

Natural Lifestyle

LOVE LIFE, LIVE WELL – NATURALLY

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March/April 2026



FANTASTIC FUNGI

The medicinal mushrooms that can support your health



Fuelling the joints

The critical role of nutrition in keeping your joints strong

Your PMS plan

A holistic guide to living with PMS

Plus »

- ♦ INTUITIVE EATING AND AFFIRMATIONS IN THE KITCHEN
- ♦ PRODUCT AWARDS – YOUR WINNERS REVEALED
- ♦ HOLISTIC PERSONAL CARE GUIDE ♦ NATURAL LIFESTYLE GIVEAWAYS

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LOVE LIFE,
LIVE WELL —
NATURALLY

VISIT OUR WEBSITE www.mynaturallifestyle.com

March/April 2026 Welcome



We live in an age where, finally, women's health is a topic we see being talked about far more openly. There is no doubt the spotlight that has been placed around the menopause has helped this conversation, but female health issues go much further than that, and this includes PMS.

When you consider that PMS is something that can affect up to 90 per cent of the female population, and the huge knock-on effect it can have on a person's health and wellbeing, it almost beggars' belief there is not more support and understanding around it. Because the truth is, although you might not stop PMS from occurring, we know that there are so many things that can help ease how severe it is and to provide some relief from symptoms – if only more women were educated around this. What's important to note is many of these don't need to be expensive, difficult to access, or rely on dosing up on pharmaceutical medication – many switches can be as simple as adding certain things into your diet, cutting out the poor-quality stuff, and focusing on some important nutrients.

Because of how important we consider female health here at *Natural Lifestyle*, in this issue, we bring the focus onto PMS, where our natural health experts discuss what can make it worse for some women, and the holistic ways you can find relief from some of these debilitating symptoms – you can read all the guidance on page 16. We hope the advice offers some much-needed support to those experiencing PMS, and if you have any recommendations you want to share with fellow readers, feel free to email me at rachel.symonds@targetpublishing.com

And finally, we wanted to extend our thanks to readers for taking the time to vote in the *Natural Lifestyle* Product Awards. We run these accolades each year to shine a light on the best brands in natural health, making products that truly make a difference to your health and wellbeing, and we are delighted to reveal the results on page 14 of this issue.

Rachel Symonds,

Editor

The best bits

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



It was a stunning Sunday stroll in Editor Rachel's new surroundings as she explored Doha's old port.



Sales Director, Ruth, enjoyed a family trip to the theatre (pictured with daughter, Grace)

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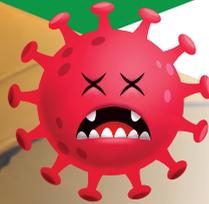
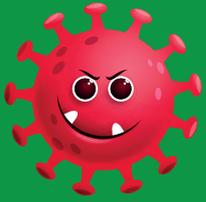
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Take Cover!



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Salus

HEALTH



BRITS FAILING TO FOLLOW OFFICIAL ADVICE OVER VITAMIN D

New research has revealed a disconnect between the evidence around vitamin D and Brits' understanding of the essential nutrient.

A new survey from the Health and Food Supplements Information Service (HSIS) found that despite the advice from experts, only 26 per cent took a daily vitamin D supplement – even though 70 per cent said they know what vitamin D does. This confusion could go some way to explaining the lower than required vitamin D among the British population.

Dr Pam Mason, HSIS Nutrition Researcher, explained: "As many as 59 per cent of those surveyed may think they get enough vitamin D in their diet, but the official data still gives us cause for concern. Vitamin D status has dropped since 2008. Overall, one in five Brits are deficient, with a more serious nutrient gap in some groups. Despite advice from the UK's Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition to take supplementary vitamin D, two in five (39 per cent) of girls and 15 per cent of boys aged 11-18 are deficient. In adults, 19 per cent of women and 16 per cent of men are deficient and 13 per cent of over-65s also fall short. The National Diet and Nutrition Survey shows that a significant proportion of adults and children have blood levels below the recommended threshold, particularly in winter. This makes vitamin D supplementation and mindful dietary choices especially important for self-care."

So, how can you ensure your vitamin D is maintained?

HSIS Dietitian, Dr Carrie Ruxton, recommended: "Take a daily multivitamin and multimineral supplement: follow Government recommendation to take a 10mcg daily vitamin D supplement, especially during autumn and winter. Incorporate vitamin D-rich foods: include oily fish, eggs, and vitamin D fortified cereals and dairy alternatives in your diet. Get safe sun exposure – 15-20 minutes of sunlight on the skin in spring and summer is a good way to boost your body's vitamin D production. Pair vitamin D intake with regular movement – especially outside – and ensure balanced nutrition and quality sleep."



Health warning as research reveals lack of strength training

With new research revealing that almost half of Brits are failing to meet guidelines for strength training, leading experts have issued a call for action.

A new report from ukactive and Les Mills revealed that 43 per cent of Brits are failing to meet the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines of two or more strength-based activities a week and 32 per cent fail to do any at all. When asked if they are aware of the guidelines, 73 per cent admit to being unaware. Awareness was lowest among Baby Boomers at nine per cent and the Silent Generation at just seven per cent. Even among those who claim they know the guidelines, only 38 per cent correctly said a minimum of two days of strength-building activities a week. Eleven per cent only do half the minimum required, just once a week.

