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Summer 2025 Welcome



Sleeping soundly is something we can all take for granted, until it evades us. When getting to sleep – or simply staying asleep – becomes problematic, the effect on our health and wellbeing can be huge; not only are we tired, struggling to get through the day, but fatigue can leave us irritable and lead us to crave more sugary food and caffeine to give us a lift. This then has an impact on our waistline, our blood sugar, not to mention our overall health.

And it doesn't end there; the long-term health effects of prolonged poor sleep can be vast, including lowered immunity (meaning you are more susceptible to bugs), while it can also raise our risk of chronic health conditions including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and poor cognitive function. Quite a list of health complaints, making it so vital we get our sleep in check.

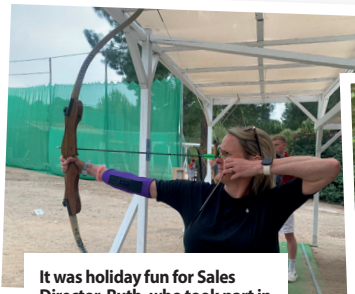
The positive news is there is a lot we can do to help ourselves to better sleep, and these don't need to mean drastic life changes and cutting out all the things you enjoy. It simply means placing the focus on a healthy sleep routine, being more mindful of the elements in your life that can stop you from getting good shuteye. But what does this mean in practice? It means ideally stopping your caffeine intake by lunchtime, avoiding sugary snacks in the evening, turning technology off at least an hour before bed, and making sure your bedroom is conducive to sleep. All of these are simple strategies which, when combined, can make a big difference. And the advice doesn't end there – turn to page 20, where you can find all the advice you need from our natural health experts.

And that's not all the advice this issue; we have a guide to healthy pregnancy, a collection of holistic giveaways, healthy recipes using the air fryer to reduce our risk of type 2 diabetes, and, back for 2025 is the *Natural Lifestyle* Retailer of the Year Award, which is now open for nominations. Simply head to www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk, where you can nominate your favourite store.

Rachel Symonds,
Editor

The best bits

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



It was holiday fun for Sales Director, Ruth, who took part in some archery during a recent family break in Greece.



Natural Lifestyle mascot, Gus, was out and about enjoying the summer weather.



It was water-based for Editor Rachel as she took to the sea during her hen party in Lisbon.

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HEALTH

IMPACT OF STRESS PERCEPTION ON HEART AND SLEEP REVEALED

A new study by WHOOP has revealed how you perceive stress could play a powerful role in how your body responds to it.

The groundbreaking study, published in the prestigious journal, *Emotion*, was conducted by WHOOP, the human performance company, which analysed data from over 11,000 members and found a clear link between stress mindset and key physiological health outcomes, including heart rate, sleep, and recovery.

The study distinguishes between two mindsets: viewing stress as a threat, which can trigger heightened physiological strain, or as a challenge, which fosters a more adaptive and resilient response. It was found that members who viewed stress as a threat experienced higher average daytime heart rate and systolic blood pressure. Those with a threat mindset had elevated resting heart rate and reduced

overnight recovery the night before a stressful event. Members who interpreted stress as a challenge had improved sleep quality and stronger recovery metrics, indicating a more resilient nervous system response.

"We're learning that perception isn't just

psychological, it's physiological," a WHOOP spokesperson said. "This study shows mindset around stress truly changes the way your body experiences it. Shifting from 'I can't do this' to 'This is hard, but I can handle it' isn't just a mental shift. It changes how your heart beats, how you sleep, and how you recover."



A plant-based celebration

If you are a vegan or interested in following more of a plant-based lifestyle, a forthcoming festival could be just the thing.

You can celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Great Yorkshire Vegan Festival in Leeds this August, hosted by Vegan Events UK and featuring 70 diverse stalls, live performances, and headline acts across multiple indoor-outdoor stages.

Taking place on August 9 and 10, the festival features live music, craft beer/bar, talks, workshops, cookery demonstrations, world food caterers, cakes, skincare, beauty, clothing, juices, smoothies, healthy treats and more. Visitors can explore artisanal vegan foods, as well as beauty products, candles, jewellery, sustainable clothing, and unique crafts.

There will be live cookery demonstrations from COOK! with the Vegetarian Society, while talks include Mind Matters with Anne Davies around a healthy gut and happy mind, while there will be music from Barbara Helen and Vegan Queen V, and vegan rhymes from Glastonbury Festival Poet-in-Residence Dominic Berry. Workshops include Chair Yoga and Vinyasa Flow Yoga, plus Muay Thai with Benny Green.

Find out more at www.veganeventsuk.co.uk/buy-tickets/

Inside... HEALTH



Better cortisol balance

An award-winning nutritionist is offering support on helping people to balance their cortisol.

Dr Lucy Williamson is highlighting the trend on social media around the cortisol diet, a dietary approach to reduce stress and cortisol through specific food choices rather than by limiting calorie intake. However, Dr Williams is advising that anyone who has embraced the concept of a healthy gut will find they are already 'doing' the cortisol diet as gut health is inextricably linked to controlling cortisol and therefore stress.

She explained: "Cortisol is known as the 'stress hormone' and is a steroid hormone produced by our adrenal glands. Although it is often thought of in negative terms for our health, it has important roles in daily metabolism and regulating immunity. Cortisol is part of our fight or flight response – a very necessary biological process to protect us when needed, for example, providing us with immediate energy via blood sugar and

changing blood pressure and our alertness when needed. The problem arises when this state is prolonged or frequent, meaning cortisol levels are consistently high, leaving us vulnerable to inflammation, increased weight gain, ageing, heart health issues, and disrupted sleep to name a few."

Lucy advises that following three key rules for gut health will help to keep cortisol in check:

- **Aim for 30+ plants per week:** This includes nuts, seeds, beans, pulses, grains, herbs and spices, as well as fruit and veg. Include seasonal, colourful and bitter plants to get plenty of antioxidants.
- **Include fermented foods:** Think kefir, kimchi, kombucha, miso and yogurt – research has suggested fermented dairy products may increase cortisol, so little and often is important.
- **Other key considerations:** Reduce added sugars and UPFs, prioritise omega 3 fatty acids as studies have shown it can help to reduce the risk of stress-associated symptoms from raised cortisol. Try to have a 12 hour fast overnight and focus on achieving 'fullness' with whole, nutrient-rich and high fibre foods.



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

Glowing, radiant skin is the ultimate summer essential and here to help is the Fire range from Elemental Herbology.

To keep complexion fresh and luminous, Elemental Herbology has created Fire to combat the harsh effects of summer, from UV exposure to sweat and congestion, helping to cleanse, exfoliate, and protect skin.

Rooted in the Five Element Theory from Traditional Chinese Medicine, Elemental Herbology understands that while many connect with one core element that resonates with their character and energy, all five elements, wood, fire, earth, metal, and water – play a vital role in achieving physical, mental, and emotional balance.

We love Zest Bath & Body Oil, with a rejuvenating combination of sweet orange to improve circulation and energise, rosemary to stimulate the mind and act as an anti-inflammatory and marjoram to boost energy and aid digestion.



Natural beauty soothers



A new aromatherapy fragrance blend from the people at Evolve Organic Beauty has been created to help you switch off after a long day.

The organic skincare brand has developed a new body wash and lotion, using certified organic formulas with a bespoke aromatherapy fragrance blend and soothing ingredients to cleanse your body and calm your mind.

Pure Tranquillity Wash and Lotion contains hyaluronic acid to support soft, plump skin. Evolve uses lower molecular weight hyaluronic acid that sinks in deep to hydrate, boost collagen and combat dryness.

It also features organic essential oils, with the signature aromatherapy blend combining uplifting notes of sweet orange, restorative lavender and rosemary, and balancing rose geranium, grounded by the calming scent of vetiver.



Your summer beauty salvation

With summer upon us, whether you're battling cabin air, jet lag, or the drying effects of a change in climate, Wildsmith's Super Hydrating Overnight Mask is a luxurious treatment, delivering intense hydration, strengthening the skin barrier and restoring radiance.

Formulated with hyaluronic acid, squalane and wild-grown English plants, the mask deeply nourishes and calms. Its lightweight, non-sticky texture means it sinks in beautifully.

Nature's nourishment

Give your skin the gift of nature's finest oils with this new range from Beauty Kitchen.

PURE Collections is a carefully curated selection of three natural and organic oils plus one gel, crafted using only the finest, ethically sourced, sustainable, and vegan premium quality ingredients. These oils gently nourish and elevate your skin's health and appearance and have been chosen for their varying properties. Whether you're looking to hydrate, repair, or enhance your complexion, Beauty Kitchen's Pure Collection offers solutions that harmonise with the



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The range comprises PURE Organic Castor Oil, PURE 98% Aloe Vera Gel, PURE Max Strength Vitamin E Oil Complex, and PURE Abyssinian Oil.

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Lessons in male health

Men have a heightened need for certain nutrients to stay healthy, yet we know many aren't getting enough. So, what do you need to know?

