

Natural Lifestyle

LOVE LIFE, LIVE WELL — NATURALLY

www.mynaturallifestyle.com

November 2021



The critical nutrient

Are your vitamin D levels meeting your winter health needs?

Love your heart

Essential advice to nourish and protect the heart

WINNING AT

NATURAL HEALTH

WE CAN REVEAL THE FANTASTIC HEALTH STORES TOPPING OUR ANNUAL AWARDS

Plus THE HEALTHY SPICES YOU NEED • WHY MAGNESIUM REALLY MATTERS
COOKING WITH THE SEASONS • NATURAL LIFESTYLE GIVEAWAYS

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Welcome



At the time of us putting together our vitamin D feature in this issue of *Natural Lifestyle*, we received the news from Food Standards Scotland that it was launching a campaign urging the nation to take a vitamin D supplement this winter – confirming just how important this vitamin is, and how critical it is that we all take it.

Yet unfortunately, many of us aren't, with data suggesting up to one in five Brits may be deficient in what is often termed the sunshine vitamin (on account that we make it on exposure to sunlight). And the worry is that, as we head towards winter, and with all the cold and 'flu bugs around, not to mention Covid-19 still lingering, we could be more susceptible to illness. In short, all of us must be considering a vitamin D supplement at the very least though the winter – and this is endorsed by our panel of natural health experts, who offer their advice on page 26.

Away from our health advice, this issue is a special one as we can reveal the winner of the coveted *Natural Lifestyle* Retailer of the Year Awards, sponsored by Terranova. We were overwhelmed with the sheer number of votes you cast, with some incredible comments about your favourite health store, and the difference

the shop has made to your life. More than 80 stores were nominated, which was eventually whittled down to five shortlisted stores, all very different in their business, but all with the same ethos of supporting people to better health. We are delighted to reveal the winners on page 16 and we thank you all for taking the time to vote.

Rachel Symonds,
Editor



THE BEST BITS

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



It was a rather long run for Editor Rachel, who proudly wore her medal after finishing the Manchester Marathon recently after 26.2 miles around the city.



Our designer, Clare, had a different perspective when she paid a visit to Brighton Upside Down.



Back to his bike, our Sales Exec, James, enjoyed a 220-mile ride along the King Alfred Way.



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VITAMIN D

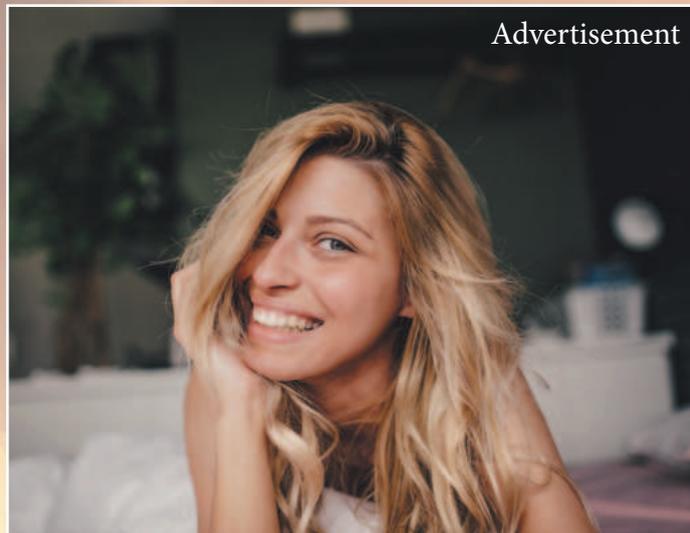


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EXPLORE
IN STORE



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HEALTH

Remember, Remember your beauty essentials in November

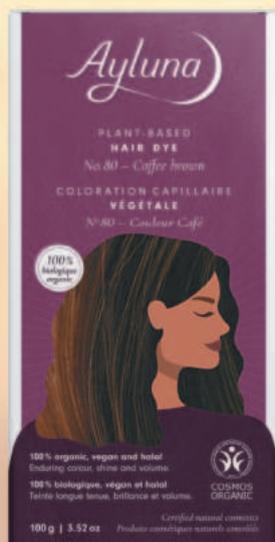


The thought of putting chocolate on your lips when you can't eat it might sound mean, but the benecos sweet cocoa flavoured lip balm is full of natural ingredients to protect and care for your lips. Cocoa and shea butter are the perfect duo to help say goodbye to dry cracked lips! Available from health stores and online. www.benecos.uk | £2.95

Wake up to smooth and glowing skin with the lavera Re-Energizing Sleeping Cream. This night-time moisturiser is enriched with two complex ingredients of organic grape and vitamin E to revitalise and regenerate, combat signs of fatigue and intensely moisturise, leaving the skin feeling soft and rejuvenated when you wake. Available from health stores and online. www.lavera.co.uk | £18.95



Switch up your current hair colour for a beautiful rich shade. Ayluna Coffee Brown Plant-based Hair Dye is your go-to seasonal shade. Giving you a glossy shine and added bouncy volume without the damage throughout the hair dyeing process. Ayluna Hair Dye is made with 8 carefully selected organic ingredients that are derived from herbs, plants and flowers. Available from health stores and online. www.ayluna.co.uk | £12.90



Create the perfect look with the benecos Freaking Hot Palette. The convenient natural It Pieces Palette comes with two gorgeous eyeshadows Rusty Copper and Very Woody, so your eyes can match your Pumpkin Spice Latte! The compact powder and contour powder make it easy for you to complete your look. Available from health stores and online. www.benecos.uk | £21.95



Colder months are in full swing, it is important to protect your skin from becoming dry with a rich moisturiser. The Fair Squared Coconut Body Lotion is rich in coconut oil which makes the lotion high in natural vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids, and antioxidants. These combined ingredients help to soothe and rejuvenate the skin while leaving it soft and hydrated. Available from health stores and online. www.fairsquared.co.uk | £12.75



Enjoy a brighter smile with the amazing Orange toothpaste with fluoride by popular zero waste brand Ben and Anna. Packed with natural ingredients such as Sea buckthorn, chamomile, and aloe vera extract it provides a reliable protective shield against tooth decay and gently cleans the teeth while protecting sensitive tooth enamel from damage. This powerhouse toothpaste with a refreshing orange taste is the ultimate must-have for your daily dental routine! Available from health stores and online. www.benandanna.uk | £8.95



STEPS TO SPOT VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY

With concern that vitamin D deficiency is at an all-time high, experts are reminding of how to spot if you are lacking.

The UK and Ireland Mushroom Producers point out that one in five Brits are vitamin D deficient, but many are unaware that they can get 100 per cent of their daily vitamins through their diet. They add that children are one of the most at-risk groups for not achieving their vitamin D RDA, spending under 20 minutes a day outdoors.

To encourage the nation to up

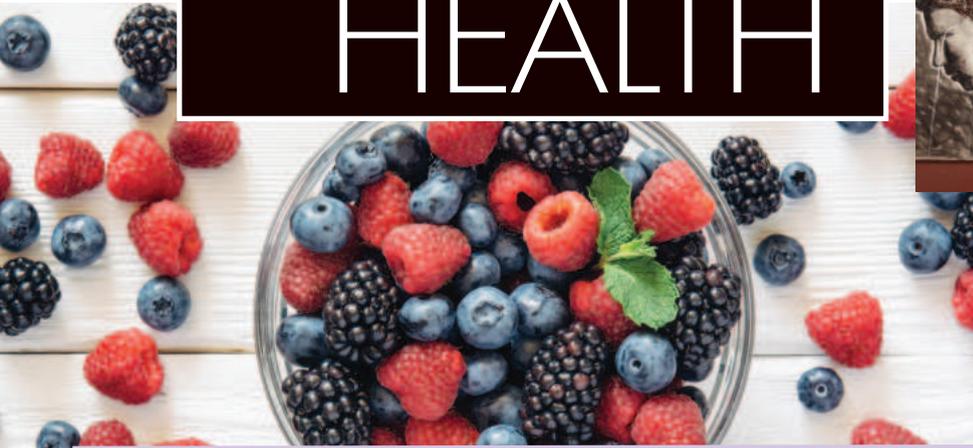
their vitamins during the darker, winter months, the UK and Ireland Mushroom Producers reveals the five main signs of vitamin deficiency and offers tips on how Brits can increase their vitamin intake each day. Signs may include:

- Tiredness and fatigue.
- Muscle weakness.
- Low mood.
- Recurrent coughs and colds.
- Disrupted sleep.

To counter this, the organisation suggests including mushrooms in your diet daily as

these are one of the few foods that contain a natural source of vitamin D. Make sure you choose mushrooms that have been harvested under UV light to ensure they are rich in vitamin D. Salmon is another good source of vitamin D so it is good to include this in your diet each week. Meanwhile, eggs are a useful source of and as every little counts, they make a great breakfast option and work perfectly with a handful of mushrooms as an omelette or scrambled.

Inside... HEALTH



A JOURNEY OF CALM

With data showing seven in 10 Brits have experienced high levels of unease over the last 18 months, one natural health brand has teamed up with an artist to support those struggling.

With 73 per cent experiencing heightened levels of unease over the past 18 months, and two-thirds struggling to describe how they're feeling to friends, family or work colleagues, Provacan CBD, together with artist, Nathan Wyburn, have created a bespoke, crowd-sourced piece of artwork that showcases the transition from unease to calm to ease the 'unexplained burden of these feelings' and help others understand what these moments of unrest feel like.