National guidelines state adults should do muscle-strengthening activities for all major muscle groups at least two days a week – from strength or resistance training to everyday activities such as heavy gardening or carrying heavy shopping. Strength-based activities are essential for supporting flexibility, balance, and coordination, and evidence shows it can help our ability to perform daily tasks, protecting against injuries and reducing risks of frailty and falls.

The report recommends Government makes strength training a core part of the physical activity campaign that it committed to within the NHS 10 Year Plan.

Huw Edwards, CEO of ukactive, commented: "With a third of the population doing no strength exercises at all, it's clear the UK is sleepwalking into another health crisis. This report makes a powerful case for the nation to rethink its relationship with physical strength so people can reap the benefits for their health."



Fermentation expert joins line-up for wellbeing show

Award-winning fermentation expert, Rachel de Thample, has joined the line-up at a forthcoming event.

Nourish & Nurture takes place at the Storey's Field Centre in Eddington, Cambridge on May 16 and 17.

Rachel, an award-winning author, food writer and educator with more than 20 years' experience in food, health and sustainability, teaches fermentation and seasonal nutrition at River Cottage, Petersham Nurseries and Daylesford, and has served as Course Director of the College of

Naturopathic Medicine's Natural Chef diploma, and Head of Food at Abel & Cole. She will co-host Seasonal Ferments Workshop: Kimchi & Beyond alongside fermentation pioneer, Sandor Ellix Katz. Rachel will also take part in two expert panel discussions: Fermentation Isn't a Fad, and Food, Mood and the Planet's Future, exploring the role of fermented foods in health, sustainable food and environmental wellbeing.

Find out more at <https://nourishandnurture2026.eventbrite.co.uk>



THE HERBTENDER RISE & SHINE TEA – start the day the right way with this blend formulated by a medical herbalist to support energy and mood. Featuring red and white panax ginseng, along with reishi mushroom.



ALTEYA ORGANICS ORGANIC MICROBIOTIC H.A. SERUM: ROSE HYDROBIOME – a hydrating serum that features triple molecular weights of hyaluronic acid, enriched with rejuvenating ectoin and balancing prebiotics to support a healthy skin microbiome. It boasts a proprietary three-rose complex made from extracts of organic rosa damascena, rosa alba, and rosa centifolia, sourced from Alteya's own organic rose gardens.

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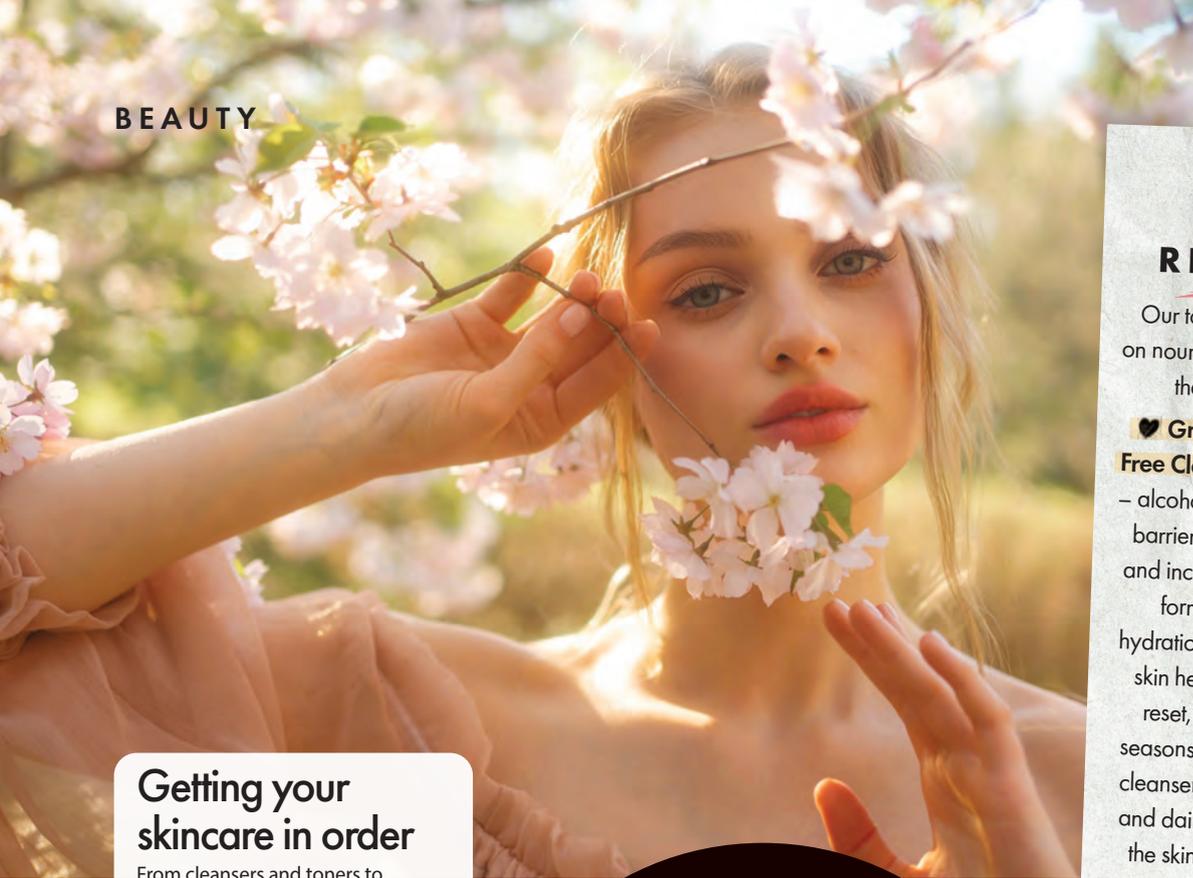
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Getting your skincare in order

From cleansers and toners to moisturisers and serums, we are spoiled for choice when it comes to our skincare – but are you applying it in the right way?