It can be difficult in our modern, busy and often demanding lives to ensure we are obtaining all we need nutritionally for good health. For example, if we look in close detail at some of the basics, how often do you get your five a day of fruit and veg? And drink two litres of water a day? And ensure a broad range of proteins, healthy fats and complex carbs at your mealtimes?

While you won't be alone if you don't tick all these boxes each day, it could mean that you are running at a nutritional shortfall, and this can have worrying effects on our health. If we turn to male health specifically, men need certain nutrients more than women, and they can also be more at risk of being low in them for a variety of reasons.

And ensuring men have an adequate intake of key nutrients is really important, given they can be at greater risk of certain health concerns, including cardiovascular disease, liver problems, overweight and obesity, which raises risk of type 2 diabetes, and mental health issues. And although the gap has narrowed, men still have a shorter life expectancy than women, which makes it critical they take good care of their health as early as possible.

HEART PROTECTORS

Let's look in greater detail at why men can be more susceptible to heart issues – and the key protective nutrients they need.

Research from the British Heart Foundation

tells us that one in four men will develop cardiovascular disease, with rates higher in males due to reasons including poorer quality lifestyle and diet, which can lead to high blood pressure and cholesterol, greater intake of alcohol, higher levels of visceral fat, which can raise risk, along with lower testosterone, which is protective of the heart, but levels can decline as men get older.

Your key nutrients here include coenzyme Q10, essential for the heart, with levels being lower as we get older, Pycnogenol, an extract from French maritime pine bark, which not only supports cardiovascular health but also erectile function, and plenty of antioxidants; think selenium and vitamin C. Omega 3 fatty acids, especially EPA and DHA, are also important for a

healthy heart, while magnesium is essential for blood pressure, and many men are known to be lacking. Magnesium also plays a critical role as a relaxant so can support those with stress and poor sleep.

PROSTATE CARE

As men get older, their prostate can function less well, with the risk of a condition called Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH), which is an enlarged prostate, rising. The risk of prostate cancer also rises as men get older so ensure you seek help if you have any concerns around urinary problems, such as increased frequency and urgency, weak flow or dribbling.

To maintain a healthy prostate, essential fatty acids are needed to help lower inflammation, while the herb, saw palmetto, is excellent for easing symptoms of BPH. Selenium is also an important mineral for being protective of the prostate.

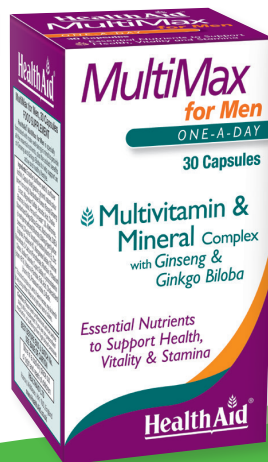
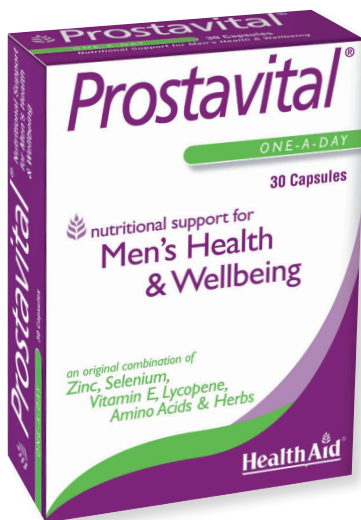


Essential nutrients

In addition to those already highlighted, men need to ensure they are getting certain nutrients, including:

- **Zinc** – this is a wonder mineral in fertility terms for men, being required for sperm health, as well as a healthy immune system.
- **Vitamin D** – this plays a role in immune health, but also testosterone levels.
- **Multivitamin and mineral** – this is a good starting point to help address any nutrient gaps. Your health food store will be able to recommend one according to your needs and lifestyle.
- **B vitamins** – these are important not just for energy production but for our heart health.
- **L-arginine** – this is an amino acid that plays a role in blood flow so can support erectile function.

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BONE support

Natural Lifestyle offers an essential guide to maintaining the health and structure of your bones.



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SUPPORT ♦ GOOD HEALTH
NATURALLY VITAMIN D3/K2
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While we might think of our bones as a complete structure formed from a young age, the truth is our bone tissue is constantly changing, breaking down and rebuilding, and can be affected by factors that are within our control.

Looking at this in detail, a lack of key bone nutrients can leave them weak, as can a poor diet of overly processed, sugar-laden food and drink. Lack of exercise can also play a role in declining bone health, as can factors involved in ageing, such as the menopause. But what's clear is there are elements we can control, that can help to keep our bones in better health.

As we get older, we are more prone to bone weakness, fractures and breaks, with osteoporosis being a condition where bone mineral density and mass decreases, increasing risk of fracture. This is more common in postmenopausal women as until then, bones are protected by oestrogen.

EATING FOR BETTER BONES

So, what needs to be avoided in terms of best protective diet for the bones?

Watch out for excess sugar and processed foods and also keep an eye on your intake of fizzy drinks, especially the overly sugary and caffeine-heavy varieties as there is concern they can raise the risk of bone mineralisation. It should also be noted that caffeine generally should be kept an eye on as it can interfere with calcium absorption. Refined

sugar can be more acidic and leave you nutrient depleted so try to reduce as much as you can.

In terms of what we should eat, calcium-rich foods include milk, cheese and other dairy foods, green leafy vegetables, such as broccoli and cabbage and okra, soya foods, tofu, nuts and also sardines and pilchards. Also add in salmon and eggs for their vitamin D content, and wholegrains, green leafy vegetables, beans, legumes and nuts for their rich magnesium and vitamin K content.

Protein is also crucial for healthy bones, while

you could try and include natto, a fermented food which contains vitamin K, a nutrient that is very important for healthy bones. Maintaining a healthy weight is important to lighten the load on the joints, while remaining hydrated it also critical.

Let's also remember how important movement is; it's well-known that a lack of physical activity can leave us with lower bone density. Ideally, low impact exercise such as swimming, walking, and strength work such as weights, should be chosen as they are supportive of the bones and the joints.

Necessary nutrients

You will have likely been told of the importance of calcium for healthy bones, and while this is certainly true, it's not the whole story as there are a range of other vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that we must have an adequate intake of – ideally from a young age – to keep the bones protected.

In addition to calcium, we need vitamin D, a nutrient that, when too low, has been linked to an increase in the bone condition, rickets, in children. It also plays an important role in helping calcium to be absorbed in the right place, as does magnesium and vitamin K2. Vitamin K2 is imperative, which has the added benefit of also being heart protective – really important for all but especially for women as they go through the menopause as lowered oestrogen is linked to a rise in cardiovascular disease, as well as osteoporosis. Another vitamin that may be important is a form of vitamin E called tocotrienol, especially for postmenopausal women dealing with the effects of lowered oestrogen.

Looking in greater detail at magnesium, this is a mineral that huge numbers of the population are deficient in and that can be problematic for bones as low levels can soften bone, reduce remodelling and increase inflammation. Zinc and boron can also be considered important minerals for bone health.

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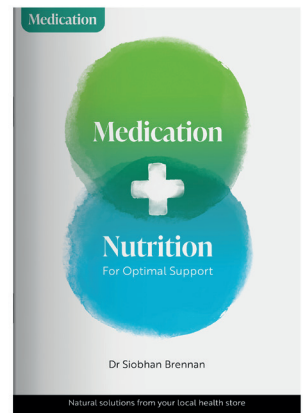
Natural Lifestyle Top Picks



Support Medications with Effective Supplements

New *Medication + Nutrition For Optimal Support* is an essential guide for anyone taking medication who wants to positively take ownership of their overall health through nutrition. Written in collaboration with NHS GP Siobhan Brennan and Viridian qualified nutritionists, this informative 24-page resource details common nutrient deficiencies and the health implications that can be associated with different types of medication. It ranges from HRT, diabetes and heart medication to antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs, as well as contraceptives and more. The fully referenced guide explains impactful ways to address vitamin and mineral shortfalls through dietary sources and clean formulation supplements. A 'must have' in everyone's health toolkit.

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Solgar – supporting the nation's wellness

With Solgar proud to be the Official Wellness Partner of The AJ Bell Great Run Series, the supplement brand is supporting runners to stay in top nutritional health, before, during and after.

Solgar has teamed up with The AJ Bell Great Run Series as its Official Wellness Partner, helping runners have the best experience throughout their journey, with nutritional advice and top tips.

Solgar is providing support to runners across the UK before, during and after their Great Run event, which comprises seven iconic races across the UK, including the flagship event, the iconic AJ Bell Great North Run in Newcastle, the world's biggest half marathon. And as part of the partnership, Solgar is working with Olympic legend, Dame Kelly Holmes, for the Great Run Series 2025.

As part of her role, she will be on-site to meet with fans, interact with the participants, and support the Solgar Pacers in their mission to motivate runners and help them achieve their race day goal.