More than 1,000 Brits voted for the specific colours and textures that described their feelings of stress, unease and calm to help Nathan create an immersive artwork for others to use. The artwork took seven hours to complete and incorporates traditional and non-traditional materials.

Nathan Wyburn is a Welsh artist who brings to life his feelings through the medium of art.

Boost your health with berries

With new research suggesting our vitamin C intake is far too low, experts are reminding of the power of including berries in your daily diet.

The people at British Summer Fruits have pointed towards research from The University of Washington, in which scientists say vitamin C dosages informed by a World War II study by the Sorby Research Institute need upgrading – and argue modern scientists and health professionals have failed to comprehensively re-examine the 77-year-old research until now.

Nick Marston, Chairman of British Summer Fruits, explained: "Many Brits are understandably wondering how to double their vitamin C consumption following the first re-examination of our recommended daily intake since 1944. The good news is we know British berries to be an effective and tasty way to boost these levels. What's more, British blackberries look and taste fantastic right now and are a perfect snack to purchase to make this change of habit a little easier to implement."

And it seems one simple way of upping your intake is through berries, as explained by British Summer Fruits, which suggested:

• **Snack on strawberries** – strawberries are high in fibre, low in calories and sugar, contain no fat – and they're delicious. The red fleshy part is extremely high in vitamin C. In fact, the iconic soft fruit contains more vitamin C than oranges. Just seven strawberries (80g – a portion)

provide the current recommended daily amount of vitamin C.

• **Get a boost from blueberries** – bursting with goodness, blueberries are the perfect healthy addition to breakfast cereals, smoothies and deserts. They are one of the most nutrient dense berries with fibre, vitamin C, vitamin K and manganese. They also have one of the highest levels of antioxidants, specifically anthocyanins.

• **Ramp it up with raspberries** – rammed with vitamin C, raspberries are the perfect snack to support your immune system. The brilliant berry is ranked near the top of all fruits for antioxidant strength, they are particularly rich in ellagic acid, quercetin and anthocyanins – all powerful antioxidants which have proven health benefits and help protect the body against disease.

• **Blackberries bring the vitamins** – blackberries contain a wide range of nutrients, including vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, potassium and magnesium, as well as fibre and other plant nutrients that have numerous health benefits. These include flavonoids, which have powerful anti-inflammatory and immune system benefits. They also give blackberries their deep purple colour.

A wide variety of berry recipes can be found at www.lovetfreshberries.co.uk/recipes

We love

FREE FROM FELLOWS MALLOWS

– with Strawberry and Vanilla Mallows, and Mini Pink & White Vanilla Mallows, these super fluffy vegan marshmallows are suitable for everyone, including vegans and vegetarians. They don't contain any nasties and have been approved by the Vegan and Vegetarian Societies.

HOPE'S RELIEF INTENSIVE DRY SKIN RESCUE

– steroid-free and offering 24-hour hydration, this cream is ideal for babies and adults alike who are suffering with eczema, psoriasis and dermatitis.

GET ACTIVE THIS WINTER

Autumn maybe over, but why does your health kick have to go out of the window? Keep moving all year round with Syno-Vital!

The older you get, the harder it becomes to exercise and keep healthy. Your joints become stiff, you feel tired and sometimes, you'd much prefer to spend your time in front of the TV. However, don't let the signs of ageing win! Show your achy joints who's boss with the help of hyaluronic acid.

What is hyaluronic acid?

There's loads of science behind the role hyaluronic acid (HA) plays in the body, but let's keep things simple.

HA is found naturally in the body, it plays an important part in keeping you feeling young and healthy. When you're younger your HA levels are higher, but as you age, these levels of HA start to diminish, leaving you with fine lines, wrinkles and worst of all - aching joints.

When you get over 50, you'll notice your joints becoming stiffer, that's because HA is essential for lubricating your joints. It creates a cushioning effect, reducing friction and compression to help bare the weight of your body and withstand the impact of exercise without pain. Although these levels drop with age, **Syno-Vital Hyaluronic Acid Supplements** can help maintain HA levels and keep your joints healthy.

How can HA supplements help?

Supplements such as the award-winning Syno-Vital from Modern Herbals can help restore your body's HA levels without having to dramatically change your lifestyle - in fact, it's a simple supplement that can easily be incorporated into your day, no matter how busy it is. All you need to do is mix a sachet of Syno-Vital into a drink of your choice and enjoy, it's that easy!



According to research, taking hyaluronic acid daily helps to rebuild the 'pillow' of fluid that cushions your joints for up to 97% of people who try it.

Hyaluronic acid supplements have also been found to help patients with osteoarthritis, reducing inflammation and pain to help them with their daily mobility and overall lifestyle.

Are there any other benefits of hyaluronic acid?

As well as reducing joint pain, mobility problems and inflammation, HA is essential for keeping your skin looking young and fresh. As you age, your natural hyaluronic acid levels drop, making your skin appear less smooth and supple, with fine lines,

wrinkles and uneven skin tone becoming more prominent. By incorporating HA supplements into your diet, you may help your skin look more youthful and beautiful naturally.

It's also ideal for anyone who suffers with dry, itchy, tired eyes - HA keeps them moisturised and hydrated, helping you maintain that sparkle in your eye.

Syno-Vital is available from all good health food stores

Syno-Vital Success Story

"I've been taking Syno-Vital for about 6 months now, I'm amazed by how young looking my skin appears, I look younger than ever! I've been suffering with stiff joints over the past few years, but I can now bend my elbows and knees much easier without pain. I'd recommend Syno-Vital to all my friends and family"



Liz Parkin, Huddersfield

SAY YES TO YORKSHIRE

A Yorkshire trail has been crowned the top walking route for fitness fans.

The Saltaire to Skipton trail, otherwise known as the Dales Highway Section 1, has been named the top calorie-burning walking route in the UK, according to new research from Peak Cottages' Worthwhile Walking Routes.

The 32.5 km long route between Saltaire and Skipton has taken the spot due to its elevation and calorie-burning potential. On this mega route, walkers could burn a whopping 2,211 calories, making it an ideal trail for those looking to push themselves physically.

Other walking routes named best for those who want to stay fit include Ben Macdui: Cairn Gorm in Scotland, and Seaford to Eastbourne in East Sussex.

Yorkshire has been named home to the top calorie burning walk in the UK, based on its length, duration and elevation.

Lockdown prompted a surge in people taking up hiking as a replacement for indoor gyms during the pandemic, with a recent survey from Mintel revealing almost a quarter of Brits aged 16-24 (24 per cent) were avid walkers, compared to just 16 per cent back in 2018.

As well as naming the best walks for fitness fanatics, the study named the top walking routes which are the most accessible and picturesque, and which boast the highest cumulative score across all metrics analysed.

Scafell Pike, in the Lake District, was crowned the UK's top trail, followed by Peak District neighbour, Mam Tor and The Great Ridge, and Pembrokeshire's Solva to St David's trail.

Shannon Keary, PR Manager at Peak Cottages, commented: "Given the big increase in walking trail interest over the last year and ever fluctuating guidelines, it's really encouraging to see how many great walking trails are available across the nation. There truly is a walking route for everyone – whether you're a beginner or a seasoned hiker – and it's helpful to see them broken down by key metrics so people can easily find a trail suited to their needs."



The Mama Collective is here to make health and mindset coaching available to mums.

Leading health coach, Louise Barton, founder of Live Well With Lou, has launched the affordable health coaching monthly membership to help busy mums transform from burnout to achieve greater balance and sharing tools, expertise, and mindset and nutrition coaching to help mums achieve greater wellness and alignment.

She points out that research conducted by online community, Mothersphere, on 1,009 women in the UK found that one in three mums reported feeling driven to breaking point after facing the 'pandemic juggle' of homeschooling, working from home and extra childcare. The survey also found half of the respondents felt that they were in 'dire need' of self-care.

Louise is a mother of four under seven, who understands first-hand the physical and mental demands placed on mothers during a global pandemic. She is a certified Integrated Nutrition Health Coach based on the Isle of White, who takes a holistic approach to health and wellness by supporting people to nourish themselves on and off the plate.

She created The Mama Collective centred around empowering mums with self-love, nutrition, mindset and mindfulness coaching without breaking the bank. The programme will run all year round and is specifically designed so that you can join at any point in time.

Inside... LIFESTYLE

ACTIVITY ADVICE YOU CAN STICK TO

We've all made resolutions to start a fitness regime, only for it to stall, and so it's important to understand how to set goals and stick to them.

And the people at LQ Collagen are here to help with their advice on reassessing and re-setting your fitness goals.

- **Set your fitness goals** – knowing what you want to achieve from your fitness programme will help to motivate you and give you a sense of direction. Whether it's running your first marathon or improving your personal best, being specific about your goals and splitting goals in to short, mid and long-term goals will help you to remain focused and achieve success.

- **Start a training journal** – writing down your goals and achievements can really help you to stay on track. You can

use it to not only keep a record of your achievements but also as a log of improvements and/or injuries. There will be nothing more satisfying than looking back over the end of the year to see how you've improved.

- **Get enough rest** – a highly underestimated aspect of any fitness regimen, rest is essential for promoting performance, preventing injury and aiding recovery. Whatever your level of fitness or sports specialism, planning at least one day off from the training schedule each week encourages muscles to recover and strengthen, avoiding overuse. It also helps to conserve and restore energy levels, maintain focus, allow the immune system to work effectively and stabilise both heart rate and alertness and help you to sleep soundly.