Danielle Louise, hair and beauty expert on the Fresha app, explains that even the best skincare can fail if it's applied in the wrong order – or combined incorrectly.

"I regularly see people using great products, but in an order or combination that stops them from working properly," Danielle advised. "It's not that skincare has stopped working, it's that the routine itself is cancelling out the results."

Danielle explains that skincare works as a system, not a collection of hero products used in isolation. When products are layered incorrectly or mixed without understanding how they interact, active ingredients may fail to absorb, become unstable, or irritate the skin.

"Applying rich creams before active serums, or combining powerful ingredients without recovery steps, can block results entirely," she explained. "In some cases, people are neutralising the very ingredients they're investing in."

One of the biggest mistakes is treating morning and evening routines as interchangeable.

"Morning skincare should focus on protection and restraint – hydration, antioxidants and SPF," she explains. "Nighttime is where repair and active ingredients belong. When people overload both, skin never gets the chance to reset. Skincare isn't failing people – routines are. Once order and compatibility are corrected, results often improve without changing a single product"



NaturalLifestyle RECOMMENDS

Our top picks for our latest issue focus on nourishing the skin as we move out of the winter months into spring:

♥ Green People Sensitive Scent-Free Cleanser & Make-Up Remover

– alcohol in skincare can disrupt the skin barrier, leading to dryness, sensitivity and increased water loss. Alcohol-free formulas, by contrast, focus on hydration, barrier repair and long-term skin health, making them ideal for a reset, for example, as we change seasons. This ultra-gentle, alcohol-free cleanser effectively removes make-up and daily impurities without disrupting the skin barrier. Fragrance-free and soothing, it is ideal for sensitive and reactive skin, leaving the complexion calm, clean and comfortably hydrated.

♥ Weleda Skin Food Body Lotion

– this creamy vegan-friendly lotion gives your skin intensive care and long-lasting moisturisation, ideal as we move out of the winter months. It activates the skin's natural regenerative processes with the signature botanicals of Weleda's original Skin Food moisturiser – healing calendula, calming chamomile, revitalising rosemary and skin-soothing wild pansy.