Dame Kelly commented: "As someone who knows the importance of consistency and quality in looking after your health, becoming the Ambassador for Solgar in their partnership with this year's The Great Run series is an absolute joy. Their focus on supporting

people's wellness journey, whether they're going for a personal best in a half marathon or just starting out, really resonated with me. It's not just about the big win in the big race but it's also about the small, every day wins and those moments of self-care that keep us happy and healthy."

NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT

Over 170,000 participants take part in the Great Run and Great Swim events each year, putting in hours of training before the big day itself and Solgar will be alongside the athletes with nutritional support.

As well as nutritional support, Solgar will be providing a series of blogs aimed at educating runners on the importance of nutrition as part of their pre-race preparation and post-race recovery.

Helen Davis, Senior Brand Manager at Solgar, explained: "Nutrition plays a fundamental role in keeping us fit and well, and this becomes especially evident when we want to feel at our best when training for amazing events such as the Great Runs. Partnering with Great Run provides a great

opportunity to invite a new audience to connect with the Solgar brand and benefit from Solgar's heritage as a provider of high quality nutritional supplements.

"In collaboration with Great Run, we want to support runners with education and advice covering the many ways nutrition can support their training journey – from energy, immune health and the reduction of tiredness and fatigue."

Nicky Homes, Commercial Director at The Great Run Company, added: "We're delighted to be partnering with Solgar to offer our runners and swimmers nutritional support in the run up to and on event day.

"Our pacers are a really important part of the event day experience for our runners, and we're delighted Solgar will be supporting them with their own race day prep and on the day so they, in turn, can support our runners to get the most out of their race day experience."

• For more information on Solgar and the 2025 Great Run Series, follow the brand on Facebook or Instagram @SolgarUK&Ireland

SOUND SLEEP

Poor quality shuteye, or problems getting to sleep, affect vast numbers of us. But with some holistic tweaks to your routine, you can help yourself to better sleep.

advice

We've all had occasions when sleep can evade us, where we lie in bed unable to switch off and drift into shuteye, or when we wake in the morning feeling exhausted. Poor sleep is something that can affect us all, but when it's prolonged, or when it affects your health, it's time to address it.

But where to start? Sleep basics are quite simple, but often the issue is the effect our modern-day lifestyles have on our ability to rest, whether due to poor diet, excess stress, and little downtime.

Catherine Gorman, Nutritionist and Health Advisor at Good Health Naturally, warned: "We seem to be in the middle of a sleep loss epidemic. According to research by The Sleep Charity, nearly half of UK adults are getting less than seven to nine hours sleep per night. But what is even more concerning is nearly one in 10 are only managing four hours or less. Teenagers are also falling short; almost half of 16- to 17-year-olds are getting fewer than seven hours each night, well below the recommended eight-10 for their age."

Alison Cullen, Education Manager at A.Vogel, added: "Up to 40 per cent of adults and 50 per cent of children in the UK are struggling with sleep, rising to 80 per cent among children with special educational needs and disabilities. Anywhere between six-40 per cent of people experience insomnia, and sleep deprivation is increasingly recognised as a public health concern."

Alice Bradshaw, Head of Nutrition Education and Information at Terranova, went on: "Our fast-paced lifestyles, high levels of stress, and constant connectivity through digital devices often make it difficult to unwind. Prolonged exposure to blue light from screens suppresses melatonin production, delaying the natural sleep cycle. Anxiety, financial pressures, and societal expectations to be productive further exacerbate sleep problems. Poor sleep hygiene, such as irregular bedtimes, late-night eating, and screens in the bedroom, also play a significant role."

Keri Briggs, Senior Brand Specialist at Lamberts, also pointed out: "For some, Covid-19 seems to have had an effect either directly or indirectly. Around 52 per cent of those who had Covid reported sleep issues, and insomnia is a recognised symptom of long Covid. The indirect effects, such as changes to routines, working and schooling from home, isolation, stress, issues around mental health or caring for the vulnerable may have affected sleep

and are sufficiently widespread to have been given their own term – coronasomnia."

THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

We must not underestimate how damaging poor sleep is to our health.

Wassen Nutritionist, Emma Bullock-Lynch, advised: "Short-term, poor sleep affects concentration, mood, and immune function. It increases irritability, sugar cravings, and risk of accidents. Long-term, it contributes to weight gain, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, anxiety, depression, and cognitive decline. It's foundational – when sleep is compromised, everything from digestion to hormonal balance is disrupted."

Catherine added: "Even one night of poor sleep can have a significant impact. It can leave people less alert, unable to concentrate, irritable and forgetful. Sleep deprivation can have the same effect as excessive alcohol consumption on reaction speeds, with fatigue increasing risk of car accidents."

In the longer-term, Keri advised: "Even in infants and young children, sleep is associated with brain development and maturation. In older people, it is associated with better memory. Sufficient sleep is required for hormone regulation and studies have shown poor sleep duration or quality influences blood sugar, stress, and production of sex and growth hormones. Sleep can also affect the heart, as this is a time when blood pressure and heart rate drop, allowing the cardiovascular system to rest to a degree. Poor sleep is linked to high blood pressure."

William Jordan, Nutrition Advisor at Viridian Nutrition, went on: "Poor sleep can weaken and compromise the immune system as sleep and circadian system are strong regulators of the immune system. Sleep helps prevent and manages infections. Poor sleep is linked with increased risk of depression, anxiety, and other related issues."

NUTRIENT CONCERN

Keep in mind if you have prolonged poor sleep, this can impact on your ability to absorb nutrients.

"Consistent poor sleep can lead to nutrient depletion, and low nutrient levels can lead to poor sleep," William explained. "Deficiencies in nutrients including vitamin D, B6, B9, B12, magnesium, and calcium have been linked to sleep problems. As well as this, insufficient sleep can impact our ability to absorb and metabolise nutrients, which can further create or worsen existing deficiencies."

Alison added: "Sleep deprivation and poor-quality sleep can alter nutrient metabolism and increase nutritional requirements. For example, magnesium, vitamin D, vitamin C, B vitamins, especially B6 and B12, play a role in melatonin production and stress regulation. Ongoing poor sleep can also impact gut health, leading to reduced nutrient absorption."

Emma added: "Poor sleep increases oxidative stress and impairs nutrient absorption. It depletes key nutrients such as magnesium, B vitamins, zinc, and vitamin D. Chronic sleep loss can increase inflammation, further taxing the body's nutrient stores."

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SLEEP SOUNDLY

Diet is an important focus when trying to get into a healthy sleep routine.

Alice explained: "Consuming high amounts of refined carbohydrates, sugary foods, and caffeine, particularly late in the day, can interfere with sleep cycles. Alcohol, while initially sedating, often leads to disrupted and fragmented sleep later in the night. On the other hand, foods rich in magnesium (such as leafy greens, nuts, and seeds) help relax the nervous system, while potassium-rich options, such as bananas and avocados, support muscle relaxation."

Alison went on: "A sleep-supportive nutrition plan would include magnesium-rich foods, such as dark leafy greens, seeds, nuts, and whole grains, and tryptophan-containing foods, such as oats, turkey and eggs to support serotonin and melatonin production. Complex carbohydrates at dinner to help tryptophan reach the brain. Stay well-hydrated

but reduce fluid intake one to two hours before bed to avoid night-time waking."

William added: "It is best to avoid sugary foods, particularly before bed as this can increase blood glucose levels and trigger your adrenal glands and spike insulin. Sugar is linked to restless and disrupted sleep."

And Keri recommended: "There is good evidence for the use of melatonin for sleep disturbances, but this is not available over the counter in the UK. However, there are foods which naturally contain melatonin. Tart cherry juice concentrate has been shown to increase melatonin and improve sleep time and efficiency. Pistachios are one of the richest food sources of melatonin, providing around 20mg per 100g serving."

A RESTFUL ROUTINE

There are other steps you can take that can make a big difference to your ability to sleep.

Alice advised: "Finding time to relax, meditate, and do breathwork can help to reduce stress and encourage the nervous system to get into a parasympathetic mode (which aids digestion and fosters a state of relaxation)."

William went on: "Having a regular sleep schedule, even on days off, helps set the body's circadian rhythm, the cycle which gets the body and brain ready for sleep. Melatonin is released as daylight fades, making us sleepy, and cortisol releases in the mornings to make us feel awake. Regular exercise can benefit our sleeping cycle. Using energy during the day to exercise will help ensure we are physically tired in the evenings, which can prepare us for sleep. However, exercising too close to bedtime can stimulate us and prevent us from sleeping as our heart rate can be raised for up to 90 minutes after. Meditation and yoga can help us relax before trying to sleep."

Catherine advised: "Incorporating calming activities such as listening to relaxing music, taking a warm magnesium bath, using a lavender spray, practicing deep mindful breathing, or drinking bedtime teas can all help prepare the body and mind for sleep."

Can supplements help?

Certain nutrients help support your body to sleep.

Herbs can be hugely beneficial, as Alison suggested: "Valerian and hops are known for promoting deeper, more restorative sleep. Passiflora is ideal for those with a 'hamster-wheel' mind that won't switch off. Best taken during the day to calm mental overactivity and ease anxiety, which in turn helps promote a more restful night's sleep."