- **Remember to stretch** – another overlooked, yet critical

element of any fitness or training regimen is stretching. Stretching muscles enhances flexibility and reduces muscle tension so that injury is minimised, and the body can recover properly. A worthwhile resolution to make and stick to.

- **Reassess your nutrition** – spending time reassessing your current nutrition plan, ensuring meals and snacks are planned and refuelling your body with nourishing meals will allow your body to both recover and perform efficiently. Not only that but it will help to support your immune system – particularly in the winter months when exposure to cold and flu viruses is rife. Of course, nothing replaces a good well-balanced diet, but sometimes the body needs a little help.

WIN WIN WIN

Be sure to follow us on Twitter and Instagram to be in with a chance of winning some of the fantastic competitions we have coming up...

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Better with a bar

If you're looking for ways to cut down on plastic, now is the time to consider shampoo bars.

But if you're not sure of the transition, here, the experts at Faith in Nature have debunked the most common solid shampoo myths.

- **Bottled shampoo will provide more washes than a solid shampoo** – wrong. The beauty bars really go the distance, providing around 50 washes, the same as your average 400ml shampoo bottle. They also require far less water (bottled shampoos are made up of 80-90 per cent water), saving the planet, as well as your wallet.
- **Liquid shampoo is more effective than solid shampoo at washing hair** – Faith In Nature's compact bars gently cleanse and condition hair without the need for harsh chemicals. Rather, they rely on natural oils and waxes (including shea, argan, coconut and dragon fruit) that work together to strengthen and soften strands.
- **Swapping to a bar means going through the 'transition phase'** – if, in the past, you've been put off by

the 'transition phase' (the period it takes for hair to adjust to a sulphate-free solid shampoo), do not fret. The solid shampoo and conditioner bars work their magic from the get-go.

- **It's easier to travel with a bottled shampoo** – forget decanting 100ml of liquid into (more) plastic bottles, shampoo and conditioner bars are far easier and lighter to travel with and can be carried in your hand luggage without the need for the plastic bag. Top tip? Keep your bars in the fully recycled and recyclable card packaging while in transit and once away, be sure to dry the bars between uses by not leaving them on wet surfaces.

Inside... BEAUTY

MOMENTS OF ME-TIME

It's never been easier for some me-time with the creation of this mini handheld diffuser from Alexandra Kay.

Green People's Alexandra Kay wellbeing brand already comprises a trio of 100 per cent pure and natural essential oil blends and now introduces Time To Inhale, a mini handheld diffuser. Convenient to carry with you when out and about, this discreet diffuser can be used to top up your self-care when away from home or to spread soothing essential oil scents throughout your home.

Easily charged using a USB cable, it is compatible with all three Alexandra Kay Me Time essential oil blends and every three drops per 10ml of water you add will provide eight-10 cycles of 60 seconds scent diffusion.



Feed your skin

If you're looking for some skin nourishment this winter, look no further than the new addition to the Weleda Skin Food family.

Building on the success of Weleda's cult classic Skin Food and its growing family of Skin Food Light, Skin Food Lip Balm and Skin Food Body Butter, the company has now unveiled a welcome new Skin Food Body Lotion, which provides intensive, long-lasting moisture, offering immediate comfort to dry or stressed-out skin and is easily absorbed into the skin, leaving it feeling soft, supple and healthy with a subtle sheen but no feeling of stickiness. This beautiful and deeply nourishing Body Lotion is a delight for the senses, with scents of sweet orange as well as aromatic lavender, which are balanced by the gentle notes of benzoin, bringing a warm depth.

It has been dermatologically tested for suitability on sensitive and very dry skin, is NATRUE-certified natural and of 100 per cent natural origin, 79 per cent of which is organic. The plant-based formulation is suitable for vegans.



CREATE YOUR OWN SPA

Indulge your senses with this relaxing new collection from Tisserand Aromatherapy.

The new Nature's Spa collection allows you to indulge in the rewards of 100 per cent natural pure essential oils for skin, body and mind, all from the comfort of your own home.

Whether you want to soothe your soul, indulge your senses, or deeply nourish your skin, these expertly blended organic oil enriched formulas will melt away tension and support your wellbeing holistically. Inspired by the gentle movement of nature and how it can carry scent, choose from a selection of feel-good, fragranced wellbeing treats for bath and body.

The collection features four fragrant blends, including Soothing Lavender & Neroli, Indulgent Rose & Ylang Ylang, Uplifting Mandarin & May Chang, and Comforting Bergamot & Sandalwood, available in a body wash, body lotion, bath soak, hand wash and soap bar.



Warm up this winter

With the colder weather on the way, we bring you our pick of the winter health essentials you need.



Spicy Christmas

The warming range of Gin Gins are a favourite treat during the cold season.

Whether you eat them whole or dissolve them in hot water for a soothing and spicy drink, they are simply yummy.

Save the day

Now the clocks have gone back, you can enjoy a revitalising daylight boost from the Save the Day daylight lamp – perfect to help banish the winter blues and help with the effects of seasonal affective disorder.



Himalayan glow

Made from the natural Himalayan salt created over millions of years, Revolution Salt Lamps light up your home with a healthy glow, which helps to reduce moisture and positive electrical ions.

Each lamp is unique and comes in a variety of shapes and sizes.



Cherry comfortable

As winter looms, there's nothing better than cuddling up with the natural and organic original Cherry Pillow.

Now your children can enjoy the soothing warmth of cherry pips in a beautiful selection of cuddly creatures too!

Products featured are available from all good health food stores.

Must have magnesium

Known as nature's relaxant, there's much more to magnesium than meets the eye – but the question is, are you getting enough?

There is concern that our soils these days are so depleted of minerals that many of us are deficient. One example of this is magnesium, a critical mineral so important for many functions, and one which many of us are lacking.

Officially, too low levels of magnesium is known as hypomagnesemia, and signs we are lacking can include fatigue, muscle cramps, poor quality sleep and heart palpitations.

The good news is magnesium can be found in a wide range of foods, so making a conscious effort to up your intake of these is a good idea; excellent sources include green leafy veg, such as spinach, nuts, beans, and soya milk.

You should also try to cut back on poor quality food, such as processed and junk food, refined sugar, fizzy drinks and caffeine, as these can actually act as a barrier to you absorbing magnesium.

MAGNESIUM FUNCTIONS

This mineral has a wide range of functions, across many health areas. In fact, it is known to be responsible for more than 300 functions.

In terms of the areas it plays a role in, there is keeping bones healthy and supporting healthy energy. Experts also suggest that too low levels of magnesium can cause disrupted sleep and mood issues.

One of the most common issues related to deficiency is muscle cramps and twitches, often referred to as restless leg. If you experience this, you may benefit from a magnesium supplement. It is also involved in nerve function, which is why you can experience heart palpitations.

We should also note that we need magnesium for other nutrients to work. For example, we need magnesium to produce serotonin, our feel-good hormone, which is why if we are lacking, it can lead to low mood.

TRY THIS

Good Health Naturally
Ancient Magnesium
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Salus Floradix Magnesium
Liquid Formula

Bio-Kult Migréa

BetterYou Magnesium
Body Butter

Magnesil

Top up

We've already highlighted the importance of upping magnesium-rich foods, but in many cases, you might want to take a supplement to ensure you're getting enough.

You can find magnesium in tablet format, but research also shows that when it is applied topically – through the skin – it is better absorbed. These days, you can find magnesium products in creams, gels, and oils, as well as in the form of flakes you add to a relaxing bath.

It should be kept in mind that some people are more at risk of deficiency and so may have a higher requirement for a magnesium supplement. This includes pregnant and breastfeeding women, the elderly, those taking certain medications, and those with conditions including Crohn's and coeliac disease.

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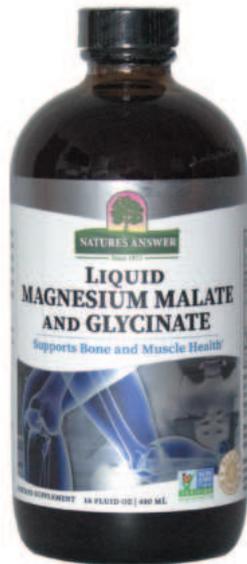
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Turmeric and Matcha

While more commonly considered a way to add flavour and interest to food, spices have been revered for centuries for their rich health-giving properties. Whether it's turmeric for easing inflammation or cinnamon for balancing blood sugar, incorporating spices into your daily health regime is a great idea.

This is especially the case at this time of year, when our immune systems can take a bit of a hit; many spices are warming and so hugely useful when we might be feeling the effects of the cold weather.

It's super easy to incorporate spices into your diet; obviously, cooking with them, whether it's a warming stew or curry or a healthy stir fry, is one of the best ways, but don't forget they can also be added to smoothies and juices to add extra flavour.

You can also find spices contained in a range of supplements; head to your health food store for the best quality products, along with expert advice to ascertain what's right for you.

Cut inflammation

One of the best spices in this area is turmeric, thanks to the compound it contains, called curcumin, which has powerful anti-inflammatory effects.

Because of these benefits, it makes turmeric a popular choice for those with joint-related pain. But because it can also help fight oxidative damage, it is also believed to help improve cognitive function.

Turmeric can be found as a loose spice, in supplement form, and is also increasingly used in herbal teas and healthy latté-style products.

Ginger is also an anti-inflammatory, not to mention being hugely warming in winter. It's also well-known for its ability to ease nausea.

