIN...

by Dr Marilyn Glenville

What effect can poor nutrition and lifestyle have on the health of our skin and what symptoms does this create?

Skin is your largest organ, and this means that what is going on inside your body can be reflected in the appearance of your skin. Poor diet, too much sun, lack of exercise, too little sleep and stress can affect your skin. Symptoms can include wrinkles, dryness, brown spots ('liver' spots), fragile and more easily bruised skin.

What are the most common nutrient deficiencies that can affect skin health?

Vitamin C is one of the important nutrients for skin health because it helps with the manufacture of collagen. Collagen is so important because it gives skin its elasticity and ability to repair itself. Collagen makes your skin look firm and young looking. Antioxidants that we get from fruit and vegetables are important as they help to neutralise free radicals, which are highly reactive compounds that damage collagen, which gives skin its softness.

How can you recommend a healthy skin plan from a nutrition perspective?

To include as many different coloured fruits and vegetables as possible in order to get a good variety of antioxidants. Include specific nutrients that help with the supply and manufacture of collagen:

- **Marine collagen** – helping with delaying signs of ageing such as wrinkles, sagging and dehydrated skin. The source should also be from wild caught fish (not farmed fish). Read the label to make sure you are getting the best for your skin.
- **MSM (methylsulfonylmethane)** – to encourage the manufacture and strengthening of collagen, which has been shown to help with reducing facial wrinkles and improving elasticity and hydration in the skin. Also shown to decrease joint and muscle pain so aiming to improve mobility.
- **Horsetail** – a natural source of silica, which promotes the production of collagen, helping to keep your skin smooth.
- **Hyaluronic acid** – a natural substance found in the fluids in joints and acts as a lubricant and cushion. Can also help with skin moisture and reducing fine lines and wrinkles.
- **Rutin** – helps to increase skin elasticity and has been shown to help with joint pains.
- **Biotin** – for maintaining healthy skin and hair.
- **Vitamin C** – to help with the manufacture of collagen.
- **Omega 3s** – to help prevent wrinkles and keep the skin supple.

But perhaps the best 'nutrient' of them all – and one that is often forgotten – is water. Be sure to drink at least six to eight glasses of water every day to keep you and your skin hydrated.

Q What are the best nutrients to support me in a summer cleanse?

Slawomir Gromadzki advised: As the summer time approaches, many of us think about seasonal cleansing to assist our body in its efforts to remove toxins, burn excess fat (stored during winter time), boost immunity and feel more energised. Here are the best tips to help you make your summer detox a success:

- Increase metabolism and levels of happy hormones by fast walking in nature.
- Drink one glass of fresh, raw vegetable juice (carrots, beets and leafy greens) with one tablespoon of a super greens powder (chlorella, spirulina, alfalfa, barley grass, etc.) 15-30 minutes before meals.
- Eat more fresh raw vegetables (with hummus), fruits, whole grains, legumes, organic tofu, and plant-based milk alternatives, while reducing consumption of all refined, processed and animal foods.
- Since due to various factors the food we currently consume is much lower in nutrients, make sure you safeguard your nutritional needs by taking a good multivitamin/mineral supplement, and in addition, take 200-300mg supplemental magnesium, 2000-4000mcg vitamin D3, and 1000mcg B12 (sublingual methylcobalamin) daily.
- Replace unhealthy sweeteners with raw, organic honey, dried and fresh fruits, coconut sugar, erythritol, and xylitol. For breakfast, have oatmeal with tahini and fresh or dried fruits instead of sweetened with sugar breakfast cereals.
- Take a good probiotic supplement, expecting many health benefits.
- Drink two to three glasses of properly filtered water three times daily between meals, avoiding water stored in plastic.
- Replace animal fat and pro-inflammatory refined oils with good fats (avocado, seeds, nuts, raw coconut oil, and cold-pressed olive oil).
- Take the following supplements: ashwagandha, alpha lipoic acid, black seed oil, kelp, pine bark extract, and milk thistle.
- Replace coffee and black tea with herbal varieties.
- Think positive and laugh frequently.

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HOLISTIC BATHROOM

Make some natural switches in your bathroom cabinet for a truly holistic health and beauty regime.

These days, there is a natural alternative for most of our daily personal care and beauty products, offering kinder ingredients to both our skin and the planet. And by making some simple switches to your everyday routine, you can keep your skin, your health, and your environment a healthier place to be.

The best place to start is with a visit to your local health food store, which will be packed full of everything from deodorants and toothpastes to shower gels and haircare products, along with period care, and from brands which care for both your health and wellbeing and that of the planet with better-for-you ingredients.

NATURAL BATHROOM

There are many products we use on a day-to-day basis that often we don't consider switching to natural choices – so, what do the experts suggest?

Natural health and beauty expert, Sue Harrison, from Mahi Naturals, which distributes brands including Hope's Relief, Woobamboo, and BioKap hair dyes, advised: "Eco-friendly and natural are the key credentials, eco-friendly covering demands for recyclable, zero waste, sustainable and low-carbon footprint. Non-plastic toothbrushes, whether that is a bamboo manual or bamboo electronic toothbrush head, can be considered. Used together with a natural toothpaste either with or without fluoride, natural floss, and interdental brush picks – all are everyday essentials for dental care. For the hair, zero waste natural solid shampoos and conditioner bars are economic and easy to use. For the body, liquid castile soaps that are multi-purpose."