Emma added: "Chamomile, often consumed as a tea, comes in supplement form and supports relaxation. While botanicals generally have fewer side effects than pharmaceutical sleep aids, choose high-quality extracts and consult a healthcare provider if taking other medications or if

sleep issues persist."

William also recommended: "Griffonia seed extract may help with sleep. Containing 5-HTP, a precursor for serotonin, which is converted into melatonin. L-theanine is found in green tea leaves, which exerts calming properties. It is often paired with lemon balm and is a good option for those with stress-induced sleep deprivation. Californian poppy contributes to relaxation, can support anxiety and have sleep-inducing effects. Saffron has been historically used to improve mood and mental health and has a number of benefits linked to sleep and associated conditions."

Alice went on: "B vitamins, especially B6 and B12, support the regulation of the sleep-wake cycle

and overall nervous system health. Adaptogens like ashwagandha and rhodiola are known for their stress-reducing properties, helping the body better cope with anxiety and fatigue. Supplements containing L-theanine, omega 3, and vitamin D3 can offer support, addressing the root cause and the effects of disrupted sleep patterns."

Keri continued: "Palmitoylethanolamide (PEA), a naturally occurring compound, has been shown to have significant effects on pain, depression, and anxiety. As these conditions are known to have a detrimental effect on sleep patterns, it is reasonable to theorise PEA will be directly or indirectly useful for aiding sleep."

Natural Lifestyle Top Picks



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livingnutrition.co.uk



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Natural Lifestyle

Retailer of the year 2025



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Holistic all-stars

The *Natural Lifestyle* Retailer of the Year Awards are back for another year – and now is the time for you to nominate your favourite store.

People shop in health food stores for all kinds of reasons. Many like to buy quality supplements there, as well as benefit from the wonderful nutrition advice that is on offer. Others opt to buy organic, free from and just generally good quality food, while others are seeking gentle, more natural skincare options and others want help to live more sustainably.

Whatever the reasons for shopping in a health food store, what is clear is such retail outlets are crucial parts of local communities across the UK, with the staff working in these shops going the extra mile to keep their customers in good health and wellbeing.

Such dedication deserves recognition, which is why each year, we run the *Natural Lifestyle* Retailer of the Year Award, sponsored by Terranova Nutrition. These coveted accolades are designed to reward and recognise the health food stores that are making a big difference to

their customers' lives, and we need you, our readers and the people who visit these shops, to tell us what gets your vote.

We are asking readers to nominate their favourite health food store, telling us why they get your vote. You can do this at www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk, until entries close on August 1. The entries will then be whittled down to a shortlist before being put to a judging panel, including *Natural Lifestyle* Editor, Rachel Symonds, and a team of industry experts.

Rachel commented: "Each year, we are heartened to read the stories from our readers about the real difference their local health food store has made to their wellbeing, and that's why we run these awards. We are delighted to be able to launch the 2025 accolades and look forward to hearing more of these inspiring stories. We also thank our sponsors, Terranova, which are so aligned with our ethos of supporting independent health food stores, making them our perfect partner."

HEAD TO WWW.MYNATURALLIFESTYLE.CO.UK/AWARDS TO VOTE

Natural Lifestyle

Retailer of the year 2025

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Ask the experts



Q I'm going to a festival this summer – how can I make sure I don't end up with an upset stomach?

Adrienne Benjamin recommended: Festivals usually involve lots of fun, laughter, late nights and dancing – and many of us have experienced unwanted side effects whilst staying in a tent in the rain and mud, with minimal sleep, restricted food options, dodgy toilets, limited washing facilities and various other excesses. All can have a negative impact on our digestion and so some ideas to help prevent an upset stomach or other gut issues, whilst still prioritising fun, include:

- Limit intake of processed, 'fast' and sugary foods. Often, festivals will offer vegan food options that include beans, lentils and legumes, and ethnic foods, such as Lebanese, Indian or Thai, based around rice and vegetables, all of which can be supportive for gut health.
- I would also recommend taking some healthy long-life snacks with you, such as low-sugar protein bars, meat jerky, nuts, olives and dried fruit, and getting back to healthy eating as soon as possible after returning home. Avoid dehydration and support detoxification. Match each alcoholic drink with a glass of water and pack unperishable foods that support the liver, including nuts and seeds, and green, nettle or dandelion teabags.
- Get as much sleep as possible. Take a sleep mask and some ear plugs, and make sure you have warm clothes and sleeping bags or blankets to put under and over you, and a comfortable pillow – all can help maximise those precious minutes of sleep.
- Pack a gut supporting, high-strength friendly bacteria supplement and consider taking for a week before and after the festival for maximum support.

Summer skin salvation...

by Emma Bullock-Lynch

How do our skin needs change during the summer, and what signs might we get if it's not healthy?

Summer brings higher temperatures, increased humidity, and more sun exposure – all of which affect your skin's health. Your skin may produce more oil, leading to breakouts, or it might become dehydrated due to sun and heat. You also sweat more, which can clog pores if not managed. Signs that your skin isn't coping well include redness, tightness, breakouts, sunburn, or dullness. It's essential to adapt your skincare by switching to lighter moisturisers, using a broad-spectrum SPF 30 or higher, and cleansing effectively to remove sweat and grime.

What nutrients do you consider critical for the skin and why?

Key nutrients for healthy skin include vitamin C, which supports collagen production and protects against UV damage, and vitamin E, a powerful antioxidant that helps repair skin and prevent

inflammation. Omega 3 fatty acids (found in fish and flaxseed) maintain the skin barrier and prevent dryness, while zinc aids in wound healing and can reduce acne. Hydration is also crucial as water keeps skin plump and helps flush toxins.

Can you suggest a healthy diet and lifestyle routine to keep skin healthy in summer?

Start with a diet rich in colourful fruits and vegetables – think berries, tomatoes, leafy greens, and citrus. These provide antioxidants and hydration. Include oily fish like salmon for omega 3s, and don't skimp on nuts and seeds. Limit sugar and processed foods, which can trigger inflammation. Stay well hydrated and aim for at least two litres of water daily, more if you're active.

Lifestyle-wise, wear sunscreen daily, reapply every two hours if you're outdoors, wear a wide-brimmed hat, and try to avoid peak sun hours (11am–3pm). A consistent skincare routine with a gentle cleanser, antioxidant serum, SPF, and night moisturiser is your best ally.



EMMA BULLOCK-LYNCH

is a Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr) at Efmaal and enjoys a career focusing on developing nutritional supplements for a range of health needs, as well as providing health advice for everyday wellness.



LOLA BIGGS

has been actively supporting clients on their journey to feeling well through food for over a decade. She works as a Dietitian for the supplement brand, Together Health.



ADRIENNE BENJAMIN

is a Nutritionist at ProVen Probiotics and specialises in understanding and sharing the ways in which our gut and microbiome help to support our health.



CARA SHAW

is a nutritionist working with BlueIron. Having experienced the transformative power of nutrition and lifestyle changes firsthand, she is committed to helping others achieve their best health.

ABOUT THE EXPERTS

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*The research was conducted between 18 September - 26 November 2020 with 77 women aged 18-45 years. The study was conducted by Cue Consumer Research. The study group took 6 x 500mg capsules a day for 12 weeks. The oil used is carefully extracted from specially cultivated Rigel Evening Primrose, the seeds of which contain up to 33% more GLA than other Evening Primrose Oils (For more information visit efamol.com). Food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a balanced diet or healthy lifestyle.



Q Why do men need iron, and how is it best to ensure they get enough?

Cara Shaw advised: Iron is essential for everyone – not just women – and plays a vital role for the human body. It helps transport oxygen around the body via red blood cells, supports energy production, cognitive function, and immune health. While men typically have lower iron requirements than women (due to the absence of monthly blood loss), they can still become deficient – especially if they have a restricted diet, exercise intensely, donate blood regularly, or have issues with gut absorption.

Low iron levels in men can result in symptoms such as fatigue, brain fog, poor concentration, low mood, and reduced exercise tolerance. In more severe cases, it may lead to anaemia. It's really important to be vigilant and aware of changes in the body as quite often, symptoms of iron deficiency such as fatigue, are often deemed as normal, overlooked and not investigated until the individual becomes really depleted.

To maintain healthy levels, men should focus on iron-rich foods such as meat, organ meats such as liver, dark leafy greens, beans and legumes. Vitamin C helps enhance iron absorption, so pairing these foods with citrus fruits, broccoli, or peppers can help. Plant-based sources contain a form of iron that's harder to absorb, so vegetarians and vegans may need to be especially mindful of ensuring they consume plenty of iron-rich foods.

For those with increased needs or poor absorption, supplementation can be useful. A gentle liquid iron formula is a great tasting and convenient option. If there's ever any ongoing fatigue, trouble focusing or remembering things or even a change in mood, it's wise to check iron status with GP.

The lowdown on vitamin K...

by Lola Biggs

What is vitamin K and why is it so important for our health?

The discovery of vitamins significantly advanced our understanding of health and illness, and vitamin K is an essential nutrient for maintaining good health. Its unique ability to guide calcium towards bones while protecting arteries makes it especially important for healthy ageing.