If pain is the issue, which can be caused by inflammation, you could also keep in mind cayenne, a type of chilli pepper, thanks to the capsaicin contained within it. Capsaicin is said to help relieve pain and you can often find this contained in topical creams that can be directly applied to the skin.

Heart healthy

There are some spices known to be supportive of the heart, including oregano.

This is because oregano contains a whole host of nutrients, including vitamin K, which is critical for a healthy heart, along with other antioxidants, such as vitamin E, as well as fibre.

In addition, cardamon can be considered for the heart, as well as having benefits around digestion, among other functions.

BALANCE BLOOD SUGAR

One of the best-known spices to keep your blood sugar levels stable – which is hugely important for a healthy waistline and to ease cravings – is cinnamon.

This spice is regarded for its ability to lower blood sugar levels thanks to the compound called cinnamaldehyde. It also contains antioxidants, so is important for general health but specifically the heart and the brain.

Cinnamon has the added benefit of adding a sweet taste, so will often be used in porridge, in hot drinks and in baking.

Cumin may also be useful in this area, as well as helping with weight management.

HEALTH FOOD HEROES



We are delighted to reveal the winners of the *Natural Lifestyle* Retailer of the Year 2021.

Earlier this year, we launched our search for the best health food store, and we asked you, our readers, to get involved by nominating your favourite shop. And nominate you did, in your hundreds, with a total of 80 stores across the UK being put forward. After five deserving stores were shortlisted, we are delighted to reveal that Inside Out Health, in Reigate, has been crowned *Natural Lifestyle* Retailer of the Year 2021, sponsored by Terranova Nutrition.

The awards were launched to recognise health stores who have gone above and beyond for their community during the pandemic, and the shortlisted stores all demonstrated that in their droves.

WINNING WAYS

Kate Segal, owner of Inside Out, was overjoyed to win the award, telling *Natural Lifestyle*: "We are so thankful to win this award and in our 10th year too! Thankful to have such a committed team giving much needed advice and support in our community, thankful that we have such lovely customers who said such great things about what we do here at Inside Out Health and thankful to have this winning formula to take into the next decade of business."

The panel of judges were particularly impressed with the knowledge of their whole team, with qualified nutritional therapists on-site and their local doctor surgery recommending their services. Some comments taken from their nominations included:

- "This small team have gone above and beyond to keep operating through the whole of lockdown and always offer a wealth of knowledge, expertise and excellent service."
- "The whole team have great customer service and knowledge of all the products in store. They happily give you time and advice with free consultation and have helped me and all my family immensely over the last few years."
- "Brilliant shop with amazing people, great advice, always make me feel I've had private consultation."

Stephen Terrass, founder of Terranova Nutrition, commented: "We know independent health food retailers are at the centre of their local communities, that's why it was such an honour – and pleasure – to read each and every lovely nomination from readers of *Natural Lifestyle* magazine who value their service so highly. A huge congratulations to the winner, Inside Out Health, to the Highly Commended, Love Health and Wellbeing, and to every shortlisted and nominated store – it was an incredibly close contest, showcasing the high standards set by health food stores from across the country."



Kate Segal



The full list of accolades are...

WINNER

Inside Out Health, Reigate

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Love Health & Wellbeing, Ormskirk, Skelmersdale, Formby

SHORTLISTED

Bare Health, Congleton
Brontasaurus Vegan Lifestyle Store, Swansea
Natural Health, Hertford and Welwyn Garden City

The awards will return in 2022. Look out for more information in *Natural Lifestyle* and on social media.



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TO THE BEAT

Expert advice on keeping your heart in the best of health – and how nutrition should be the foundation.

Millions of people across the UK are living with some kind of heart-related health issue, and with expanding waistlines, heightened alcohol consumption during the pandemic, not to mention a lack of activity among the general population, it is perhaps not hard to see why.

But caring for the heart is actually relatively easy if you adopt some simple principles that you follow every day – with your diet at the very heart (pardon the pun) of this. So, what do you need to know about the healthy changes to make?

Alice Bradshaw, Head of Nutrition Education and Information at Terranova Nutrition, explained: “Many people are living with poor cardiovascular health. While most people associate poor heart health with heart attacks, angina and other heart-specific conditions, what often goes unrecognised is the fact that conditions such as diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure are all directly linked to cardiovascular health.”

Lindsay Powers, Nutritionist and Health Coach at Good Health Naturally, went on: “Heart disease is one of the biggest threats to public health in the UK today, with figures from the British Heart Foundation (BHF) stating that these conditions affect one in four people. While they suggest that deaths from heart and circulatory disease have halved in recent years, it still accounts for a quarter of all deaths in the UK or 170,000 deaths each year.

“Figures from the BHF also state that around 7.4m people live with heart and circulatory disease in the UK, affecting 3.9m men and 3.5m women. While we are dealing with vast numbers here, the BHF suggests that the annual deaths from heart diseases have halved since they were established and promoted lifestyle modifications.”

Amy Hipwell, Nutrition Advisor at Viridian Nutrition, agreed, commenting: “Heart-related conditions are one of the most common causes of mortality in the UK. The Office of National Statistics has stated that the amount of people dying at home from heart disease has increased since the beginning of the pandemic. There have been 26,000 extra deaths which have occurred in private homes across England and Wales between March and September 2020 in comparison to the last five years.

“However, statistics show that in 1961, more than half of all deaths in the UK were attributed to heart and circulatory diseases (320,000 deaths). This has improved over the last 60 years, with current figures showing heart and circulatory diseases causing an estimated total of 168,000 deaths each year.”

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

With diet the foundation, making some lifestyle shifts can also keep the heart healthy.

“One of the most important is to stop smoking, which contributes to thousands of deaths each year from heart disease,” Lindsay commented, adding: “As being overweight or obese is another risk factor, aim to maintain a healthy weight, and seek the help of a qualified nutritionist if you need a plan and support to reach your goals. Exercise has also been researched for its positive benefits in terms of heart health, and even taking a daily walk is beneficial.”

SHIFT YOUR DIET

How healthy you are must start with your diet – putting in too much bad food, laden with additives and with little nutritional value, not only places pressure on the heart but can also lead to weight gain, which is no good for this organ. So, what do you need to think about in terms of a heart healthy diet?

“A Mediterranean diet, high in antioxidant-rich fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds and olive oil, is often touted as the most beneficial diet for heart health, however, any eating plan which focuses on a wide variety of fresh, unprocessed whole foods will be a good approach,” Alice advised.

She added: “Animal derived foods and saturated fats have acquired a reputation for being bad for cardiovascular health, but more accurately, processed meats and poor quality oils (including refined vegetable oils) are more problematic as they are linked to inflammation and poor nutritional status.”

Lindsay went on: “Omega 3 fatty acids, in particular, are very heart-friendly. Aim for two to three portions of oily fish a week, and add walnuts, chia seeds, flaxseeds, and hemp seeds for vegan options. It also is no surprise that many processed foods contain high sugar levels (often from hidden sources). The more obvious sugary snacks and sugar are the primary cause of inflammation. When you eat excess sugar, the extra insulin in the bloodstream can affect the arteries, leading to inflammation and hardening and damage to the arterial walls, known as atherosclerosis. Therefore, sugar is associated with an increased risk of heart disease.”

Try this

- ★ Terranova Nutrition CoQ10, Magnesium & Hawthorn Complex
- ★ Good Health Naturally HeartPower 45
- ★ Natural Health Practice Omega 3 Support
- ★ NutraTea NutraLipid

LOWER YOUR RISK FACTORS

While some heart conditions can be genetic, it must be remembered that there is a lot you can do to reduce your risk of developing issues. We should first start with the most common heart-related issues to be aware of.

“Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the most common heart and circulatory disease diagnosed in the UK. It occurs when coronary arteries are narrowing due to a build-up of fatty deposits and other debris, leading to potential blockages and heart attacks. CHD is the leading cause of death in the UK and worldwide. Having CHD or a heart attack is also likely to increase the risk of stroke,” Lindsay explained.

“High blood pressure is another common issue affecting heart health, and according to Blood Pressure UK, one in three adults has high blood pressure. They estimate that 31 per cent of men and around 26 per cent of women have high blood pressure. However, many more cases are undiagnosed or not receiving any treatment, so the numbers are estimated to be much higher.”

Amy went on: “Other common heart conditions include heart attack (myocardial infarction), which accounts for more than 100,000 hospital admissions in the UK each year, atrial fibrillation (AF), which is one of the most common forms of abnormal heart rhythm (arrhythmia) and a major cause of stroke that is said to affect around 1.5m people in the UK, heart failure, which occurs when the heart is not pumping blood around the body as well as it should, and is said to affect 650,000 people in the UK.”

And when it comes to risk factors, Amy advised: “There are many genetic

and lifestyle factors for heart and circulatory disease, and the risk of developing these diseases can increase with the number of risk factors an individual has and how serious they are. Risk factors such as sex, race, genetics, and family history cannot be changed, however, some risk factors, such as high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol can be improved through healthy lifestyle changes.

“High blood pressure (hypertension) is the leading modifiable risk factor for heart and circulatory disease in the UK. An estimated 28 per cent of adults in the UK have high blood pressure, which equates to around 15m adults. Diabetes is another common risk factor for developing heart disease. Almost five million people in the UK have diabetes, and statistics show that adults with diabetes are two to three times more likely to develop heart and circulatory diseases.”