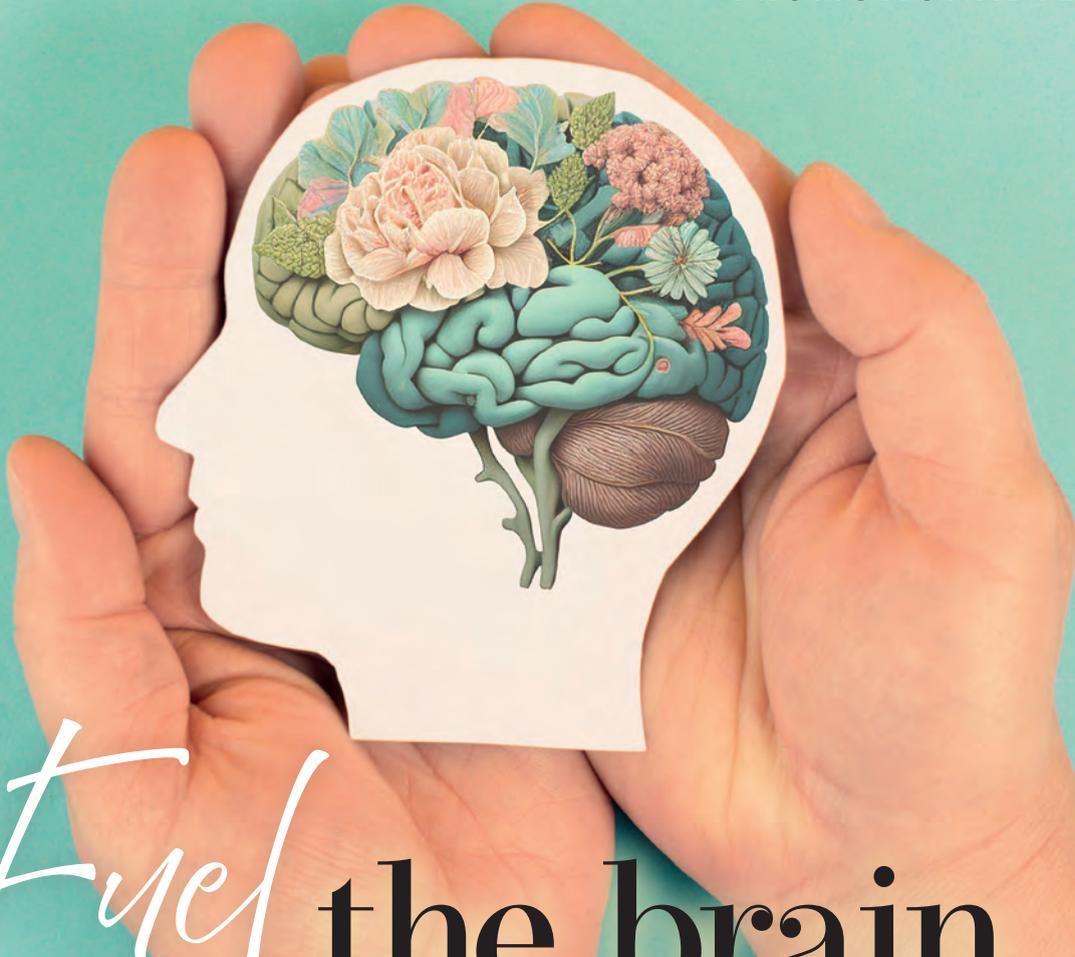
CONSCIOUS SKINCARE



If you're looking for a gift with a sustainable focus, look no further than the spring collection from Wild England.

The Dorset-born brand offers a beautifully curated range of organic, refillable toiletries and home fragrances that blend indulgence with integrity. Perfect for thoughtful gifting and uplifting the home, Wild England is inspired by the untamed beauty of the English countryside and coast. Fragrances are rooted in Dorset's wild beauty, from windswept coastlines to woodland trails, bringing natural freshness indoors.

For the gift ranges, choose from travel-size pouches, 2L refills, or ready-to-use sets featuring shampoo, conditioner, cleansing gel, and body lotion, as well as home fragrance favourites including candles and reed diffusers.



Fuel the brain

The brain needs plenty of nutrients to keep it healthy, but how can you ensure adequate intake?
Follow our guide to good brain nutrition.

Make it magnesium

Biethica 3 in 1 magnesium offers three different types of this essential mineral; magnesium glycinate, citrate, and malate support brain health by improving cognitive function, reducing anxiety, and enhancing mood. They assist in neurotransmitter regulation, promote better sleep quality, and protect against neurodegenerative diseases, contributing to overall mental clarity and wellbeing.



Cognitive function

Synaptaid is a doctor formulated supplement to support cognitive function and mental performance. Combining proven nutrients and lion's mane mushroom extract, its unique formula helps support the brain's neuro plasticity, which declines as we age.



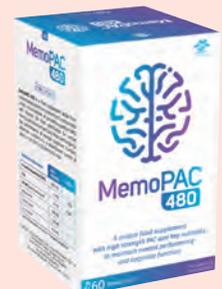
Strath support

Strath (Bio-Strath) has been subjected to numerous clinical studies to support cognitive function. In one study on 184 patients, an 82 per cent improvement was seen in those taking Strath compared to 32 per cent in the control group.



The power of proanthocyanidins

Cranberries have typically been used in the treatment of UTIs but a recent study at the University of East Anglia demonstrated that patients consuming high dose cranberry powder improved significantly in cognitive tests, while lowering LDL cholesterol. MemoPAC 480 contains 480mg of PAC (proanthocyanidins), which are believed to play a role in protecting the brain.



Products available at health stores across the UK.



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- ✦ NEW NORDIC LION'S MANE
- ✦ TOGETHER HEALTH ORGANIC MUSHROOM 5

NATURE'S NUTRIENT *powerhouses*

Support your health and wellness routine with the power of medicinal mushrooms.

Mushrooms have been in existence for millions of years, yet it's only recently that the scientific research in the western world is confirming their powerful benefits. And far from being something you simply cook with, mushrooms – or, more specifically, medicinal mushrooms – can offer wide-ranging benefits to your health, whether you are looking to support overall wellbeing or to target specific health concerns.

As a general overview, medicinal mushrooms are rich in a number of important compounds, which include phytosterols, polysaccharides, antioxidants, and beta-glucans. Because of the rich range of beneficial compounds, medicinal mushrooms are known to support everything from immune health through to cognitive function, and the gut.

Immune-friendly

Our immune systems can take a bit of a battering during the colder weather when more bugs are doing the rounds. Therefore, giving it some extra support during these months can really help you to stay well.

Medicinal mushrooms are hugely beneficial to the immune system, thanks in part to the fact there are some that contain beta glucans, compounds which are a form of soluble fibre that are known to support immune function. The mushrooms that are particularly useful for the immune system are reishi and maitake, the latter

of which is also helpful to support our cardiovascular health.

Address stress

Stress can contribute to so many other health woes, including lowering immunity and disrupting the gut – but the good news is, medicinal mushrooms can be supportive during times of stress.

The reason for this is some mushrooms are classed as adaptogens, which help the body cope with stress better. Among the best mushrooms for stress are reishi and cordyceps, as well as chaga, which can support relaxation. Reishi is also known to be helpful to promote better sleep.

Up your energy

Low energy can be a by-product of our busy lifestyles these days, with some people struggling to get to the end of a day without propping up with caffeine or sugar. It therefore makes sense to choose products that can naturally support your energy, when taken hand in hand with a healthy diet and lifestyle.

The mushrooms that are useful for energy include cordyceps, which is great for anyone seeking a boost but particularly for those taking part in a lot of sport.

Better brain health

Cognitive function can be supported with the aid of medicinal mushrooms too.

Lion's mane is the star mushroom for the brain,

and that's because it supports nerve regeneration, aiding memory and focus. It can also be helpful in easing brain fog. Chaga is also useful when it comes to its antioxidant content, helping to protect cells from damage and helping to fight damaging free radicals. This also has a beneficial effect on heart health.