Can you explain the different forms of vitamin K, and how we can obtain them?

While both forms of vitamin K are vital, they function quite differently in the body, which highlights the importance of K2.

Vitamin K1, found in leafy green vegetables, is not easily absorbed from food, with typically less than 10 per cent being absorbed due to its tight binding within plant cell walls. Even when absorbed, K1 is quickly processed by the liver and leaves the bloodstream within hours. This makes K1 primarily beneficial for blood clotting in the liver, rather than for calcium management throughout the body.

Vitamin K2, on the other hand, shows superior absorption, particularly when consumed with fats, and remains in circulation much longer – for days rather than hours. This extended presence allows K2 to reach bones, arteries, and other tissues where calcium regulation is critical. Within the vitamin K2 family, Menaquinone-7 (MK-7) offers the best absorption and the longest-lasting effects, staying in the bloodstream seven to eight times longer than K1.

Vitamin K2 has emerged as a crucial nutrient for long-term health, yet it is often underrepresented in most people's diets. Unlike the more well-known vitamin K1, K2 has specialised roles in directing calcium to the right places, strengthening bones while keeping arteries clear.

Do you recommend a supplement, and if so, what type of vitamin K supplement should we opt for?

Ideally, we should aim to get enough essential K1 and K2 through our diet, and supporting gut health can help as beneficial bacteria work to convert K1 to K2, although this process isn't very efficient.

Most people don't consume enough K2 because its richest sources, such as natto (fermented soybeans), aged cheeses, fermented foods, and certain organ meats, are not common in Western diets and often provide only small amounts.

Population studies consistently indicate K2 deficiency in Western countries, with many people consuming less than 50µg daily, which is below the optimal levels for good bone and heart health.

Therefore, a daily supplement can be beneficial for many to address this nutritional gap. When choosing a supplement, opt for one that uses natural fermentation with traditional bacterial cultures to ensure the correct molecular structure. Additionally, choosing one combined with healthy oils like coconut oil within the capsule can significantly improve how well it's absorbed by the body.

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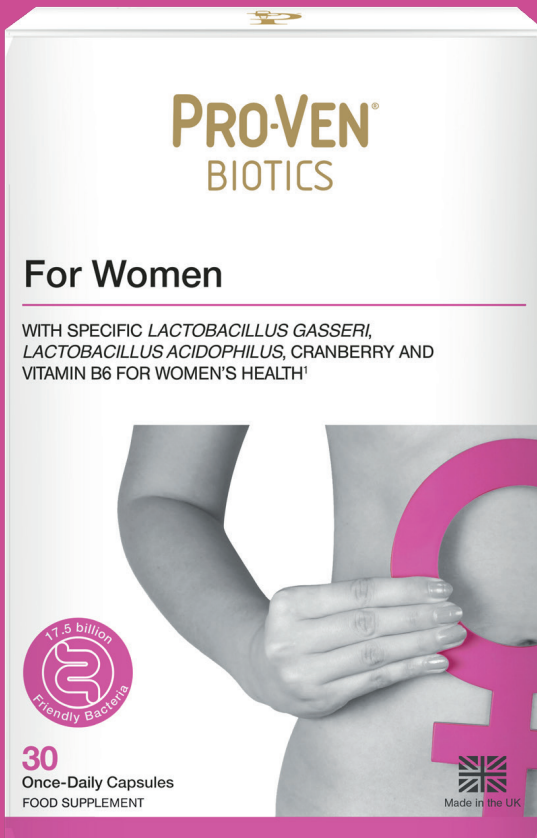


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Ben Shouler, Founder of Planet Paleo, guides us through how to ensure you are choosing a quality, ethical collagen supplement.

COLLAGEN

-the ethical approach

More and more people are understanding the benefits of taking collagen to support their nutritional needs. However, this has inevitably had a strong impact on the supply chain as demand has grown.

Beef

Bovine collagen is a byproduct of the meat industry. If collagen is very cheap, it is impossible for it to be truly from grass fed suppliers, despite the 'pasture raised' claims that often show up on packaging.

The term 'pasture raised' used to mean what it said, with the distinction being from grass fed that the animals would often be 'finished' on grains. In some countries where climate doesn't allow for all year farming, the hay might be supplemented with an animal feed, whereas in some cases, it is simply to fatten up the cows before slaughter, to varying degrees of time.

EU beef is still renowned for higher animal welfare standards, however, EU suppliers of collagen are not able to distinguish between grass and grain fed. They are all sourced from large abattoirs that provide little to no traceability when it comes to the materials used for collagen production.

Two thirds of all protein-based animal feeds in the EU are soy and 65 per cent of it is from imported GM soy. It is well documented that GM soy is sprayed with glyphosates, a controversial chemical in the farming industry, and one of the key areas of concern with collagen is that it mimics the molecular structure to glycine, the key amino acid in collagen. Some hypotheses suggest glyphosate is then mistakenly incorporated into proteins instead of glycine, which can lead to altered protein structure and function. Glycine plays such an important role in

different metabolic processes that the idea it could be usurped by a chemical is one of deep concern.

Our bovine collagen is sourced exclusively from Argentinian grass fed and finished suppliers. The supplies are audited each year by the LIAF control group, who assess that each batch can be traced back to cattle with high animal welfare, exclusive diet of grass and unconfined their whole lifecycle. This allows us to proudly display the 'GRASS FED CERTIFIED' logo on all of our bovine collagen products.

We are also proud to use organically certified bone broth in our Bovine Broth powders. We source exclusively from KRAV certified Swedish cattle, which is known to be the gold standard for cattle farming in the world.

Fish

The vast majority of fish collagen products on the market are sourced from fish farms, the most popular being tilapia due to cost efficiency and higher yield of suitable biomass. Farmed fish are often fed corn and soy that are not their natural diet.

The density of these farms causes diseases to spread, and for this reason, waters are treated with chemicals and antibiotics to slow the spread of disease (which leaches into the sea around the farms, impacting local fishing industries).

Planet Paleo was the first MSC certified collagen brand in the world. The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) guarantees the fish is supplied from sustainable fish stocks and that fish populations must remain productive, healthy and wild caught.

Chicken

Chicken collagen is becoming more popular due to its use for Type 2 collagen and Type 4 and 5 eggshell membrane collagen. However, out of all the collagen sources this is possibly the most controversial when it comes to the supply chain.

The primary source of Type 2 is from chicken sternum, and this is overwhelmingly sourced from very low welfare chicken farming practices. When it comes to eggshell membrane, caged and barn chicken eggs are shown to contain higher

levels of lead contamination than rural/free range eggs.

Lead is shown to have higher concentrations in cartilage than bones, therefore, it's important to consider the source of Type 2 collagen, with the majority sourced from chicken sternum cartilage from caged or barn chickens.

Some companies use the phrase 'cage free' but this is hardly a shoutout to the animal's welfare, as many of the worst case of abuses for chicken are carried out in barns. Confined birds are

shown to have significantly weaker bones and earlier bone demineralisation. This is partly due to over production of eggs without suitable nutrition, and restriction of movement impacting skeletal development. The sternum, in particular, has been shown to be weaker or underdeveloped. This is a byproduct of chicken fillets and is commonly used in food supplements. Whilst some companies make the claim that it is therefore 'sustainable' because it is a byproduct, this is a somewhat dubious argument.



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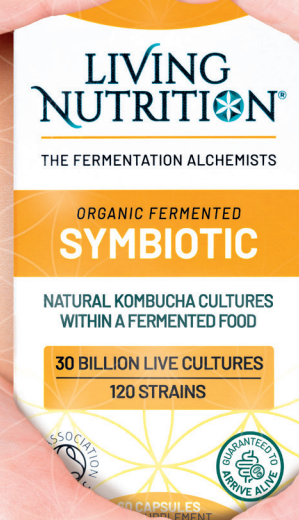
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PREGNANT

pause

Taking time to consider your nutrition and wellbeing during pregnancy can make a huge difference to the health of mum and baby. And here, *Natural Lifestyle* gathers a panel of experts to explain how.

Creating and nurturing new life is no mean feat, and during pregnancy, a woman has many more demands on her body, including nutrient levels.

And while there are important considerations for her growing baby, it's critical she considers her own health, given the baby will take nutrients from her and she may end up lacking.

Holistic health approaches are really important, focusing on diet and obtaining a broad range of nutrients, being sure you're adopting self-care practices and also ensuring a regular supply of supplements to address nutritional shortfalls.

William Jordan, Nutrition Advisor at Viridian Nutrition, explained: "Nurturing new life adds extra nutritional demands on the mother's body. Not only are nutrients needed for development of the baby, but they are required for the changes which occur in the mother's body. The heart works harder, as the volume of blood increases by almost 50 per cent. This creates a demand for nutrients involved in formation of red blood cells, as well as fluid intake. Kidneys have to work harder to filter the increased volume of blood, while breathing rate deepens and quickens as blood supply to the lungs is increased."