But how can you as a shopper know that what you are buying for your bathroom cabinet is truly natural?

"Many brands make claims that the product contains natural ingredients to make it 'appear' as a natural product, but, in fact, it may still contain some undesired ingredients, so it is always worthwhile to read the ingredient list," Sue explained. "Some of the solid shampoo brand bars, for example, that appear 'natural' contain detergent, which can be very drying on the hair. Cosmetic brands may contain filling ingredients, especially in their powders like talc, so although it is considered natural, it is not a necessary or beneficial ingredient to the skin."

She went on: "Read the ingredients list, with practice you will learn to spot the unnatural ingredients, avoid SLSs, SLES, parabens in all your body care products."

Try this

- ★ Ben & Anna Deodorant Sticks
- ★ AllMatters OrganiCup
- ★ Woobamboo Bamboo Toothbrush
- ★ Absolute Aromas Himalayan Bath Salts
- ★ Organyc Sanitary Pads



CHEMICAL WATCH

When making the switch from conventional products, chemicals you want to avoid in any new products you buy are many.

Geoff Kerouac, Director at the natural brand, Friendly Soap, advised: "All too often, you can research a 'natural' product and find out that behind the pretty pictures and 'green' claims they are owned by a company that is responsible for deforestation, animal or human welfare violations. At Friendly Soap, we think that a 'natural' product should avoid the use of fragrance oils and harsh chemical substances like SLS (used to produce lather), parabens (preservatives), and micro plastics (used for skin exfoliation).

"Look out for the Leaping Bunny and Vegan Society logos. Always look at the ingredients. As a rule of thumb, the fewer ingredients the better."

Sue added: "Natural toothpastes do not contain sodium lauryl sulphate (SLS). This is a common ingredient in non-natural toothpastes used as an artificial foaming agent, yet it is an industrial cleaning agent. Have you ever had cracked sore sides to your mouth? Look out for this ingredient as it may be the cause. Natural toothpastes often contain calcium carbonate as its cleaning agent. Another example in a toothpaste to avoid is saccharin. Brands like WooBamboo contain natural xylitol and stevia as sweeteners instead. Xylitol has other benefits in dental hygiene and can be considered as even better than fluoride."

When it comes to more natural ingredients, Geoff added: "Using coconut oil to create a natural lather eliminates the need for SLS. Any fragrance should be naturally occurring or created with essential oils. Exfoliants can be successfully produced using natural ingredients such as poppy seeds or bran."

PERIOD MATTERS

One of the key products to consider with natural switches is around period care, which has a huge impact on women and the planet.

One alternative choice is a menstrual cup, and Ginny Gegg, from Mooncup, explained: "Firstly, it's a plastic problem. Conventional tampons and pads can contain up to 90 per cent plastic. That's 90 per cent of the product itself and doesn't include the additional plastic that makes up the wrappers, applicators and backing strips.

"Each one of us will use 11,000 disposable period products in our lifetime, on average. And nearly 90 per cent of single use pads and tampons end up in landfill, where the plastic in them takes up to 500 years to break down. While the tampon lays there decomposing, the plastic in it gradually breaks into microplastics, and releases chemicals. These seep into our waterways, polluting the environment and harming wildlife.

"Speaking of chemicals, non-organic cotton, used in most tampons and pads, is responsible for one sixth of all pesticides used globally. And tampons and pads are also bleached to enhance their white, sterile look.

"Secondly, it's a question of what's better for your body. We've known since 1918 that toxins can be absorbed into the body through your vagina. When tested, single-use period products have been found to contain traces of chemical, dioxins and insecticides like rayon and glyphosate. Tampons also absorb 35 per cent of your natural, vaginal moisture, which can cause dryness."

If we look in closer detail at materials used in conventional period products, Ginny went on: "From an environmental and health perspective, there are a whole list of materials you don't want to be putting anywhere near your vagina, or into the environment: perfumes, bleaches, pesticides, BPA, phthalates, or any other nasty toxins. And, of course, plastic! A recent study by non-profit City to Sea revealed 64 per cent of people are still unaware that disposable tampons and pads contain a significant amount of plastic in the products themselves."

She explained that menstrual cups are made from platinum cured, medical grade silicone, a product of silica – a natural mineral and one of the most abundant on earth. The Mooncup is latex-free, hypoallergenic and contains no dyes, perfumes, BPA, phthalates, plastic, bleaches or toxins.

And if you haven't used such an alternative before, Ginny suggested: "Like anything new, using a menstrual cup for the first time can take some practice to get the knack of (we say around three cycles). But don't worry, with practice, it becomes second nature before you know it, and once you've got the knack you'll never look back! Take your time when getting started. Have a good look around our website and read the usage instructions. It's important to be relaxed. Choose a time during the day when you're at home and feeling relaxed. After a bath or shower can be ideal and you can even do a practice run before your period starts."

When seeking other alternatives, such as tampons or pads, try to ensure they are organic as this will mean certain materials are not allowed.