Choose wisely

We must add an advisory note in terms of choosing a medicinal mushroom supplement as there is a lot on the market, and some not as well-made and with the right ingredients as others.

Our key starting point would be to visit your health food store as they will stock high quality products – they will also be able to advise of the right mushrooms for your needs.

It's also advisable to look for those made with the whole mushroom, rather than just a single part. This ensures you gain a range of beneficial compounds. Also be sure the ingredients list doesn't include fillers and artificial additives, as these mean you don't get the full benefit from the mushroom. Finally, choose supplements that are organic, as these will be free of chemicals and pesticides, which can be detrimental to health.

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www.olivit.co.uk



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Bursting with uplifting herbs, turmeric, ginger and galangal, this invigorating blend keeps you feeling vibrant throughout the day. From active bodies and fitness enthusiasts to desk-dwellers or the less mobile, thrive with every sip and take on the day. 100% organic, FairWild and Fair for Life Certified. All pukka teas are made from ethically and sustainably sourced organic ingredients with FSC certified recyclable card and home compostable tea bags.



@pukkaherbs for more information

Wellness in Your Pocket

Modern life is demanding, but your wellness routine shouldn't be. SOiL Organic Aromatherapy is pleased to introduce four new Remedy Rollers designed to provide targeted relief while on the go. Combat fatigue with a swipe of Energy, melt away tension with De-Stress, enjoy the outdoors protected by Bug Away, and reclaim your rest with our soothing Sleep Roller. Each roller features 100% certified organic essential oils, pre-diluted with organic jojoba oil for safe, effortless application. Wherever life takes you, carry the therapeutic power of nature in your pocket.
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BioKap Dyes – PPD Free grey coverage in just 10 minutes!

BioKap hair dyes offer a fast and gentle option to cover grey hair perfectly. The high percentage natural and vegan formulas work in just 10 minutes, and are a first in the natural home hair dye category! Carefully developed with Organic Argan Oil and Tricorepair complex to protect hair and scalp, the range of 12 shades is free from PPD, Ammonia, Resorcin and Fragrance to ensure suitability for even the most sensitive scalps. Also available from BioKap are Root Touch-Up sprays in 3 shades for covering re-growth, and shampoo and conditioner for coloured hair.
www.biokap.co.uk



Clean PERSONAL CARE

Choosing natural personal care products is not only beneficial to you but also to the planet. Here's what you need to know about making the right choice.

We use toiletries so routinely that often, we don't think about what has gone into the products, and what impact they might be having on our skin, our health, and the environment.

But it is because shower gels, soaps, toothpastes and deodorants are so ingrained in our everyday routines that it is important to consider how healthy they really are; many mainstream products can contain a host of undesirable chemicals, impacting both you and the health of the planet.

But the good news is it has never been easier to choose a gentler, more natural personal care routine, and your health store is the perfect place to find such products.

EASE UP THE CHEMICALS

We face chemicals in many aspects of daily life, whether it's from pollution outside, from the

food we eat, through to the products we put on our skin and our hair. Because there are so many harsh chemicals, artificial colours, and synthetic fragrances found in our toiletries, it can be difficult to know what should be avoided. Those that we would advise you watch out for are:

- **Parabens** are found in many personal care products, such as shower gels and shampoos, but they come with health concerns, including as endocrine disruptors, which means they can mess with our hormones.
- **SLS/SLES** are used as foaming agents and so contained in a host of products, but can irritate the skin, among other health concerns. They can make symptoms of eczema worse.

- **Phthalates** are chemicals linked to a variety of issues across different organ systems, as well as reproductive health, and child development.
- **Toothpastes** can contain everything from triclosan and SLS to artificial sweeteners.



We must also mention period products, as these can contain equally undesirable raw materials; worryingly, toxins and traces of heavy metals have been found in tampons. Such products can contain bleached cotton, microplastics, and other worrying chemicals, including dioxin and rayon. These are not only undesirable for your health, but they also end up in landfill and can contribute to pollution.

Go natural

It can be difficult to clean up all of your personal care products at once, and a more gradual approach is advised, trying one natural product first before moving onto another.

In terms of what to look for when you are choosing products, as a magazine dedicated to holistic options, it's best to start with certification, ideally those that are organic and natural – this means that to be certified, they have to be free of certain chemicals. Look for labels such as NATRUE or COSMOS, as these are reputable certification organisations in the UK.

Other aspects to consider when choosing personal care products includes:

- In deodorants, beneficial ingredients include potassium alum, which is a mineral astringent creating a protective barrier, shea butter for its nourishing properties for the underarm, and bicarbonate of soda, which is effective at neutralising bacteria.
- For period products, seek brands using organic cotton, sustainable wood pulp, and avoid those that are perfumed. You could also try a menstrual cup, which is made from medical grade silicone, is free from undesirable chemicals, and is reusable, so benefits the environment.
- From an environmental perspective, you ideally want those made from recyclable or plastic-free materials, and soap, shampoo and conditioner bars, which use far less packaging and also last much longer.
- For good oral care, coconut oil is a powerful antibacterial to support mouth hygiene, tea tree oil is a strong anti-inflammatory for the gums, while sage, mint, and activated charcoal are also great.
- Natural ingredients such as aloe vera are ideal for everything from the skin to our hair, while coconut oil can be found in many soaps. Chamomile is ideal for sensitive and also young skin.