Alice added: “As well as lifestyle factors (such as lack of physical activity) and diet, hereditary factors all contribute to heart-related health conditions. A lack of sleep and poor management of stress has also been associated with poor heart health.”

Looking specifically at CHD, Amy went on: “CHD is the leading cause of death in ethnic groups in the United States. South Asian individuals are at a higher risk of developing CHD, as many individuals from this community are from areas of deprivation. Often, in deprived areas, people are on lower incomes and have less access to healthier foods. Unhealthy foods such as those high in salt, sugar and saturated fats are known to increase the risk of CHD.”

HEART HEALTHY TOOLKIT

We can be lacking in key nutrients for a range of reasons, so considering supplements can be worthwhile.

As a starting point, Alice cautioned: “For anyone with an existing heart condition or on medication for cardiovascular health issues, additional nutritional and botanical supplements should only be taken with the guidance of a nutritional or health care practitioner.”

When considering what may be beneficial, let's start with fats.

“Omega 3 fatty acids are very heart friendly as their anti-inflammatory properties can help protect the blood vessels from inflammation and damage and reduce overall triglycerides in the blood,” Lindsay explained. “Krill oil is a good option for supplementation, as this offers a rich source of omega 3 fatty acids in a form that is well-absorbed by the body.”

Alice added: “Heart healthy fatty acids (EPA and DHA), found within fish oil and flaxseeds, and omega 9 fats found in olive oil, avocados, walnuts and almonds play a significant role modulating blood fats and stabilising insulin and blood sugar levels (thereby reducing inflammation), factors that are important to the cardiovascular system.”

B vitamins are also known to be important.

Alice explained: “B vitamins are often associated with energy production and stress management, however, they also play a vital role in heart health. B vitamins are involved in the metabolism and conversion of homocysteine back into non-harmful substances. Antioxidant nutrients, vitamin D3 with K2, coenzyme Q10, hawthorn, carnitine and garlic are all backed by research for their benefits to cardiovascular health.”

And Lindsay suggested: “Magnesium, vitamin D3, and K2 support heart health, and unfortunately, it is not always possible to get enough from food alone (or sunlight with vitamin D3). Using nutritional supplements can be a beneficial way of correcting any nutrient deficiencies and supporting optimal cellular levels.

“With vitamin K2, the typical western diet is low in natural sources, such as natto, the fermented soya bean, or animal foods such as cheese and liver. We can convert some K2 from K1 from foods such as green leafy veg, but it may not always provide enough. Therefore, it is becoming more common to recommend a K2 supplement in practice, especially alongside D3, as they are essential co-factors for calcium metabolism and heart health.”

She went on: “Serrapeptase and nattokinase are enzymes beneficial for cardiovascular health. These enzymes help target inflammation and clean unwanted debris from the blood vessels, supporting better heart and circulatory health.”

And Amy reminded: “When choosing food supplements, always choose high quality supplements which contain 100 per cent active ingredients, no binders or fillers. It is important to keep in mind that some food supplements can interact with prescribed medications, so it is essential you speak with a healthcare professional before using any.”

NATURAL LIFESTYLE'S Top Picks



Canned Fish You Can Trust

Rated a world beating 89% by Greenpeace, Fish4Ever Skipjack isn't

only the best option in ethical terms, it's also the best for quality. That's because our little island factory in the Azores only works from whole fish rather than frozen pre-processed loins – and we only add really good, natural and organic ingredients such as first cold pressed organic olive oil.

www.fish4ever.co.uk



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The people that brought you vegan sausages and beans bring you another first – pea and vegan ham soup. An old school pea soup with vegan ham pieces, our soups are loaded with flavour and deliciously warming. Thick and wholesome, but with a vegan twist – the 'ham' is made from soya protein making it deliciously meat-free. This rich and hearty soup makes a substantial

and filling lunch or lazy supper that's ready in a flash. There is a tremendous growth in the alternative meat market currently, as manufacturers experiment with plant-based versions of everything, from fish fingers to haggis. This product is registered with the Vegetarian and Vegan Societies.

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Ask the experts



LOWER YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT...

by Alex Smith

What impact do our food choices have on the environment?

The most concerning impacts of our food choices are biodiversity loss, the climate emergency and water use. One third of climate chaos gas, for instance, comes from the global food supply chain. We need to educate about how significantly the impact on these three aspects are and choose differently, especially if you only have to pay a small premium. This is exactly what we achieved when we launched our net zero carbon cereals, where the Scope 3 CO2e is highlighted on the back of the pack with details of how this is offset. We are transparent about the impact of our products and seek to help our customers understand that their choices can really make a difference.

How can we shop for food in a more sustainable way?

Buying local, seasonal, organic and minimum packaging or plastic-free are a good focus consumers should

keep in mind if they want to shop in a more sustainable way.

As well as buying food, I would encourage everyone to grow some food, even if just a few herbs in a pot on the windowsill. This helps understand the miraculous gift that nature gives us, transforming seeds to food. When this is realised, there is a tendency to waste less food, which is also a vital component in this jigsaw puzzle.

And why is organic a good choice in terms of the environmental benefits?

There are two main overarching reasons why organic is the best option for a sustainable food system.

Organic systems and food are mandated in law, so the governance is as good as it can be. Governance is a foundational element in sustainability. Organic has a clear path to becoming a food system, independent from fossil fuel. No other system can do this, and it is impossible to have a sustainable food supply dependant on fossil fuel.

Q What indicates if a beauty supplement is truly vegan and what nutrients are important for healthy skin?

Linda O'Byrne recommended: It can be a minefield to look through the range of cosmetics that are truly vegan and cruelty free. You'd think it'd be a given but it's definitely not. To be 100 per cent vegan, it must contain no animal derived ingredients, which includes beeswax, lanolin and honey, which are often added to skin care ranges.

Cruelty free guarantees that the product, or its ingredients, haven't been tested on animals. So, what to look for that ticks both these boxes but will truly nourish your skin, providing the nutrients you need?

Look for brands that are 'back to basics' with their ingredients, in other words the list of ingredients is minimal, rather than a list of unpronounceable words. Clean and natural ingredients are ideal, without harsh dyes, preservatives or sulphates. Instead, look for plant-based ingredients that are hydrating, such as glycerol, which traps water in the upper layer of the skin, making it youthful and dewy.

Pair this with moisturising, natural ingredients to lock in the moisture. Rose oil not only smells amazing and gives your senses an instant lift but is great for soothing and softening the skin. Of course, water will always feature in any good skincare product as it's so good for the skin. Water helps to deliver ingredients to the skin and mixes with the oil to form an emulsion; the humectant helps to trap in the water, making your skin even softer. As well as skincare that works for your skin, you also want it to be affordable so look for a skincare range which suits your purse, as well as your face.

About the experts



ALEX SMITH is the pioneering founder of Alara, one of Britain's best-known sustainable food businesses. Alex founded the business in 1975 with £2 he picked up in the street and it went on to become the first cereal company to be certified organic.



Dr MARILYN GLENVILLE PhD is one of the UK's leading Nutritionists. She is the author of a number of internationally bestselling books, including *Natural Solutions For Dementia and Alzheimer's*.



LINDA O'BYRNE is an experienced nutrition and fitness professional, she has a BSc in Nutrition and International Sports Sciences Association (ISSA) certified in Performance Nutrition, Fitness Coaching and Fitness Nutrition. She is speaking on behalf of the supplement brand, Heritage Store.



LOUISE CHEADLE is the Co-founder of teapigs and its tea taster.

‘Studying at CNM transformed my health and life’

Eleanor Hoath, CNM Nutritional Therapy Graduate, details the positive impact her training had.

The hands-on learning experience at CNM and the true passion that every lecturer has for their field of expertise is what I loved most about the nutrition course.

Studying CNM's Naturopathic Nutrition course completely changed my life. I suffered from severe gut problems, acne and hormone-related conditions and wanted to gain in-depth knowledge about what was going on in my body to understand how I could help myself. I enrolled on the course thinking I was going to learn about different types of foods and why they are good for you. Instead, I discovered, uncovered and investigated my own health worries further and through my own knowledge, power and understanding, I've been able to heal my body and understand my symptoms. This is something I thought would never be possible.

Each CNM lecturer has a true passion for the field. What really attracted me to CNM's nutrition course is how thorough the course is. It doesn't just teach you about food, it also explains the complete biological and chemistry understanding of the human body that is equal to, or even more in-depth than what is taught in some medical establishments. The hands-on learning experience and the true passion that every lecturer has for

the nutrition field is what I loved the most about my studies. The fact I was also able to use evidence-based research and findings to support my learning highlighted how important nutrition is for our health.

The power of nutrition inspired me to help others. I now have my own practice called Well Nourished Nutrition, where I see clients on a one-to-one basis to support them with their health and wellness journey. As someone who has been affected by gut, hormone and acne related conditions, I understand the impact these health conditions can have on your life. I want to support people to get to the bottom of their symptoms to empower them to reach their optimal wellbeing. As well as seeing clients, I also run programmes, write e-books and organise events for people to take part in. I'm also a freelance digital and publication content producer, applying my passion for writing to support brands and publications.

There is nothing more powerful than hearing someone say that you have made a difference to their health and that they can see the benefits of your hard work and commitment. I also love being able to use the qualification how I want to and choose a path that works for me.



Eleanor Hoath

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Ask the experts

TUNE INTO YOUR THYROID...

by Dr Marilyn Glenville



What is the thyroid and what are its functions?