PERSONAL CARE

At times, we can suffer with more intimate issues that require help, and so keeping on hand certain natural remedies is worthwhile. By way of example, let's talk about urinary tract infections (UTIs).

Mark McCarty, Director of WFBM Healthcare, which has the Bladapure supplement in its range, explained: "The majority of UTIs are caused by *E. coli* bacteria entering the urinary tract. *E. coli* is often present in the bladder and is naturally flushed out during passing urine. When the *E. coli* bacteria has chance to multiple to high levels, it starts to attack the bladder wall which forms the UTI. Women are far more prone to UTIs due to the length of the urethra, which is shorter in women, which allows bacteria to enter the bladder more easily.

"There are a number of times when bladder infections are more likely to occur, including pregnancy, when bladder emptying is often reduced but also the urine contains more sugar and protein, which feeds bacterial growth. Menopausal changes can increase infections

due to hormonal changes."

And if do experience a UTI, what changes should we make to our diet and lifestyle to ease symptoms?

"*E. coli*, like other pathogenic bacteria, flourish in an acidic environment, increasing its growth dramatically. Following a low acid diet and consumption of alkalising foods can help reduce growth, but increased water consumption is one of the best things to maintain regular urination and elimination of bacteria," Mark added.

There are also some key supplements that can help.

Mark added: "Nutrients like magnesium and zinc help maintain an alkaline environment and electrolyte balance. D-mannose has been identified as one of the most powerful ingredients which attracts *E. coli* from the bladder wall like a magnet, these can then be flushed away during urination. It's important that UTIs are treated promptly as left untreated there is potential for the infection to travel back to the kidneys, which is particularly serious for the elderly."

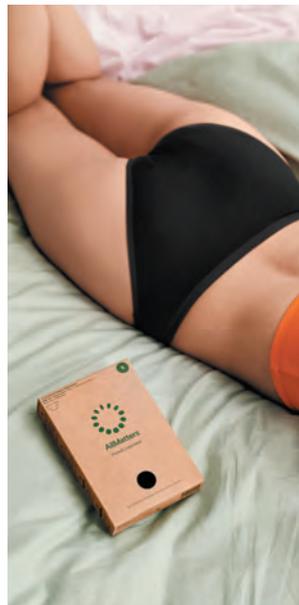
NATURAL LIFESTYLE'S Top Picks



NEW: AllMatters Period Underwear

AllMatters has brought the award-winning, Danish menstrual cup, OrganiCup, to millions of women all over the world. Now we launch the AllMatters period underwear that is your reusable, comfortable, and leak-free period solution. It feels like regular underwear but has built-in layers that serve different purposes – from absorbing your flow to keeping you safe, dry and odour-free. Made from high-quality materials like TENCEL™ and VEOCEL™. Comes in 7 sizes in black bikini style. The little things you do daily can have a big impact on our planet – our products are made with that in mind. Because it AllMatters.

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Enjoy a relaxing bath with our all-natural Himalayan bath salts, harvested from the foothills of the Himalayas, and one of the purest mineral laden salts in the world. These pure Himalayan salts have been blended with our 100% pure and natural Relaxation essential blend to help unwind the body and relax the mind, this is a great blend for anyone feeling tense or anxious. Our

Relaxation blend contains essential oils including, Tangerine, Bergamot and Ylang Ylang, for the ultimate relaxing soak.

www.absolute-aromas.com

Vitasil Bio-activated Organic Silicium

Extracted from stinging nettle, soluble silica is anti-inflammatory and a natural antioxidant. It is also important in joint flexibility and general mobility. Soluble silica supports the normal functioning of the metabolism. It is important in the formation of the most common protein in the human body, namely collagen. If the concentration of silicon is low then the body finds it difficult to regenerate its own collagen, which is, of course, preferable to artificial collagens currently available in the marketplace. Wrinkled dehydrated skin, thin hair, brittle nails are all signs that collagen is not being generated fast enough to replace that being broken down as we age.

www.agedefy.co.uk



Dr Jacobs Naturals, The No.1 Palm Oil Free Castile Soap

Dr Jacobs Naturals is the No.1 palm-oil free branded castile soap in the USA and is now available in the UK. It's unique formula is double thickness with added sea salt for a luxurious feel, ultra moisturising with aloe vera and vitamin E and fragranced naturally with essential oils. Formulated using just coconut and olive oils, it cleans effectively whilst keeping your skin hydrated all day with no oily residue. Available in 2 sizes and 12 difference fragrance varieties including unscented. 100% Natural & Vegan, biodegradable, cruelty free and gluten free.

www.mahinaturals.com

SAFE TRAVELS

Ensure your holiday first aid kit is packed with these natural health essentials.



POTION FOR THE MOTION

The Ginger People's range of ginger candies are perfect for soothing the stomach on a bumpy road trip or just enjoying their warming properties and enjoying the positive effects of a daily dose of ginger.

Add a couple of chews to your travel mug to enjoy a spicy wake up drink!



TRAVEL IMMUNITY

Immunix3 is a new convenient way to increase immune defences while travelling. The tablets can be chewed, sucked or swallowed and contain a unique blend of live cultures, glutathione, vitamin D and and ZincNova, which is a blend of zinc and vitamin C.