A HOLISTIC

celebration

You voted in your droves to tell us what you believed was deserving of a *Natural Lifestyle Product Award* – and now we can reveal your winners.

BEST BEAUTY/BODYCARE

Alteya Bio Damascena Organic Ageless Rose Otto Face Cream

Discover Bio Damascena Organic Ageless Rose Otto Face Cream, an intensive solution for a firmer, more youthful-looking complexion. The rich formula is fortified with rare organic rose oil and powerful white truffle extract. It is designed to reduce the appearance of lines and wrinkles while boosting elasticity and resilience. Pracaxi oil helps minimise age spots, while antioxidant-rich pomegranate extract provides protection against environmental damage. Certified organic and NATRUE approved.

Daniel Kolev, Co-founder of Alteya, commented: "Alteya Organics is honored to receive this *Natural Lifestyle Product Award*, and we sincerely thank everyone who voted and the organisers for this recognition. This award is especially meaningful to us because it helps bring greater awareness to what has always been at the heart of Alteya: our commitment to sustainable practices and organic, clean formulas that respect people and planet. We believe transparency, responsibility, and quality should be the standard – not the exception – and we hope this recognition encourages others in the industry to continue raising the bar. Thank you for supporting brands that prioritise integrity, sustainability, and positive impact."



HIGHLY COMMENDED: Weleda Skin Food Lotion



BEST FOOD & DRINK

The Herbender Vital Glow

Nourish immunity with some of nature's finest ingredients with The Herbender's organic herbal tea, Vital Glow, expertly crafted by its medical herbalist using adaptogens, functional mushrooms and botanicals that taste as good as they make you feel.

The gentle giant of mushrooms, reishi, is blended with hibiscus, cinnamon, warming ginger, sweet licuorice (for its immune supporting properties) and finished with soft orange and clove. The result is a stimulating, warming 'hug in a mug' that will build inner resilience and vitality from within.

Co-founder, Laura Neville, enthused: "We're thrilled to have won Best Food & Drink in *Natural Lifestyle's Product Awards* for Vital Glow Organic Herbal Tea. As a small, independent brand, being voted for by real customers means everything to us. Blended by our Medical Herbalist to support immunity, this much-loved tea combines reishi mushroom with ginger, cinnamon, licuorice, hibiscus, and clove – a nourishing, feel-good cup that is as effective as it is delicious."



HIGHLY COMMENDED: Pukka Night Time 40s



BEST HERBAL

NutraTea NutraMeno

NutraMeno by NutraTea is part of an award-winning range of 34 functional herbal teas. Specially developed by pharmacists and nutritionists, this natural blend is designed to support a calm and comfortable menopause. Every biodegradable tea bag contains 2g of sustainably sourced herbs, offering a convenient way to support your wellbeing during the menopause phase of life.

NutraTea Co-founders, Anish and Mikesh Patel, commented: "We're incredibly proud of NutraMeno for being recognised with this award. The blend was created with a clear purpose: to support women through menopause using 100 per cent natural ingredients, with no added oils or flavourings. Formulated with red clover to help maintain comfort during menopause and shatavari root to support balance in female physiology, NutraMeno reflects our commitment to wellbeing and sustainability. From ethically sourced herbs and biodegradable, plastic-free packaging to reusable tea bags that can be used up to three times, this award is a meaningful recognition of the care, values and responsibility behind everything we do. Rooted in Ayurvedic principles, NutraMeno brings together ancient herbal wisdom and modern wellbeing to support women naturally through menopause."

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Unbelievable Daily Defence





BEST NEW

Booja-Booja Hot Chocolate

Booja-Booja Hot Chocolate is an exciting new creation, bringing all the deliciousness and quality you expect from Booja-Booja chocolate truffles to an indulgent hot drink.

Smooth, sophisticated and sumptuous, this exceptional hot chocolate is made with organic ingredients and is completely dairy free, gluten free and vegan. It can

be used with any type of milk to create a rich and luxuriously comforting chocolate drink. New, innovative and luxurious, Booja-Booja Hot Chocolate is also a Nourish Awards 2025 winner.

"We're absolutely thrilled that our Hot Chocolate has been voted Best New in the *Natural Lifestyle Product Awards*," enthused Louise Collins, Marketing Communications Manager at Booja-Booja. "These awards are really special because the winners are chosen by the people who really matter, the people who actually use and enjoy the products. Thank you to everyone who voted for us. We were confident that our dairy free Hot Chocolate would bring you lots of cosy, delicious smiles, but it's incredible to have that confirmed by winning your votes. It's really wonderful to know that people are enjoying what we've created so much. We're simply over the moon."



HIGHLY COMMENDED: Good Health Naturally Saffron Balance



BEST SUPPLEMENT

Pure Encapsulations Metabolic Xtra

Metabolic Xtra with Svetol Green Coffee Bean Extract features a blend of ResVida resveratrol, alpha lipoic acid and chromium.

Svetol is a clinically studied decaffeinated green coffee bean extract providing chlorogenic acids, featuring the recommended amount of 400mg Svetol per daily dose. With ResVida resveratrol providing high purity trans-resveratrol and alpha lipoic acid. Highly bioavailable chromium picolinate contributes to the maintenance of normal blood glucose levels.