HEALTH AWARENESS

Although pregnancy is considered a natural process, women need to be aware it can raise the risk of certain health complaints.

William advised: "Gestational diabetes can develop, where high blood sugar develops at any point during pregnancy, but commonly in the second or third trimester. Most women have normal pregnancies with gestational diabetes, but it does increase the risk of the mother developing type 2 diabetes in future. The immune system of the mother undergoes significant changes, including getting slightly weaker. This can increase risk of infection from colds, flu, and other illnesses.

"Anaemia is caused by iron deficiency, but folic acid and vitamin B12 deficiency can also contribute. It is estimated up to one in four pregnant women in the UK are anaemic. Anaemia can lead to low birth weight or premature birth. Hormonal changes can make gums more vulnerable to plaque, leading to inflammation, and bleeding, called pregnancy gingivitis or gum disease. Gastrointestinal issues are very common. Constipation, heartburn and haemorrhoids are the most frequent reported issues."

Keri Briggs, Senior Brand Specialist at Lamberts,

went on: "Evidence from several studies have led to UNICEF and the WHO stating that nutrition in the first 1,000 days of life, from the point of conception, can affect lifelong health, influence development of disease, and may be associated with cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes."

Martina Della Vedova, Nutritional Advisor at NaturesPlus, added: "It all comes down to everyone's medical history and individual predispositions."

ADDRESSING NUTRIENT GAPS

Being aware of deficiencies, and addressing them, is important for both you and baby's health.

Keri commented: "National Diet and Nutrition Surveys in the UK indicate many women have insufficient intake of some vitamins and minerals from diets and these include folate, iron, choline, and zinc. Given the requirements for some of these increases during pregnancy, it is clear some women are not starting pregnancy well prepared, nutritionally.

"One of the best-known vitamins linked to pregnancy is folate or folic acid. There are several forms, with folate being the most common found in foods, and folic acid used in supplements. Both require conversion to a biologically active compound before it can be used by the body, called methylation, and is essential for many biologically essential processes, including growth and development. Studies have found higher levels of folate, and therefore folic acid and folate supplementation, decreases the risk of neural tube defects (NTDs) in early pregnancy. Troublingly, dietary surveys indicate 90 per cent of women of childbearing age have folate levels low enough to



increase the risk of NTDs.

"Magnesium is a concern for women, as over 70 per cent do not meet daily requirement. Magnesium contributes to over 300 processes, including muscle function, energy production and bones and teeth. Magnesium levels decrease during pregnancy and insufficiency has been linked to leg cramps, pre-term labour and pre-eclampsia."

PREGNANCY NUTRITION

Cravings can dictate what a woman eats during pregnancy, as can morning sickness, but trying to follow a basic nutrition plan is important.

William recommended: "Include plenty of vegetables, wholegrains, and high quality and lean

proteins from animal and plant sources. Avoid ultra-processed, and nutrient devoid foods with added sugars. Energy intake is often said it is needed to increase during pregnancy, which is true, but by much less than people think. You only need a 200 calorie per day increase."

Keri added: "A Mediterranean style diet focuses on polyphenol, potassium and magnesium-rich fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds which contain omega 3 and 6, olive oil and lean meats and oily fish, such as herring, mackerel, salmon, and sardines, which are also rich in omega 3 fats. Recent evidence shows the Mediterranean diet can be useful for pregnancy, with studies showing following it closely can reduce risk of pre-eclampsia by 20 per cent and improve neurodevelopment of the child."

In terms of supplements, there are certain ones your health store may recommend.

Keri suggested: "A multivitamin and mineral which provides relevant nutrients, along with a good level of choline and methylfolate, is vital. It should be free from vitamin A and suitable prior to conception, during pregnancy and breastfeeding. And given the importance of adequate folate in red blood cells, follow government advice of 400µg of folate a day, prior to and during pregnancy. Using the methylated form is advisable as it raises folate levels 46 per cent more than folic acid in a 12-week period.

"Requirements for iodine increase, which is essential to produce thyroid hormones which regulate brain and neural development. Evidence suggests over 40 per cent of women failed to meet the recommended intake in 2010, and updates show

intakes have decreased further in the decade since. Vitamin D is vital as it affects most cells of the body. There is evidence linking low vitamin D to increased risk of high blood pressure, pre-eclampsia and gestational diabetes, as well as preterm birth and low birth weight. One study showed low vitamin D as a predictor for pre-term birth is particularly significant for black women, due to their lower ability to make vitamin D from sunlight."

William went on: "Choline is very important to supplement during pregnancy as its vital for foetal brain development and overall health. Omega 3, and specifically DHA, should be supplemented as it contributes to normal brain and eye development. Vitamin C is very important for immune health and regulation, as well as supporting iron absorption, collagen production, and foetal development. Calcium deficiency can lead to low birth weight, pre-eclampsia, and bone deformities."

Martina added: "During pregnancy, blood volume increases significantly so iron is the nutrient that GPs measure in mothers-to-be. Iron transports oxygen around the mother's and baby's tissues."

She added that care extends beyond what you eat: "Listening to the body is rule number one. Women experience pregnancy differently and each might find different ways to cope and feel good. There is no one plan fits all. Priorities remain consuming fresh food, preferably organic, and avoid restrictive diets unless allergies and sensitivities are involved. An essential part of a healthy plan also involves mental and emotional support when needed, and rest."

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Essential postnatal care

When baby has arrived, it doesn't mean the focus on your health should end.

"Pregnancy takes a toll on the body, and postnatal nutrient depletion is common. Post partum depletion affects around 50 per cent of women. Common nutrients depleted are iron, vitamin B12, zinc, calcium, folate and omega 3," William advised. "Iron should be increased as this can replenish blood loss and supports production of red blood cells.

"Vitamin C can help with tissue repair and support immune function. Zinc may also support wound healing. Vitamin D supports the immune system and reduces

the risk of postpartum depression."

There are additional considerations if you are breastfeeding.

William added: "Breast milk quality is reflected by the diet, so a well-rounded multivitamin safe to take during pregnancy and breastfeeding is recommended to fill gaps from diet. Calcium should also be considered, as this increases demand for the mineral. Pregnancy and childbirth can cause gastrointestinal discomfort and constipation. Fibre can support regular bowel movements. Breast milk is approximately 80 per cent water, so fluid intake needs to be increased in order to

accommodate this, however, you should drink to thirst."

Martina added: "Relying on a varied and healthy diet full of freshly cooked food and preferably organic is important. Breastfeeding and pregnancy can push you to change portions sizes quite considerably, but quality really be compromised, ever. It takes months for the body to restore hormonal balance, so I would suggest not to rush into any radical or sudden change, take your time and if in need, seek help from your health professional. Make sure vitamin Bs, vitamin D and minerals such as magnesium, calcium, iron, iodine, zinc are replenished, as well as omega 3, lutein and protein."

Natural Lifestyle Top Picks



Best for baby

Choose maternity and nursing pads made from plant-based, breathable materials. Most pads contain plastic, dyes and irritating super absorbents – nothing your skin needs, especially after giving birth. Natracare maternity pads are designed to be soft next to delicate skin and effectively absorbent. Discover plastic free, certified organic cotton baby wipes, designed specifically for sensitive skin. No plastic and no nasty ingredients for your newborn. www.natracare.com

Natural Nordic Energy

The only iron supplement formulated with delicious Nordic blueberries, BlueIron provides iron which is highly bioavailable and fast working. With the added benefit of a micro-encapsulated form of iron, it is easily absorbed and gentle on the stomach. Every bottle of BlueIron contains added vitamins combined with the Nordic blueberry juice for a great flavour, avoiding the unpleasant taste and side-effects often associated with other iron products. It is also suitable for vegetarians, vegans and includes no artificial colours. BlueIron will make a strong addition to pharmacies' existing vitamin and supplement category. Suitable for pregnant women. www.blueiron.co.uk



Fruitful® New Mum - Postnatal Support

Created for the early days of motherhood, Fruitful® New Mum is a carefully formulated blend of 27 essential nutrients to help you feel more like yourself again. It includes iron, B12 and folate to support energy and recovery, with zinc to help maintain healthy hair, skin and nails. Gentle botanicals like moringa and nettle add extra nourishment, while iodine helps keep your thyroid and hormones in balance. Certified Vegan and completely free from additives, it's a kind and effective formula made for new mums - because you deserve to feel supported too.

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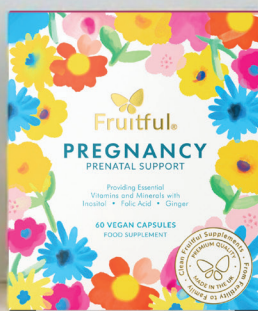
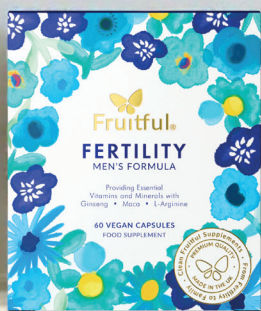
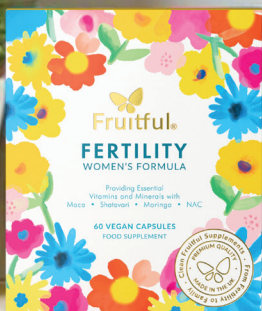


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A time to CALM

Natural Lifestyle is delighted to once again team up with BioCare to launch our latest reader trial of the brand's Calm Complex – and now is the time to sign up.