Suitable for adults and children and priced at just £6.95.

TUMMY TROUBLES

A change of diet while holidaying can play havoc with your digestive system so make sure you have an effective natural remedy at hand.

Silicea gastrointestinal gel sachets quickly and effectively treat all types of gastrointestinal problems, including nausea, sickness, heartburn, diarrhoea and IBS symptoms.



ORGANIC FRESHNESS

Vermints are a handy range of tinned organic mints to keep your breath fresh while travelling. The range includes stimulating coffee, cinnamon, wintergreen, chai and peppermint.

Pick up a sample at your local health store. • Product of USA.

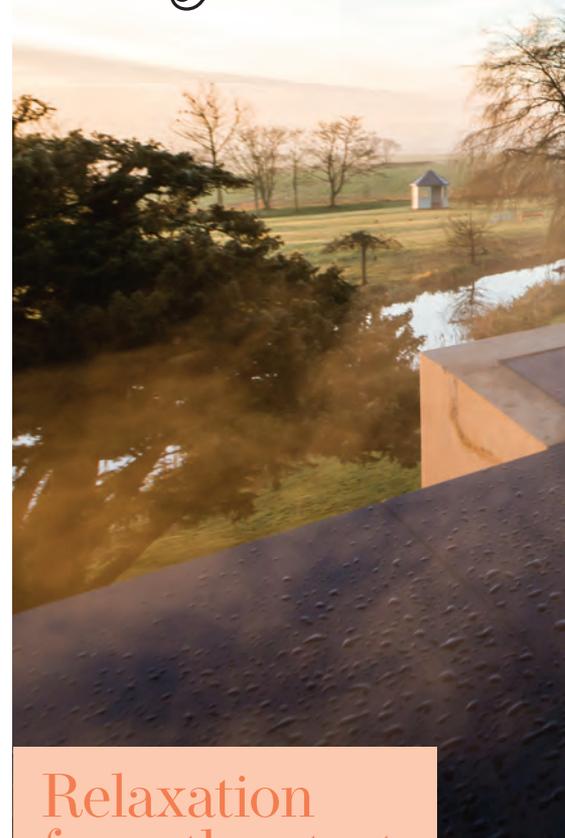
All products featured are available from your local independent health store. If they don't have them in stock, they can be ordered for you.

Escape to holistic luxury

Natural Lifestyle takes a trip to Ragdale Hall Spa to discover a haven of luxury to reset and recharge.

Realign, reconnect, recharge and re-energise are all things we need from time to time – and this is what struck us as soon as we pulled into the grounds of Ragdale Hall Spa.

Natural Lifestyle journeyed to the Leicestershire countryside to experience what Ragdale Hall Spa has to offer, and it was luxurious relaxation from the start; a friendly welcome from the Guest Service Manager greeted us on arrival, before we were taken to the Garden Room cafe for a welcome drink and explanation of the spa and guided tour – and then our relaxation truly began as we were taken to our superior room, with views of the stunning grounds.



Relaxation from the start

There are so many ways to relax and reset at Ragdale Hall Spa and we got started after our welcome lunch with a trip to the Thermal Spa, which offers 11 heat and water experiences and was our first chance to settle down and take in the peaceful surroundings. And we can't leave out one of the most impressive experiences with a visit to the new rooftop infinity pool, providing us with lovely views while we relaxed on jet massage beds.

Many different relaxation areas can be found throughout the spa, with comfortable sofas and loungers and within the spa itself, there is a large 25 metre pool, volcanic salt bath, a sauna and rose sauna, candle pool, colourflow room and experience showers. Being a fitness enthusiast, it was nice to also use the stay to do a little exercise, but in a more relaxed environment than I would usually experience; I enjoyed the facilities in the modern gym, and if you really want to work up a sweat, exercise classes are also arranged. There are also tennis courts and mountain bikes on offer, although we opted for a late afternoon stroll around the grounds to take in some fresh air.





Holistic treatments

And then it was onto the treatments for us; Ragdale Hall Spa promotes realign, reconnect, recharge and re-energise and the treatments we experienced truly did this.

I opted for the Revive Back Massage, followed by a mini facial, all of which used Elemis products, while my partner enjoyed the relaxation of a full facial. I also experienced the reflexology treatment, from a very knowledgeable therapist who has 24 years of reflexology experience. This treatment offers many benefits, including the releases of toxins and helps with lymphatic drainage and during my treatment, she correctly highlighted several conditions I have that she was unaware of previously.

We left Ragdale Hall Spa feeling totally revitalised and rejuvenated, and looking forward to a return stay.

Nourishment from the inside

From the start of our stay, the focus at Ragdale Hall Spa was on caring for your body, and the food offering was second to none. Upon arrival, we enjoyed a healthy lunch with a selection of two starters, a spinach and feta tart and a beautiful poached lemon and cardamon salmon with Asian salad. This was followed by an excellent self serve buffet with a large selection of choice, and both vegans and vegetarians are well catered for. Continuing the focus on health, there was a large range of delicious healthy salads.

Dinner was equally nourishing, not to mention extensive, while there was a good selection of very reasonably priced wines.