The thyroid is a small butterfly shaped organ in your neck that has an enormous influence over every system in your body. It controls your metabolism and is like a thermostat that regulates your body temperature and tells your body to burn calories and use energy.

It is estimated that there are over 100 symptoms of thyroid imbalance and because of this huge range, it can often be difficult to diagnose.

What signs can we have if it's not working correctly and what health issues can this lead to?

The thyroid gland can be underactive (hypothyroidism) or overactive (hyperthyroidism). Problems of an underactive thyroid are much more common than an overactive one and are also more common in women than men. The symptoms of an underactive thyroid can also mimic other problems so it may take some time to get a correct diagnosis.

If you answer 'yes' to four or more of the following questions, your thyroid gland could be underactive.

- Has your weight gone up gradually over months for no apparent reason?
- Do you often feel cold?
- Are you constipated?
- Are you depressed, forgetful or confused?
- Are you losing hair or is it drier than it used to be?
- Are you having menstrual problems?
- Are you having difficulty getting pregnant?
- Have you noticed a lack of energy?
- Are you getting headaches?

With an overactive thyroid, the gland releases too much thyroid hormone. Symptoms can include weight loss, increased appetite, frequent bowel movements of diarrhoea, mood swings, sweating, rapid heartbeat, irregular or absent

periods, bulging eyes and swelling in the throat (goitre).

Can you offer advice on how best we can support thyroid health?

Testing for thyroid hormones can be done by your doctor and involves a blood test. Some nutritionists also test thyroid hormones, and it can be helpful to modify your diet if your doctor has suggested a 'wait and see' approach if your results are borderline before medication is introduced.

The hormones tested will include TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone), T4 (thyroxine), T3 (triiodothyronine) – not usually tested on the NHS. Changes in TSH can serve as an early warning system, often occurring before the actual level of thyroid hormones in the body become too low. A high TSH level indicates that the thyroid gland is not making enough thyroid hormone. T3 hormone makes your metabolism work faster and burn fat.

Iodine is needed to make your thyroid hormones and seaweed is one of the best food

sources of iodine and others include seafood, dairy products, grains and eggs. You can't manufacture iodine in your body, it has to come from your food. But iodine uptake can be blocked by certain foods called goitrogens and particularly when those foods are raw. These foods include the cruciferous vegetables like cauliflower, broccoli, kale and cabbage and also soya so these should always be eaten cooked if you have an underactive thyroid or in moderation.

As well as iodine, other nutrients are important for thyroid function, including selenium, zinc, tyrosine, vitamin D, iodine from seaweed, vitamin C and gum guggul.

Selenium is needed by your body to convert T4 to the active thyroid hormone T3 and low levels are found in those with autoimmune thyroid disorders. Tyrosine is a building block for the thyroid hormones and with the help of iodine, turns it into thyroxine. Zinc is also important for the production of thyroid hormones and gum guggul supports the conversion of T4 to T3.



Why is kombucha good for me, and can you suggest how I can make sure I'm picking a quality product?

Louise Cheadle explained: Lots of people have asked about the health benefits and while, for us, it's all about the taste, there are some benefits of kombucha – particularly over regular soft drinks.

Tea naturally contains polyphenols and these little compounds can act as antioxidants. As we use real tea to make our booch, there will also be caffeine in there to give you a natural boost. Plus, the fermentation process used to make kombucha also creates a wide range of organic acids, including acetic acid and guluronic acid.

Yes, there will be sugar in kombucha – but for an important reason! Sugar essentially feeds the SCOBY and allows the fermentation to occur – without this, there'd be no kombucha! But never

fear, a can of kombucha won't rot your teeth. The average can of fizzy pop will have around 10.6g per 100ml – whereas our kombuchas average at the 3g mark, making it the perfect, natural alternative to satisfy those cravings!

When faced with a fridge full of booch, which should you choose? Being in the tea world, kombucha is everywhere, and we couldn't help but think there's always been one thing missing from the hype – the tea! Rather than using syrups, juices of flavourings, we've got an award-winning range of teas and fruit infusions so why not use those real brewed teas to make a delicious drink? Choosing a kombucha that uses real ingredients is always going to bring you a better tasting beverage.

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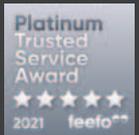
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Spotlight on the sunshine vitamin

All of us should be taking vitamin D, yet research shows many Brits are failing to get adequate levels. Here's what you need to know about this crucial nutrient.

We need a range of nutrients to maintain good health, but in our modern world, with too much in the way of processed junk foods, we can often be missing out. One of the best examples of this is vitamin D, a nutrient that plays such a critical role in a whole range of functions, including the bones, immune system, and mind, yet it's thought up to one in five of us could be deficient.

And, as we head into winter, it's never been so critical to ensure we have enough – so much so, health officials in Scotland have just launched a winter health campaign to urge people to take a supplement during the colder months. When you then consider research is ongoing into vitamin D's role in reducing the effects of respiratory infections, including Covid-19, and it's clear we should be making sure we have enough.

Here, we put key questions around vitamin D to a range of health experts.

Q

What are the functions of vitamin D and why do we need it for our health?

The answer to this is many, and it's important to understand just how important it is.

Keeley Berry, Molecular Biologist and NPD Manager at BetterYou, explained: "Normally produced in the skin using energy from sunlight, mainly ultraviolet B (UVB), vitamin D is often referred to as the 'sunshine vitamin' and it's a powerful nutrient that can significantly impact our mood, energy levels, muscle, and bone health.

"What vitamin D is arguably known for is its role in immune health as it is crucial in defending the body against bacteria and viruses, with many studies finding links between vitamin D deficiency and poor immunity. What's more, researchers have found that low levels of this vital vitamin are linked to a higher risk of sleep disorders, poor sleep quality and shorter sleep duration, as well as depression, autoimmunity, and weight gain – so it's important that we all maintain healthy levels year-round."

Catherine Gorman, Nutritionist and Health Coach at Good Health Naturally, advised: "Since the discovery of vitamin D in the early 20th century, it has been synonymous with skeletal and dental health, as it plays a key role in calcium and phosphorous metabolism, both vital minerals for maintaining healthy bones and teeth. More recently, we have started to learn about its

involvement in immunity.

"This particularly came under the spotlight last year when some studies suggested low vitamin D levels were associated with a higher risk of Covid-19 infection, and more severe symptoms. Vitamin D receptors are present in more than 30 different tissues, including the brain, heart, skin, eyes, ovary, prostate gland, breast, so it should come as no surprise its effects could be wide ranging."

Ella Owen, Nutrition Advisor at Kinetic, which has the Nature's Answer brand, added: "Vitamin D contributes to absorption of calcium – and plays an important role in maintaining healthy bones. Children need vitamin D to build strong bones and teeth. In severe cases, deficiency can cause a bone problem in children called rickets and osteomalacia (the adult form of rickets) in adults. Vitamin D contributes to the maintenance of normal muscle function so may help prevent muscle aches and pains."

Jenny Carson, Technical Services Manager at Viridian Nutrition, also advised: "Low mood has been associated with lowered vitamin D, especially seasonal affective, disorder which can occur in the winter months. Further links between depression in older adults and lowered vitamin D may suggest greater difficulty in vitamin D absorption with ageing."



How much of an issue is deficiency in the UK?

The concern is deficiency could be getting worse, especially since the pandemic.

Deepali Shah, Nutritionist at Lifeplan, advised: "Vitamin D deficiency in the UK is more common than ever imagined, particularly as most of us spent last year indoors. Vitamin D deficiency is more prevalent among certain ethnic and socio-economic groups and those living in the northern areas of the UK. According to Heart UK, one in five adults and one in six children do not get enough vitamin D."

Joanna added: "Although the awareness of vitamin D is constantly growing, the number of people that have deficiency is still very high. We faced three lockdowns in the last 18 months, most UK citizens didn't travel abroad to sunny locations, many people had to self-isolate at home, and, most importantly, we've had very little sunshine in the UK this year. People have also reduced their sun exposure by staying more at home simply because they considered it as a safer protection from the virus. We don't have official data on the national prevalence of vitamin D deficiency, but it's safe to assume it has gotten a lot worse."

Alice Bradshaw, Head of Nutrition Education and Information at Terranova, advised: "Everybody living in the UK needs to be conscious of getting enough vitamin D due to the fact that we have very little sun exposure for much of the year, coupled with the fact that food sources of this important nutrient are notoriously few and far between. Children, pregnant women and the elderly are especially at risk of deficiency as are dark skinned people or those who dress in a way that limits skin exposure to sunlight. Certain prescription medications also interfere with vitamin D metabolism."

Susie Debrace is a Food Scientist and Nutritionist with Abundance & Health, UK manufacturers of Neutrient D3+K2 vegan oral spray. She pointed out: "National surveys from countries across Europe reveal vitamin D deficiency to be extremely common, especially in countries with limited daylight during the winter months. According to national surveys, 20 per cent of the population in Northern Europe suffer from a vitamin D deficiency and this climbs to 30-60 per cent in Western, Southern and Eastern Europe. Health authorities across Europe are now expressing the importance of daily vitamin D supplements to help prevent a deficiency, making this vitamin an essential part of your daily wellness strategy."

The worry is, we don't yet know the real impact of the pandemic, with Jenny commenting: "Although data is yet to be published regarding vitamin D population status in the last 12 months, there has been a lot of media interest and discussion around vitamin D supplementation to support immune health. The sales of vitamin D food supplements during the Covid-19 pandemic were suggested to have increased."