"The team at Pure Encapsulations is absolutely thrilled to be the recipient of the *Natural Lifestyle Best Supplement Product Award* for Pure Encapsulations Metabolic Xtra," commented Joanna Dziedzic, Nutritional Therapist and Business Development Manager at Pure Encapsulations. "It's incredibly exciting to see that readers share our passion and trust in our commitment to providing the largest range of free-from, professional food supplements. Metabolic Xtra is not just a great product; it's a preferred choice among health professionals and our loyal customers, and this prestigious award truly reflects that. A huge thank you to everyone for your votes."



HIGHLY COMMENDED: Theta Balance Blend



BEST PERSONAL CARE

Salt of the Earth Unscented Roll-on Deodorant

The Salt of the Earth Unscented Refillable Roll-on Deodorant is certified vegan by the Vegan Society, natural by COSMOS and scent free. It's a great option for those who are looking for an alternative to heavily perfumed deodorants.

The formula of natural mineral salts, aloe vera and rosemary offers long-lasting protection without leaving any unsightly white marks on your clothes. The 75ml bottle can be refilled up to seven times by purchasing a 525ml Unscented Refill Bottle, which offers a great way of reducing waste.

Thomas Laird, MD of Salt of the Earth, said of the award win: "We're absolutely thrilled that our Unscented Refillable Roll-on

Deodorant has been recognised in the *Natural Lifestyle Product Awards*! As a family-run brand, it means the world to us to see our commitment to natural ingredients and effective deodorant rewarded like this. We put a lot of care into creating products that people can trust – and that actually work – so this is a lovely way to kick off the year. Huge thanks to everyone who supports Salt of the Earth. We're on a roll – literally!"



HIGHLY COMMENDED: Alteya Organic Bulgarian Rose Water



BEST VEGAN

Viridian Vitamin D3 & K2

High potency Vitamin D3 and K2 Liquid is a convenient and easy to use pill-free way of taking these essential nutrients.

Vitamin D3 and K2 are a powerful duo when combined, contributing to the maintenance of bone health. Vitamin D3 contributes to the absorption of calcium and K2 helps activate the relevant proteins that requires calcium. Viridian Vitamin D3 is clinically studied and sourced from lichen, whilst K2 is derived from natto, and contributes to normal blood clotting and maintenance of normal bone. The K2 is non-animal tested.

Aimee Benbow, Director of Nutrition, commented: "Our high potency Vitamin D3 & K2 Liquid is a vegan formulation, containing clinically studied vitamin D3 and we're delighted it's won the *Natural Lifestyle Best Vegan*

category in the 2025 Product Awards. Viridian D3 has been clinically studied at the University of Surrey and proven to increase levels of the micronutrient. Our vitamin D3 is sourced from lichen and when paired with K2, they work in harmony to support bone health. This researched blend is captured in a convenient and easy to use liquid format to suit people's individual preferences. All the ingredients are sustainably sourced and ethically made in line with our Viridian values."



HIGHLY COMMENDED: BlueIron Liquid Iron

Easing the effects of

PMS



Nutrition and lifestyle switches can go a long way towards easing your experience of PMS each month, as our natural health experts explain in this essential guide.

When you consider that 90 per cent of women in the UK alone are suffering with PMS each month – some to a degree so severe they cannot go about their normal daily life – you would hope that there was some kind of quick fix that could alleviate the suffering.

But while no such quick fix exists, there are steps you can take, some small, simple changes, that, when followed consistently, can make a big difference – and nutrition and lifestyle are among the key places to start.

Looking at in detail, we know that certain nutrients can help to ease some of the common PMS symptoms, whether it's anti-inflammatory omega 3, relaxing magnesium, or B vitamins for hormone balance. Striking that nutrient balance, when taken with cutting out certain foods that are known to make symptoms worse, while also placing the focus on your own self-care, it can mean that, although you might not get rid of PMS altogether, you can really help with your symptom management.

Who suffers?

The answer to this question is anyone who has a monthly period can, and is likely, to suffer with PMS to one degree or another.

Keri Briggs, Senior Brand Specialist at Lamberts, explained: "Up to 90 per cent of women in the UK experience some symptoms, ranging from mild to severe. Up to 10 per cent experience symptoms so severe that they interfere with normal, day to day life, and researchers believe that this is at least partially due to some women being more sensitive to hormone fluctuations. These severe symptoms are often known as premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) and will normally require more intervention, as these symptoms, especially those affecting mood and emotion, are much more severe."

Alice Bradshaw, Head of Nutrition Education and Information at Terranova, added: "Around 20-30 per cent report symptoms that noticeably affect daily life, while a smaller percentage – roughly five to eight per cent – experience PMDD, a more severe form characterised by significant mood-related symptoms. The intensity and combination of symptoms can vary widely from woman to woman and even from cycle to cycle."

But why do these symptoms occur in the first place? And are certain women more at risk?

Alice explained: "PMS refers to the physical, emotional, and behavioural changes that appear in the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle, usually in the days before a period. Although the exact cause isn't fully understood, PMS is thought to stem from the way fluctuating hormones, particularly oestrogen and progesterone, interact with brain chemistry. These shifts can influence neurotransmitters such as serotonin, which plays a key role in mood and emotional balance. Factors such as inflammation, fluid retention, stress, and individual sensitivity to hormonal changes may also contribute to how strongly PMS is felt."