About Ragdale Hall Spa

Ragdale Hall Spa was established in 1973 and today, is a multi-award-winning, privately owned, dedicated spa, with the aim of being unpretentious, luxurious and always welcoming.

With over 130 therapists and a huge and ever evolving treatments menu, guests will be pampered to their heart's content.

There are a range of packages on offer, from two night stays to one day experiences, and much more.

To find out more about a stay at Ragdale Hall Spa, visit www.ragdalehall.co.uk or call 01664 434831.

The power protein

Collagen is the hottest item in the world of nutrition and beauty, and with good reason – here's what you need to know about why you need adequate amounts.

Collagen forms a scaffold to provide strength and structure to our bones, muscles, skin and tendons, supports the major structures of the body and provides the overall shape.

The most abundant protein in the body, accounting for about 30 per cent of its total protein content, collagen is strong, about as strong as steel. What's more, it fills all sorts of roles in the body, a versatility that stems from the fact that there are many types of collagen.

DIFFERENT VARIETIES

The world 'collagen' covers a family of closely related protein; 28 types have been identified in the human body.

All types of collagen have different functions, whether you're talking about collagen in the eyelids, in the face, in the lips, in the tendons, in the nerves.

Most of the body's collagen – up to 90 per cent – consists of types I, II and III. Of those, I and III are the types most commonly found in the skin, as well as the hair and nails (type II is a major component of joint cartilage).

Collagen support

Keeping collagen firm and healthy as the years pass requires the same basic lifestyle approach that should be applied to support general health and wellbeing.

Excess sugar should be avoided as this can damage collagen molecules. Exposure to herbicides, chlorine and other chemicals, as well as smoking or breathing in smog, can also wreak havoc on your skin's collagen.

Of all the vitamins, vitamin C has a special affinity for the skin. In addition to fighting damage from free radicals generated by excessive sun exposure, toxins, stress and other sources, it also helps support collagen production.

In its natural state, collagen's large molecular structure means that it can't be effectively absorbed by the body. Therefore, you should always look for a collagen supplement that contains hydrolyzed collagen, in which the protein molecules are broken down into smaller units called peptides for better absorption. Choosing a supplement that contains digestive enzymes is also beneficial.

Some peptide products provide not only collagen types I, II and III but other types as well, such as IV, V and X. Look for products that come from sustainably managed sources, such as grass-fed beef, free range chicken and sustainably caught fish.

ACCELERATED BREAKDOWN

As with the rest of the body's tissues, collagen is subject to degradation over time.

As we age, our body's natural ability to produce collagen declines. This reduces the structural integrity of the skin and causes the sagging, fine lines and wrinkles we see with ageing. A good indicator of strong collagen is when the contour of your face is still defined and has good elasticity, meaning it bounces back when you pinch it.

What happens with age, however, is the body breaks collagen down faster and produces it more slowly. This is what causes the overall decrease in amounts of this vital protein, a process that destabilises contact among the different skin layers.

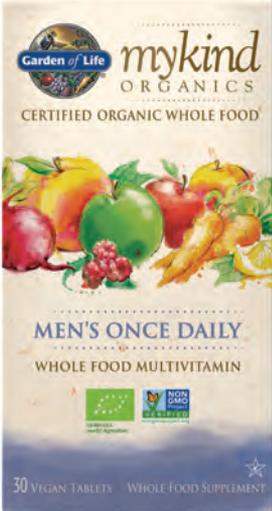
Reader offer

Collagen is a key component of hair, skin and nails so getting enough of this nutrient is vital. NaturesPlus Collagen Peptides is one of the few collagen supplements that provides all six major types of collagen from clean sources. It mixes easily and is virtually taste free and is further supported by enzymes to maximise absorption and bioavailability. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of six. See page opposite to enter.



NATURAL LIFESTYLE Giveaways

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



GARDEN OF LIFE MYKIND ORGANICS MEN'S MULTIVITAMIN ONCE DAILY

Natural Lifestyle has teamed up with Garden of Life to offer readers the chance of winning one of five of its mykind Organics Men's Multivitamin Once Daily. Garden of Life mykind Organics provide a sustainable, wholefood multi made from real, nutritious foods that is certified organic, vegan and non-GMO project verified. Specifically formulated for the needs of men, the multivitamin is designed to support sustained energy levels, a healthy metabolism and heart. Providing bioavailable nutrients including methylcobalamin (B12), vitamin D3 and K2, zinc and vitamin C, its Clean Tablet Technology provides the first real food approach to tableting. The company is Carbon Neutral and B-Corp.



COYNE BIO-SHODEN ASHWAGANDHA

Natural Lifestyle has teamed up with Coyne to offer readers the chance of winning one of three bottles of its Bio-Shoden Ashwagandha. Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) is renowned as an essential herb in Ayurveda, used for thousands of years as a powerful adaptogen, natural substances found to increase the body's resilience and ability to recover from physical and emotional stress. Bio-Shoden Ashwagandha utilises Shoden, which is proven to be one of the world's most potent bioactive ashwagandha extracts. This multi-patented extract provides an industry-leading 35 per cent withanolide glycosides for exceptional bioavailability. At a dosage of 240mg per capsule, Bio-Shoden Ashwagandha provides one of the most powerful and effective doses available.