And who is most at risk of deficiency?

"Those at most risk include pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants, young children under five, and older people aged over 65 years. Those with limited sun exposure are also at risk – these include individuals who are housebound or wear clothes that cover up their skin while outdoors," Ella explained.

Keeley added: "The colour of our skin can impact the amount of vitamin D our bodies are able to naturally produce from sunlight. This is because those with darker skin tones have a higher level of melanin – a natural barrier towards the UVB rays needed to penetrate the skin. Melanin competes with vitamin D receptors, meaning that darker skin types allow less UVB to enter, and consequently produce less vitamin D. Add to this, the fact that research indicates Asian ethnicity is associated with reduced intestinal permeability and ethnicity should be a consideration when addressing vitamin D intakes."

Catherine also pointed out: "The overweight may need larger than usual intakes of vitamin D to achieve levels comparable to those of normal weight. And people with conditions causing fat malabsorption, such as inflammatory bowel disease, as vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin. Genetics can also play a part. Several variants have now been identified which are involved in the metabolism, transport, or binding of vitamin D onto receptors in the body. All of these can affect vitamin D levels and may be present in more than half the population."



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How do you know if you are deficient?

So, what are the signs that you could be lacking?

"Symptoms of vitamin D deficiency include constipation, fatigue/persistent tiredness, muscle weakness, bone pain and changes in mood. Too little vitamin D may also lead to a susceptibility to infections and, when vitamin D is in short supply, less calcium is absorbed from food, so it's leached from bones, leaving a risk of bone fracture or osteoporosis, especially in menopausal women," explained Linda O'Byrne, Nutritionist at Solaray.

And Catherine added: "A deficiency has been linked to an increased risk of illness related to respiratory health in particular. We've seen reviews of patients with Covid-19, where low levels of serum vitamin D are associated with an increased severity of symptoms."

Testing, therefore, is important: "Suboptimal levels of vitamin D and associated symptoms can vary from person to person and are very non-specific, so a blood test is needed to determine true levels," explained Joanna Dziedzic, Nutritional Therapist and Business Development Manager at Pure Encapsulations.

Keeley agreed, commenting: "This is easily done either through visiting your GP, or by purchasing an at-home finger prick test. Testing will provide a rapid insight into your vitamin D level, allowing people to make informed decisions about their supplementation needs. For anyone deemed deficient or insufficient, it's wise to re-test levels following 12 weeks of supplementation to ensure your levels have increased appropriately. Regularly testing levels will also indicate the quality of any supplement that you are taking, as absorption levels may vary."

Q

How can you top up your vitamin D?

While some food contains vitamin D, the best way is through sunshine.

"Vitamin D is considered to be a hormone because it is synthesised by the skin in the presence of UV light from sunshine, before being converted into its most active form within the kidneys and liver. This is a highly effective way of obtaining vitamin D during the summer months in the UK, however, during autumn and winter, UV radiation is much lower. Even on a sunny winter's day, the sun is just not at the right angle to get enough UV light to the earth," Ella pointed out.

Linda added: "Oily fish like salmon, sardines, herring and mackerel are excellent sources, as well as red meat, liver, butter and egg yolks. You can also buy foods that are fortified with vitamin D, such as milk and cereals. Vegan/vegetarian sources of vitamin D include green, leafy vegetables, mushrooms and fortified milks, such as almond or rice milk."

But Joanna went on: "It's a myth that food can provide adequate vitamin D. Although vitamin D does occur in food, sunlight is the most important source and for most people, a vitamin D supplement is an important

complement to healthy sun exposure. Although foods such as wild salmon, herrings, sardines, eggs, mushrooms, and some fortified foods provide some vitamin D, you cannot consume enough to keep your blood vitamin D in a healthy range. For example, to reach 2000IU, you would need to eat over four servings of wild salmon, about 3kg of mushrooms, or drink four litres of fortified oat milk, daily!"

Craig Millington, from Vegums, added: "Getting enough vitamin D from your diet is going to be difficult, but it can help your overall level of the vitamin. Some sources which include vitamin D include oily fish such as salmon, sardines, herring, and mackerel, red meat, liver, and egg yolks. Sadly, in the UK, you will struggle to get enough vitamin D from food due to the low levels found in food."

And Jenny pointed out: "Vitamin D is found in sun exposed mushrooms, oily fish, liver, eggs and dairy plus fortified foods. The key is variety so consumption on a regular basis of these foods will provide a low-level supply, which may be enhanced with supplementation during the winter or at other appropriate times."

Q

Should we be taking a supplement?

Keeley explained: "Eighty to 90 per cent of our vitamin D stores are provided by the sun and for people living in the northern hemisphere, the amount of UVB radiation is not sufficient to produce adequate amounts of vitamin D. Even during the summer, it is predicted that up to 13 per cent of the population will be deficient.

"Due to clothing, cosmetic skin protection and our increasingly indoor existence, our skin's unprotected exposure to sunlight is drastically reducing and our body's ability to make its own vitamin D declines as we opt to protect our skin from the sun. This is because UVB rays are required to convert cholesterol in our skin cells into our very own self-made vitamin D.

"We know vitamin D is stored in the body for only 40-60 days, so taking a supplement – based upon specific blood levels – is the best way to keep our vitamin D levels at their optimum. Not just during the winter months, but year-round."

And Susie went on: "Vitamin D is normally produced by skin cells when exposed to the UVB rays found in sunlight and your liver and kidneys help convert vitamin D into the bioactive form that your cells can use. If you live in a country with shorter hours of sunlight, cooler temperatures or have an indoors lifestyle, this means that your skin cells may not make enough sunshine vitamin D across winter, compared to the summer. Taking a daily vitamin D3 supplement across the winter months is highly recommended if you live in Europe or the Northern Hemisphere."

Catherine added: "Not all sunshine is equal either, the further away from the equator you live, the less vitamin D you can make. If your shadow is longer than you, as it is at the beginning and end of the day in summer, or during winter, then you will not catch enough of the crucial UVB rays."

How much would be recommended in terms of daily amounts?

"No 'one size fits all' solution exists for vitamin D supplementation and PHE's recommendation of 400IU (10mcg) per day, is simply not effective for everybody. Additionally, the Endocrine Society has acknowledged the association between vitamin D dosage and body weight, recommending those considered overweight or obese supplement with levels 1.5 to three times higher, respectively," Keeley explained.

"Supplementation should be based upon specific blood levels though, and a 'loading' dose of double or triple this may be required

if you're deficient, to elevate levels to optimal. But what does 'optimal' look like? The official measurement for insufficient serum levels is under 50nmol/L, with lower than 25nmol/L being considered deficient. Anything above 50nmol/L is considered fine and there is no guidance for what would be considered 'optimal'.

"Research clearly suggests that most auto-immune disease associated with low vitamin D can be effectively resisted with a serum level between 100-150nmol/L (40-60ng/ml). This is the optimal level I consistently recommend aiming for, through daily supplementation."

And what do you need to know when choosing a supplement? Consider form and how you take it first and foremost.

Alice advised: "It is well recognised that the vitamin D we obtain from sunlight and food sources are inadequate and that at least for certain months of the year, we should all be using a good vitamin D supplement. Choosing the right form of vitamin D is important. There are two forms of vitamin D, ergocalciferol (D2) and cholecalciferol (D3). Vitamin D2 is produced by plants upon exposure to UV light, whereas vitamin D3 is the biologically active form that is produced in the skin by humans and animals upon UV exposure.

"Vitamin D3 supplementation is a better choice and can be sourced from plants (lichen), making it a suitable choice for vegetarians and vegans."

And Susie added: "Many factors influence your body's ability to absorb and utilise vitamin D. This is why experts recommend oral sprays over and above tablets and capsules, which are dependent on intestinal absorption rates. An oral spray is also ideal if you often experience digestive discomfort with nutritional supplements or if you have digestive or malabsorption issues, such as IBS, Crohn's, colitis and coeliac. Oral sprays are a great solution for the elderly or anyone who finds swallowing tablets or capsules too challenging. With an oral spray, vitamin D3 passed rapidly through the soft tissues inside the mouth and heads straight into the bloodstream, providing fast, maximised absorption."

Ella pointed out other nutrients may be needed alongside vitamin D.

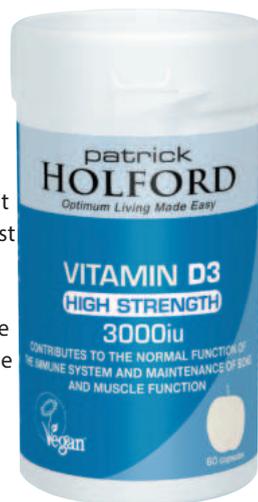
She explained: "There is a synergistic relationship between vitamin D and vitamin K2. Vitamin D contributes to absorption of calcium and vitamin K2 assists transporting this calcium into the bones and away from the soft tissues and arteries."

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Your ESSENTIAL guide

Top tips on ensuring you're getting plenty of essential fatty acids – and why we all need them.

We have long had a love/hate relationship with dietary fats. For many years, low fat diets were thought to be the way to achieve good health, while today, high-fat diets are embraced by millions of health-seeking people around the world.

Fat certainly is a vital nutrient and obtaining the right type of fats is essential for maintaining good health and even to help in the management of certain health conditions.

Fat advice

Fats are involved in all aspects of health and are even involved in the structure of every cell within the body. One category of fats, known as essential fatty acids (EFAs), must be obtained from the diet as the body cannot manufacture them in any other way.