Stress, fatigue and poor sleep are among some of the most common complaints we are faced with in our modern lives but it's important to note that there is so much we can do nutritionally to help our body to cope.

And here to help is BioCare, which has formulated Calm Complex, a unique combination of lemon balm, L-theanine, holy basil, and magnesium glycinate for mental health and wellbeing, relaxation, and sleep.

And we want to put Calm Complex to the test, which is why we have teamed up with BioCare for

our latest reader trial, in which we ask you to sign up to test out the product. All you need to do is take the product for eight weeks and then provide us with a true account of its effectiveness and what impact it had on your life.

Brand Manager, Hannah McMartin, commented: "We are delighted to be running another trial with *Natural Lifestyle*, in which readers can put our Calm Complex to the test. This unique combination contains key nutrients to support mental health and wellbeing, and we are excited for readers to try it out and to hear about how it supports them and their wellbeing."

A UNIQUE COMBINATION

Calm Complex contains magnesium in an easy for the body to absorb glycinate form, which supports the nervous system, and helps reduce tiredness and fatigue. In addition, lemon balm, L-theanine, and holy basil reduce stress, support brain health, relaxation, mental and physical wellbeing, and healthy sleep. Lemon balm also decreases tenseness, restlessness, and irritability.

It is an advanced formulation in that it contains concentrated lemon balm and holy basil extracts, which are high in antioxidants, including rosmarinic acid in lemon balm. Specifically selected blend of herbs and nutrients support the nervous system, especially due to stress, worry, irritability, or difficulty sleeping, including during the pre-menstrual period, or when studying for exams.

As always with BioCare, Calm Complex is free from unnecessary additives and is suitable for vegetarians and vegans.

HOW TO TAKE PART

If you would like to apply to be involved in the trial, visit www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk and complete the form by July 11 and we will confirm if you are eligible to take part. All those selected to take part will be sent an eight-week supply of Calm Complex.

Once the eight-week trial period is complete, testers will be sent a questionnaire by *Natural Lifestyle* to complete in terms of the results they have seen, which will then be published in the magazine.

Full terms and conditions can be found on the website.



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GUMMY *goodness*

Gummies are a great way to get your nutrient intake up but not all are made the same. Read on for our guide to choosing the best gummy for your health needs.



The popularity of gummy supplements has been on the rise for some time and this trend seems set to continue to rise, with a significant proportion of people preferring this enjoyable and tasty format. There are many factors which are driving this upswing in popularity and availability and many of these are linked to the unique format for these supplements.

Many supplements are best suited to being supplied as tablets or capsules, as these formats work well for nutrients which may be more delicate or unstable. They also allow for higher potencies to be used, as well as specialised delivery systems such as delayed or time release formats.

However, the technologies behind gummy supplements are becoming more and more advanced, meaning a broader range of nutrients can effectively be delivered in a more palatable form.

Why gummies?

One of the main benefits of gummy supplements is their accessibility for people who may struggle with the use of conventional supplements which need to be swallowed. Children and older people can often have issues with taking conventional tablet and capsule formats and often crushing or splitting these types of supplements can be time consuming, messy and result in an unappetising product.

Gummy supplements offer an appetising alternative which can make it easier for many people to find a supplement regime suitable for their needs.

Gummies also offer a great alternative for people

who can use tablets or capsules but who might be suffering from 'pill fatigue'. Large supplement regimes can often feel inconvenient and cumbersome and can lead to low compliance with supplements which are recommended or are needed; only 30 per cent of those using supplements will take them on a daily basis, and this means that not all the potential benefits will be experienced.

Gummy supplements offer a tasty, convenient alternative and can easily be used on the go.

How to choose

Choosing the right gummy supplements can be confusing and daunting, with so many different options on the market. It's important to note that many of the health benefits can also be overshadowed by the presence of the ingredients needed to make them attractive and palatable; around 70 per cent of gummy products on the market contain either sugar in some form or artificial sweeteners, which can deter many health-conscious people from using them, as they are viewed as no better than sweets.

Selecting a product which uses fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS) as a base not only removes the need for other sweetening ingredients but also provides a useful amount of soluble fibre, which can be beneficial for the health of the gut microbiome.

Using FOS or pectin as a base also avoids the need to use animal ingredients such as gelatin as the 'gummy' element of this type of supplement and also means that they can be used by vegetarians and, depending on the active ingredients, sometimes even

vegan. When choosing this format, look for a product that also combines relevant levels of nutrients, with natural colours and flavours to get the most out of using a gummy.

READER GIVEAWAY

Natural Lifestyle has teamed up with **Lamberts** to offer readers the chance of winning one of five bundles, comprising its gummy range. The bundle will include one of each of the following gummies; **Immunostrength**, **Biome Balance**, and **Multi Guard Hair, Skin and Nails**.

See page 40 to enter.



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Giveaways

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



Pharma Nord Bio-Magnesium

Natural Lifestyle has teamed up with Pharma Nord to offer readers the chance of winning one of four packs of its Bio-Magnesium 150-tablet packs. Magnesium contributes to muscle, nervous and psychological functions, but we might wonder if we get enough. Used in clinical trials, this product demonstrates a proven high absorption and even breaks down in water.

EFAMOL EVENING PRIMROSE OIL

Win glowing skin this summer with Efamol. The brand's ever-popular Evening Primrose Oil now has a new and improved formula, which includes natural vitamin E to help protect cells from oxidative stress. Efamol High Strength Evening Primrose Oil capsules are a natural supplement, clinically proven to support beautifully smooth and nourished looking skin, and *Natural Lifestyle* has five 1000mg 30-capsule packs to give away.



MUSHROOMS FOR LIFE LION'S MANE

Lion's mane is a revered nootropic known for supporting cognition, focus and nerve health. Mushrooms For Life Lion's Mane is made from organic, pure grade, fruiting body extract, grown under nature-identical conditions and third-party tested for purity. Ideal for busy, modern lifestyles, it's free from fillers and contaminants, delivering a clean, potent dose of brain-supportive nutrients in every capsule – naturally supporting clarity and performance, every day. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of five.



A.Vogel Perimenopause Balance

Perimenopause Balance is a strawberry-flavoured powdered food supplement designed to support women through the perimenopausal stage. Providing a source of easily absorbed essential nutrients, magnesium, zinc, potassium, calcium and vitamin D3. Simply mix with water, milk, smoothies or protein shakes to make a fruity drink. The convenient sachet design can be taken anywhere at any time. It helps target 10 common perimenopause symptoms such as tiredness and fatigue, nervous system support and electrolyte balance – and *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of five 14-sachet boxes.

ENTER HERE Please indicate below which giveaway you are applying for, complete form and post back to us at 'Reader Offers', *Natural Lifestyle* magazine, The Old Dairy, Hudsons Farm, Fieldgate Lane, Ugley Green, Bishops Stortford CM22 6HJ. Closing Date: August 1, 2025. Or you can enter online – visit www.mynaturallifestyle.com

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RESET AND *rejuvenate*

If the stresses of life are leaving you feeling depleted, why not journey to Tenerife to nourish mind and body at OCEÁNO Health Spa Hotel?

We all need some self-care, time away from the stresses of everyday life, to rest, reset and replenish. But knowing exactly what to do in terms of the right self-care – not to mention giving ourselves the time and space to do this – can be difficult in our busy and demanding lives.

Taking time out to really invest in our health and wellbeing – whether that is around focusing on your wellness, supporting relaxation, getting fitter or wanting to shape up – can make a huge difference to your overall health. And here to help is OCEÁNO Health Spa Hotel, a true haven of holistic health, which can be found in beautiful surroundings in Tenerife.

A visit to OCEÁNO is truly an exploration of holistic wellness, and *Natural Lifestyle* journeyed here to bring you the latest natural health and wellbeing experiences. Many people visit for a recharge, while plenty of guests return annually, some even twice a year. Others want to take care of their wellbeing and are starting their health journey as a kickstart with the Mayr diet.

BESPOKE SUPPORT

From entering the doors at OCEÁNO through to the consultation and treatments, it is all individualised to your needs.

During our trip, at our initial assessment, the doctor makes recommendations of the type of treatments to help achieve your goals, which ranged from therapeutic massages of various types, algae wraps to support detoxification, hot and cold treatments, infusions of various vitamins, and minerals, sauna, cold plunge pools to help increase blood flow and promote detoxification, and recommendations to swim in the natural pool with sea water. For those who wanted some indulgence with facials, pedicures and manicures, there is a separate beauty area.

For me, it was advice around diet and lifestyle to help reset my gut, in which I was recommended a gluten-free, mainly plant-based diet. Only later during the stay did the doctor introduce proteins into my diet, which can be made up of fish or meat, with fresh lightly steamed vegetables.