IRON VITAL F

Women are much more likely to suffer with iron deficiency, which often leads to some reaching for a sugary energy drink that can mask tiredness, which could point to a deficiency. Iron Vital F is a tasty and highly absorbable natural iron and vitamin supplement which won't cause constipation. Dosage can vary depending on your life stage so there's a useful guide to dosage. The new sachets are convenient for travelling and require no refrigeration and *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of five boxes, comprising 20 sachets each.



WELEDA NEW LOOK ORAL CARE RANGE

A sneak peek for you of Weleda's new-look oral care, coming soon! You can win everything in the range, including four adult toothpastes – Ratanhia, Calendula, Plant Gel and Salt – plus Children's Tooth Gel, and Ratanhia Mouthwash, each made with organic plant extracts carefully selected for teeth and gums. The NATRUE-certified natural range is made without synthetic fragrances, colourants, flavourings, detergents, foam boosters, disinfectants or triclosan, to preserve the balance of natural flora in the mouth. Packaged in sustainable aluminium/glass, *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of three sets.



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: May 1, 2022. Or you can enter online – visit www.mynaturallifestyle.com

Please tick: Garden of Life Coyne Iron Vital F Weleda NaturesPlus

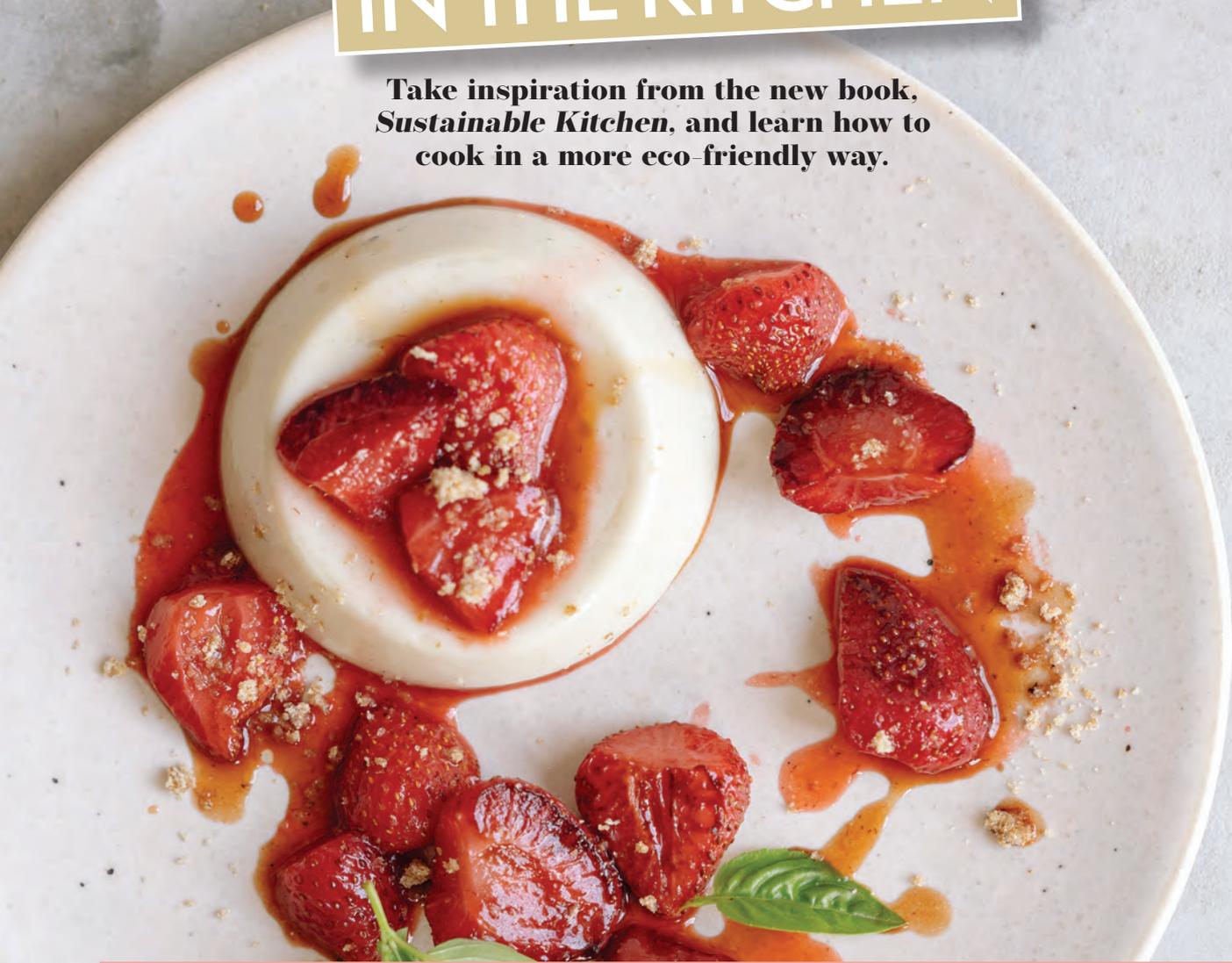
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ECO CONSCIOUS

IN THE KITCHEN

Take inspiration from the new book, *Sustainable Kitchen*, and learn how to cook in a more eco-friendly way.