There are two types of essential fatty acids, linoleic acid (omega 6 fatty acid) and alpha-linolenic acid (omega 3 fatty acid). In the body, alpha-linolenic acid is converted to the active forms of omega 3 fatty acids, docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA).

Although linoleic acid and alpha-linolenic acid are both considered essential fatty acids, experts tend to recommend that most of us consume more of the omega 3 fatty acids as these are found in less foods that are commonly consumed.

EPA and DHA contribute to the normal function of the heart in several ways. They are involved in regulating blood pressure and maintaining normal triglyceride (blood fat) levels. As such, these fatty acids have been researched for their ability to support general heart health, as well as their benefits for those with poor cardiovascular health.

Getting enough

Although fats are generally quite abundant in our diets, it's still necessary to be conscious of obtaining enough EFAs.

Omega 6 fatty acids are easily obtained in many commonly eaten foods and health experts have concluded that the ideal ratio of omega 6 to omega 3 is skewed by our modern-day eating habits and underconsumption of omega 3 fatty acids. Omega 6 fats are found in safflower seed, sunflower seed, hemp and borage oils, walnuts and pumpkin seeds. Oily fish is a rich source of omega 3 but non-fish eaters can choose other sources, such as flaxseeds, walnuts and chia seeds.

Olive oil is known for its heart healthy omega 9 content and although not an essential fatty acid, it is known to support good health.

Adding essential fatty acids to your diet should be a daily consideration. For maximum convenience, an essential oil blend can be drizzled onto salads and meals, blended into smoothies or stirred into yogurt.

DESIGNS ON DHA

The benefits of DHA are widely documented and include a role in brain health and function, as well as eye health.

DHA has also been identified as a crucial nutrient for the development of the eye and brain during foetal development. Pregnant women are encouraged to maintain good levels of this essential fatty acid, especially in the latter stages of pregnancy and during breastfeeding. In addition to these health benefits, there are numerous studies exploring the roles of EFAs in many diverse areas of health, including cognitive function and brain health, joint health, skin health, immunity and much more.

Reader offer

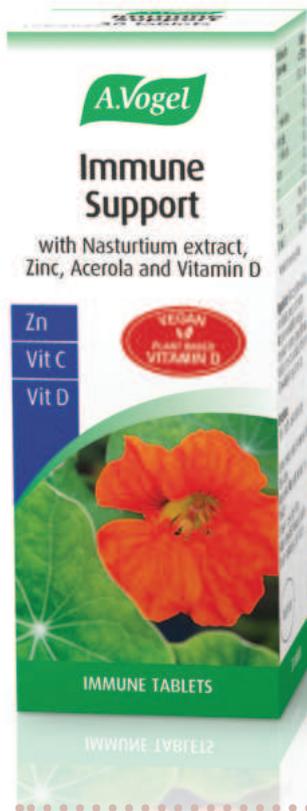
Terranova Omega 3-6-7-9 Oil Blend is an innovative essential fatty acid formulation that is organically certified and suitable for a vegan diet. The formula provides 1703mg omega 3, 1252mg omega 6, 24mg omega 7, and 114mg omega 9. This carefully balanced formula provides a ratio of EFAs which may support many aspects of health, ranging from heart and brain health and normal vision. The glass bottle that this oil is contained in is custom-made and spray coated with a specific material to protect the oils from ultraviolet light – and *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of three. See opposite page to enter.



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NATURAL LIFESTYLE

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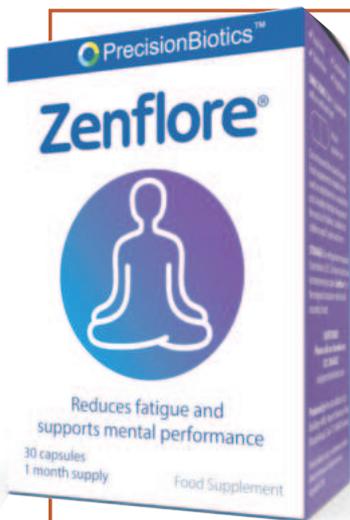
A.VOGEL IMMUNE SUPPORT

Natural Lifestyle has teamed up with A.Vogel to offer lucky readers the chance of winning one of 15 of its Immune Support Tablets. A.Vogel Immune Support is a dietary food supplement containing zinc, vitamin D and vitamin C, which all contribute to the normal functioning of the immune system. Lactose and gluten free, it is suitable for vegetarians and vegans, from age 12-plus.



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OatWell Crispy Hearts are available as seven individual sachets in one case. Each individual sachet is an oat-based breakfast cereal, containing 3g of oat beta-glucan, equivalent to three to four servings of porridge oats, the amount scientifically proven to reduce cholesterol levels. Simply enjoy it as a healthy breakfast cereal or as an on the go snack. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one 10 boxes of OatWell Crispy Hearts (seven-day supply).



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

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A CELEBRATION OF THE SEASONS

Inspired by the countryside around the remote farm that Amanda lives on in Yorkshire, she believes in buying good, local and seasonal ingredients and shares some of her favourite recipes from her new book. *Celebrating the Seasons*.



Hearty barley and vegetable soup

Serves 4

Prep time: 15 minutes
Cooking time: 1 hour 10 minutes

Ingredients:

- 30g butter
- 1tbsp Yorkshire rapeseed oil
- 300g carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 stick celery, chopped
- 300g potatoes, peeled and diced
- 300g turnips, peeled and diced
- 150g leeks, sliced
- 250g parsnips, peeled and chopped
- 100g pearl barley, rinsed and drained
- 85g split red lentils, rinsed and drained

- 3tbsp tomato puree
- 1.3l vegetable stock
- 2tsp dried thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 75g kale, chopped
- 1 small bunch parsley, finely chopped
- Salt and ground black pepper

Method:

- Melt the butter and oil in a large pan over a gentle heat. Add the carrots, celery, potatoes, turnips, leeks and parsnips and fry for 10 minutes until the vegetables soften.
- Stir in the pearl barley, lentils, tomato puree and

vegetable stock, then sprinkle over the dried thyme and bay leaves. Bring the soup gently to the boil, then cover and simmer over a low heat for one hour until the barley is tender.

- When the soup has 10 minutes left to cook, stir in the kale and simmer gently until the kale has softened. Season to taste, then stir through half of the chopped parsley.
- Serve the soup in warm bowls with a sprinkling of the remaining parsley and a chunk of herby focaccia bread.

Tip: As an alternative, try adding some cooked leftover chicken and use chicken stock instead of vegetable stock.



Hedgerow nutty crumble

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

Fruit filling:

- 40g butter
- 40g golden caster sugar
- 2 Braeburn apples, peeled and sliced
- 200g Bramley apples, peeled and sliced
- 300g foraged berries or any mixed berries, such as blackberries and wild raspberries

Crumble topping:

- 125g plain flour
- 85g unsalted butter, diced
- 85g demerara sugar
- 50g rolled oats
- 30g chopped toasted hazelnuts
- Custard or ice cream to serve

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas 4.
- For the fruit filling, melt the butter in a pan, add the sugar and apples and gently simmer for five minutes. Add the berries and simmer for two minutes, then transfer to a 23cm round ovenproof dish.
- Meanwhile, prepare the crumble topping. Put the flour into a mixing bowl and rub in the butter with your fingertips, until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar, oats and hazelnuts.
- Sprinkle the crumble topping over the fruit, then place the dish on the middle shelf of the oven. Bake for 30-35 minutes, until the crumb is golden and fruit bubbling.
- Allow to cool slightly before serving with custard or ice cream.

Tip: Try using other seasonal fruits, such as damsons or gooseberries.



Spelt bread wedges with red onion and rosemary Makes 4

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 35 minutes

Ingredients:

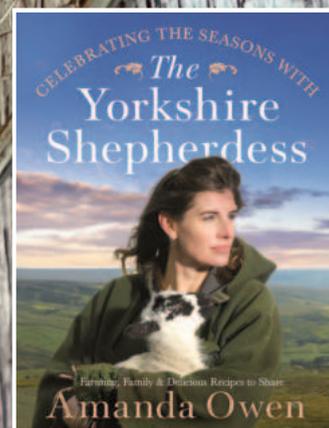
- 1 medium red onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 sprigs rosemary, leaves roughly chopped
- 1tbsp Yorkshire rapeseed oil
- 170g spelt flour, plus extra for dusting
- 2tsp baking powder
- 2tsp wholegrain mustard
- 180g potatoes, peeled and coarsely grated
- 1 medium egg, beaten
- 2tbsp milk, plus a little extra to glaze
- Salt

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6.
- Put the red onion and rosemary on a small baking tray, then drizzle over the oil. Place on the top shelf of the oven and cook for 10-12 minutes until the onion has softened, then set aside to cool.
- Heat a baking tray in the oven. Place the spelt flour, baking powder, mustard, grated potato and onion into a bowl and mix well. Season with salt.

- Make a well in the centre of the flour mixture, pour in the egg and milk, and mix to combine.
- Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface, gently knead together and shape into a 15cm round. Cut into four wedges, then place on the hot baking tray. Brush the tops with milk and bake for 25 minutes until well risen and golden.

Tip: Serve warm with butter. The spelt bread wedges are best eaten on the day they are made.



Recipes taken from **Celebrating the Seasons, The Yorkshire Shepherdess**, by Amanda Owen, published by Pan Macmillan, £20.

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