The GP measured my waist, chest, hips, neck, and weight at the start and also provided a free blood test, results of which are discussed with you. Then, at the final appointment, generally the day before departure, they provided me with advice on what to eat and how to maintain weight loss and healthy eating when I arrive back home to keep up momentum, post stay.

In terms of the daily routine, the morning would start with magnesium citrate or Epsom salts taken with water to help flush



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toxins from the liver and kidneys, before bone broth was taken at 11am. There would be a morning walk or gym visit, before a pre-breakfast routine of supplements of magnesium sulphate and a base mix to help neutralise acid.

Breakfast is the biggest meal of the day, before treatments in the morning, free time after that, and then lunch and an afternoon swim, walk or time to relax. There is a light dinner, followed by a walk, and then a sauna and red light therapy in the spa. The recommendation is to drink three litres a day, one before lunch, one after lunch and one litre pre-5pm.

What was clear was this is a place for many different needs, with a broad mix of ailments and goals, from those wanting to lose weight, to those with gut health issues, to others needing help restart their metabolism and health, leading them onto a path for a better healthier life.

EXPLORING THE LOCAL BEAUTY

OCEANO is a stunning hideaway situated within a stunning landscape in Tenerife, with the local town of La Laguna accessible by taxi.

The hotel can be found in a mountainous area with sea views and snow-capped Mount Teide in the distance. There are hikes in the local mountains, with a complementary guided tour on offer, while long walks can also be enjoyed along the beach.

All rooms overlook the sea and Mount Teide and also offer breathtaking views of the sea and bay of Punta del Hidalgo.

A SUSTAINABLE FOCUS

A hugely important aspect of OCEANO is sustainability, and the spa and hotel has made many strides forward in this aspect.

For example, the strategy of having the hotel so close to a natural pool is significant as this ocean pool is designed to utilise the sea water in a way that allows people to enjoy the benefits of the salt water but still remain confined to a natural sea pool. This approach blocks out any harsh waves and any uses of harmful chemicals usually used in pools. In addition, a treatment offered to guests is the algae wrap, which ensures only natural substances are used and recycled back through the water system. This treatment not only releases toxins from one's body but is also another contribution to being sustainable.

Furthermore, when you arrive, you are gifted with a reusable glass bottle, so you have the opportunity to refill it with water at the many filtered taps available, while the exfoliation mitt given to guests is made out of natural substances, is washable and reusable.

OCEANO Health Spa Hotel prioritises environmentally conscious practices that are designed to minimise their ecological footprints, meaning not only did we leave the retreat feeling refreshed, relaxed and rejuvenated, we also returned home knowing our presence and treatments were environmentally conscious.

Air fry YOUR WAY TO HEALTH

Katie Caldesi offers up some easy, everyday recipes to lose weight and beat type 2 diabetes in her new book, *The Diabetes Air Fryer Cookbook*.

Roast aubergine, squash and lentil bowl

This vibrant vegan or vegetarian salad is easily made in around 30 minutes and provides enough protein while still being moderately low carb. The dressing can be made with silken tofu for vegan protein or, if you prefer, with thick Greek yogurt instead of the tofu. Adding boiled eggs gives further protein, too, if you are vegetarian. And for a bigger meal, add a handful of salad leaves.

Serves 2

INGREDIENTS:

- 100g (3½ oz) dried green lentils, washed
- 1 small aubergine, cut into 3cm (1¼ in) cubes
- 4 spring onions or 1 shallot, cut into 1cm (½ in) slices or wedge
- 125g (4½ oz) butternut squash flesh, cut into 3cm (1¼ in) cubes
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 quantity of dressing (see below)
- 25g (1oz) roasted peanuts or other nuts, roughly chopped
- Flesh of 1 ripe avocado, sliced
- Salt and pepper
- A few fresh coriander or parsley leaves, to serve

FOR THE CORIANDER AND CHILLI DRESSING:

- 12g (½ oz) fresh coriander or a mix of mint, dill, chives, parsley or celery leaves
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- ¼-½ green or red chilli, or to taste, or pinch of chilli flakes
- 1 small garlic clove, peeled
- 100g (3½ oz) silken tofu
- Salt and pepper

METHOD:

- Bring a pan of water to the boil. Add the lentils and boil for 25

minutes until tender, then drain.

- Meanwhile, put the vegetables into a mixing bowl and season. Spray or drizzle with the oil and use a spoon or your hands to toss the vegetables to evenly coat.
- Tip the vegetables on to a crisper in the drawer and spread out in a single layer. Air fry at 200°C (400°F) for eight minutes, tossing once during cooking. Remove the spring onions, divide between two serving bowls and set aside.
- Cook the remaining vegetables for a further eight minutes until lightly browned and tender, then transfer them to the serving bowls.
- Meanwhile, make the dressing according to the recipe below and then pour it over the salad.
- Scatter the peanuts over the vegetables. Add the cooked lentils to the bowls, along with the avocado. Scatter with the coriander or parsley, then serve.
- Make the dressing by whizzing all the ingredients together with one tablespoon of water in a small food processor or using a stick blender in a bowl. Taste and adjust the seasoning or chilli to taste.
- Store in the refrigerator until serving; it will keep in a sealed jar for up to four days.



Baked oats with seeds and walnuts

Although 'baked oats' have recently experienced a resurgence, the delicious and filling dish of set porridge is also a blast from the past. Our Glaswegian friend, Brian McLeod, told me about his mother's porridge that was poured into a drawer where it set firm. She sliced pieces off to feed her children who were about to run to school and needed energy. A 40g (1½ oz) serving of porridge made with water typically contains 24g net carbs. Since most of us don't immediately run after breakfast, this can give us a large spike in glucose levels, so in this recipe, I have replaced most of the oats with nuts and seeds to lower the carbs. Flavour the loaf with cinnamon, orange zest or mixed spices as you wish, or leave them out altogether. The mixture can also be cooked in six silicone muffin moulds.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 small banana (approximately 110g/3¾ oz), roughly chopped
- 35g (1¼ oz) steel-cut porridge oats
- 75g (2½ oz) ground almonds
- 35g (1¼ oz) mixed chopped nuts
- 2 eggs
- 25g (1oz) seeds such as sunflower, linseed or pumpkin
- 2tsp vanilla extract
- 2tbsp erythritol or 4tsp honey (optional)
- 1tsp ground cinnamon or mixed spice or ½ tsp finely grated orange zest
- ½ tsp baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- 50g (1¾ oz) raspberries or other berries, fresh or frozen

METHOD:

- Mash the banana with a fork in a mixing bowl, then add the remaining ingredients, except the berries.
- Put a baking paper liner or an ovenproof dish into the drawer.
- Spoon the mixture into the liner or dish and flatten it out a little with the back of the spoon. Evenly scatter over the berries.
- Bake at 160°C (325°F) for 16 minutes, or until a skewer poked into the middle comes out clean.
- Leave in the warmth of the drawer to cool and set firm. Once cooled, wrap and keep in the refrigerator for up to three days. ➤





Banana and chocolate muffins

Makes 4 flowerpot muffins or 6 small muffins

Ideally serve these warm straight from the air fryer while the chocolate is still molten. A couple of these are perfect for breakfast on the go, or you could add one to a packed lunch. Serve with a dollop of cream cheese or Greek yogurt and berries. Choosing the 'bake' setting on an air fryer often means the fan will be less strong, which helps when you are cooking anything that needs to cook through rather than burn on top. I love these baked in my mini terracotta flowerpots, which are approximately 6cm (2½ in) across and 6cm (2½ in) deep. I line them with scrunched and wetted non-stick baking paper, but the muffins will work equally well in 7cm (2¾ in)-diameter, 3.5cm (1½ in)-deep silicone muffin moulds.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 small banana (approx. 120g/4¼ oz)
- 2 eggs
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- 60g (2¼ oz) ground almonds
- 50g (1¾ oz) chopped walnuts
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 15g (½ oz) dark chocolate (at least 85% cocoa solids), chopped

METHOD:

- Mash the banana with a fork in a mixing bowl. Stir in the rest of the ingredients until thoroughly combined. Distribute the mixture evenly between four lined mini flowerpots or six silicone muffin moulds.
- Bake in the air fryer at 160°C (325°F) for 12-15 minutes, or until firm and cooked through.

- The smaller ones can be turned out straight away on to a wire rack but leave the flowerpot muffins for 10 minutes to cool before turning out. Serve warm.

TIPS AND TRICKS:

- Raspberry and banana seeded muffins: Instead of the chocolate and walnuts, mix in 75g (2½ oz) raspberries and 50g (1¾ oz) mixed seeds. Mix and bake as above.
- These are completely lovely while warm with a cup of coffee. No one would know there is no sugar in the recipe as the banana and raspberry have enough natural sweetness.
- Nut-free muffins: For nut-free muffins, use a small processor to grind the same amount of sunflower or mixed seeds to a fine powder and use this instead of the ground almonds, and omit the chopped walnuts. Mix and bake as above.

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