Basil panna cotta with charred balsamic strawberries Serves 4

Strawberries and goat's dairy are good pals – the sweetness and tangy dairy richness really complement each other. We often use goat's or sheep's dairy to vary our demand for cow's dairy. This dessert works well with dairy-free milks too. We originally made this recipe with foraged sheep's sorrel, but it's not as easy to come by, so we've given quantities for infusing with basil, an excellent alternative flavour.

Prep: 10 minutes

Cook and cool: 30 minutes, plus chilling time

Ingredients:

- 350ml (scant 1½ cups) goat's milk (or dairy-free milk)
- ½ vanilla pod, split in half
- Grated zest of ¼ lemon
- 200g (7oz) sheep's sorrel (or 3 sprigs of basil)
- 70g (½ cup) caster sugar
- 1 sachet vegan gelatin (or carrageen/Irish moss)
- 200ml (generous ¾ cup) goat's, oat or coconut cream (we have had the best results with oat cream)
- Vegetable oil, for greasing

For the charred strawberries:

- 1tbsp goat's butter, vegan block or coconut oil
- 1 x punnet (250g/1¼ cups) strawberries, halved
- 25g (2tbsp) brown sugar
- 2tbsp balsamic vinegar

Method:

- In a medium saucepan, combine the milk, vanilla pod, lemon zest, sheep's sorrel or basil and sugar. If you're using carrageen/Irish moss as the vegetarian setting agent, it needs to be soaked in water for 15 minutes then added to the milk at this stage. Bring the mixture to a simmer, but don't boil. Turn off the heat and allow to infuse for 15 minutes.
- Strain the infused milk through a sieve, into a measuring jug, retaining the vanilla seeds, but leaving the lemon zest, herbs and vanilla pod (and carrageen, if using) behind in the sieve. If using a sachet of vegan gelatin, follow the instructions on the package and add to the milk mixture. Mix in your cream of choice.
- Lightly oil four 175ml (6fl oz) ramekins or similarly sized pudding basins. Pour the mixture into these moulds. Transfer to the fridge and chill for at least 30 minutes, or until set.
- Meanwhile, make the charred strawberries. Melt the butter or coconut oil in a pan over a high heat. Tip in

the strawberries and sprinkle with the brown sugar, giving it a good mix to evenly coat. Leave to fry, caramelising the sliced sides of the strawberries for a couple of minutes. This is a perfect way to use up slightly soft strawberries. Finally, add the balsamic vinegar and wait for the liquid to thicken into a caramel.

- Veggie setting agents don't set exactly like gelatine, so expect that it may be quite a different texture to traditional Italian panna cotta. Unmould the puddings by sliding a knife around the edge of the ramekins, turning them upside down over a serving plate and gently easing them out, pulling the desserts down to release them.
- Serve the panna cottas with the syrupy charred strawberries poured over and around. Garnish with any remaining sheep's sorrel or basil leaves.

TIP: Sprinkle over granola, leftover buckwheat crumble or broken biscuits for a bit of crunch, if liked.

Giorgia's leftover grain seeded sourdough

Makes 2 small loaves

This super seeded bread using leftover grains was first brought to the Skip Garden kitchen menu by intern-turned-community-chef-extraordinaire, Giorgia Lauri. We all met through our connection to the Skip Garden, so it's nice to think of this forgiving fusion bread, accepting all wholesome seeds, grains and nutty flours around, as somewhat representative of the collective that is The Sustainable Food Story. Bake one for you and one for a friend. For our sourdough starter recipe, see right.

Prep: 30 minutes, starting day before to allow for seed soaking time and overnight ferment. Start five days before if you're starting your own sourdough starter from scratch.

Cook: 1 hour 15 minutes

Ingredients:

- 260g (2 cups) mixed seeds (such as sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, linseeds)
- 480g (1lb) sourdough starter
- 300g (10½ oz) cooked and cooled grains (such as barley, rice, spelt, rye, oat groats)
- 280g (2¼ cups) rye flour
- 230g (scant 2 cups) spelt flour
- 2tbsp treacle
- 3-4 level tsp (22g/1 oz) fine sea salt

Method:

- In a large mixing bowl, cover the seeds with 300ml (generous 1¼ cups) water and set aside to soak for a few hours.
- Once the seeds have had their soaking time, add

the rest of the ingredients to the bowl, along with 80ml (⅓ cup) water. Stir thoroughly until everything is evenly combined. Cover with a bowl cover and leave in a warm, draft free place to ferment and rise for one hour. Transfer to the fridge to rest overnight.

- The next day, remove from the fridge and divide between two 450g (1lb) loaf tins, and leave for about two hours to come up to room temperature.
- Preheat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan/425°F/Gas 7).
- Place both loaves in the oven and bake for 15 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 200°C (180°C fan/400°F/Gas 6) and bake for one hour.
- To check if the loaves are cooked, knock on the bottom of the loaf – it should sound somewhat hollow. Leave the loaves to cool in their tins before slicing. These loaves should last for over a week in a paper bag or bread bin. If you want to keep both loaves, pre-slice the second loaf and put it in the freezer so you have a nutritionally diverse toast option always ready to go (tahini and marmite make an excellent topping combination).

Sourdough starter

Makes 500g (1lb 2oz) starter

There are plenty of very informative bread books and tutorials out there on the science of sourdough but here's our simple guide to starting your own sourdough starter.

Ingredients:

- 200g (1¼ cups), plus 5tbsp wholemeal or bread flour

Method:

- To make your own sourdough starter, mix a tablespoon of any wholemeal or bread flour with a tablespoon of water in a jar or tub of at least 500g (1lb 2oz) capacity.
- Leave out on the work surface, or somewhere you'll remember to 'feed' it. Feed with a tablespoon of water and a tablespoon of flour every day for four days. It should start to look bubbly and active, and smell a bit funky, fermented and sour – this means you've successfully managed to form a colony of bread yeasts.
- On day five, add 200g (1¼ cups) flour and 200ml (generous ¾ cup) water, so that you now have about 500g (1lb 2oz) total. Leave for a few hours until it is bubbling and active, then you can scoop out 480g (1lb 1oz) to mix with the seeds for the seeded sourdough.



Caramelised onion tart

Makes 1 x 23cm (9in) tart or 4 small 11cm (4¼ in) tarts

We have loved the challenge of making a great vegan tart, and although it's taken us a while, this version can really fool the most seasoned omnivore. The caramelised onions give a sweetness and the miso adds that salty umami that will have you reaching for another slice.

Prep: 30 minutes, plus chilling time

Cook: 60-90 minutes

Ingredients:

- 3tbsp oil of choice
- 4 onions, thinly sliced
- 3tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 280g (10oz) silken tofu
- 250ml (1 cup) soya cream
- 1tsp miso, soy sauce or yeast extract (such as Marmite)
- Wholemeal flour, for dusting
- 1 quantity of shortcrust pastry
- 1tbsp nutritional yeast for a classic quiche colour
- Sea salt and ground black pepper
- Vegan cheese (optional)
- Seasonal edible flowers, to garnish (optional)

- ¼ tsp ground turmeric (optional)
- Heritage tomato and nasturtium side salad (see below), to serve

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan/400°F/ Gas 6).
- Heat the oil in a large frying pan with a lid over a medium heat for a couple of minutes. Add the onions and balsamic vinegar, stir and turn the heat down low and put the lid on. Cook for 30-45 minutes until tender, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.
- In a blender, combine the silken tofu, soya cream, miso, turmeric, if using, and some salt and pepper. Blend until smooth.
- Lightly dust a work surface and rolling pin with flour and roll out the pastry. Roll up the pastry on the rolling pin, and gently unroll it into the tart tin(s), pressing down into the

- corners. Trim the pastry, making sure you still leave some hanging over the edges. Transfer to the fridge to chill for 20 minutes.
- Cut a section of greaseproof paper larger than the tin(s) and press into the pastry. Fill with baking beans (these can be substituted for rice or dried beans) and bake for 10-20 minutes until the base has dried.
- Remove the greaseproof paper and baking beans from the tart case and bake for five more minutes. Remove the tart case from the oven and trim the edges of the pastry down to the tart tin.
- Spread the onions evenly over the base of the tart and pour over the tofu mixture. Top with vegan cheese, if using. Bake in the oven for 30-40 minutes for a large tart, or 15-25 for small, until golden on top.
- Sprinkle over the edible flowers, if using, and serve with the salad.



Heritage tomato and nasturtium side salad

Serves 2

This side salad is great for adding a tang to any dish. Nasturtiums grow like weeds in many gardens. When we visited Berkeley, California, everybody's front lawn was adorned with nasturtium plants, and they spilled onto the pavement, making great curb-side foraging. In addition to being beautiful, great for pollinators and for insect control in food growing, nasturtium flowers and leaves are delicious. We use the smaller leaves for a little less intense peppery flavour

Prep: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

- 150g (5½ oz) heritage tomatoes, halved or quartered
- 10 small nasturtium leaves
- 2tbsp oil
- 2tsp apple cider vinegar or blackberry, soy and basil shrub
- Pinch of smoked sea salt
- 3 nasturtium flowers (or any edible flowers), to garnish (optional)

Method:

- Place the tomatoes in a serving bowl with the nasturtium leaves. Mix the oil, vinegar and salt in a small bowl, then add to the tomatoes and toss together to allow the tomatoes to absorb the dressing for a few minutes.
- Garnish with nasturtium flowers or edible flowers if you have them.



Sustainable Kitchen
by Sadhbh Moore and Abi Aspen Glencross, £18,
White Lion Publishing.



Made in Switzerland

Super Natural – Since 1961



'It really gives you energy and I didn't get any colds last winter!'



'A great pick me up after an illness.'



'A must have item in your medicine cupboard!'



'Highly recommend if you need a pick me up'



'Cant believe it! A friend advised me to try this (was ill so long, had 2 goes at anti biotics) within 8 days I felt so much better.'



'Excellent after illness to regain strength and appetite.'



'Great stuff, really fights fatigue!'



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