"While PMS can't always be prevented, certain lifestyle habits may help reduce the likelihood or severity of symptoms. Managing stress, supporting good sleep, and maintaining steady blood sugar levels throughout the day can all make a meaningful difference. Regular physical activity, even gentle movement, may support

mood and energy. Limiting alcohol, moderating caffeine, and reducing highly processed foods may also help some women feel more balanced across the month."

Keri added: "Studies conducted using identical twins have hypothesised that there may be a genetic component to PMS. Smoking, alcohol intake, stress and body weight are also considered to raise the likelihood or severity of PMS. Diet is also significant; diets high in fat, carbohydrates, sugar and salt are associated with more significant symptoms and close adherence to a healthier diet, such as the Mediterranean diet, tends to show a reduction in symptoms."

Lindsay Powers, Nutritionist at Good Health Naturally, went on: "It is helpful to focus on a balanced lifestyle with regular, gentle exercise. Good sleep is essential to help the body repair and regulate itself. While managing stress is equally important, as long-term stress can place extra pressure on our hormones and body systems."

Recognise your symptoms

There are some obvious symptoms of PMS, but there can be some less known ones too, and so understanding the range – and also your own cycle and what affects you most – can go a long way to aiding symptom management.

Alice advised: "For some, PMS is mild and manageable; for others, it can be genuinely disruptive. Physical symptoms may include bloating, breast tenderness, headaches, fatigue, and digestive changes. Emotional and cognitive symptoms often involve irritability, low mood, anxiety, mood swings, or difficulty concentrating. Some women also notice changes in appetite, sleep, or social engagement. When symptoms are more intense, they can affect work, relationships, and overall wellbeing, making the premenstrual phase feel particularly challenging."

Lindsay continued: "While they can vary between women, common symptoms include mood fluctuations, depression, anxiousness, tiredness, bloating, breast tenderness, skin breakouts and headaches. Some women may experience one or two mild symptoms, while others may experience them more severely, which can affect their quality of life."

Keri went on: "There are over 200 symptoms associated with PMS, and PMS can be classified into four types:

- **Emotional** – PMS-A (anxiety, associated with mood swings, anxiety and irritability) and PMS-D (depression – associated with crying, insomnia, forgetfulness and confusion).

- **Physical** – PMS-H (hydration – associated with weight gain, fluid retention, bloating and breast tenderness) and PMS-C (craving – associated with sweet cravings, increased appetite, headaches, fatigue, dizziness and fainting).

"During a normal menstrual cycle, four main hormones will fluctuate, controlling fertile phases, the menstrual period and ovulation. These are oestrogen, progesterone, luteinising hormone (LH) and follicle stimulating hormone (FSH). Most PMS symptoms are linked to changes in oestrogen and progesterone levels following ovulation. For example, high oestrogen and low progesterone can be linked to mood changes and cravings, as well as an increase in prolactin, which is linked to breast tenderness. Some studies suggest a link between PMS and serotonin, which is strongly linked to mood, appetite and sleep."

"Hormonal changes during the menstrual cycle can also influence other conditions and it is estimated that around 50 per cent of women seeking relief from PMS have another condition which gets worse depending on her cycle. These can include irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), ME or chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), bladder pain, asthma and allergies."

Focus on diet

So, what should a healthy diet look like to support hormones and ease symptoms?

Alice recommended: "A PMS-friendly approach centres on nourishment, balance, and self-care. Meals rich in fibre, colourful vegetables, whole grains, and healthy proteins and fats may support steadier energy and digestion. Magnesium-rich foods such as leafy greens, nuts, seeds, and wholegrains are often highlighted for their role in muscle relaxation and mood. Including omega 3 sources like oily fish, flax, or chia may support overall wellbeing."

Lindsay added: "It is important to have regular meals with a balance of protein, fibre and healthy fats to support stable blood sugar levels, which is often linked to mood and energy fluctuations during PMS. A good intake of fruits and vegetables will provide essential vitamins and minerals to support the nervous system and hormone balance. Good hydration is important, as is being mindful of caffeine and alcohol intake."

And let's not forget the key lifestyle changes you could incorporate too.

"Regular movement, fresh air, and gentle practices such as stretching, yoga, or mindfulness can help to ease tension and promote emotional steadiness. Prioritising rest during the luteal phase can also help women feel more resilient," Alice suggested.

Lindsay added: "Practices like yoga and

PMS SUPPORT

stretching can complement general exercise by supporting circulation and mood. Managing stress with deep breathing exercises and mindfulness can also support this and help calm the nervous system. Sleep must also be a priority as poor sleep can make symptoms worse in many cases."

Know your nutrients

A healthy, balanced diet, with a range of nutrients, is important not just for controlling PMS but for overall good health. But to ensure you have a broad intake of nutrients, it may also be worthwhile adding in certain supplements.

Lindsay recommended: "Iron is important to be aware of, particularly for women with heavy periods, as levels can gradually decline over time. Low vitamin D levels are also common and may influence mood and overall wellbeing, especially during the winter months. Vitamin E is often used for cramps and comfort around breast tenderness. More recently, we've also seen studies showing the benefits of saffron extract for relieving PMS symptoms."

Another good choice is around the family of good fats.

Keri explained: "Gamma-linoleic acid (GLA), a fatty acid found in starflower and evening primrose oils, is commonly recommended for some PMS symptoms, particularly breast tenderness. Studies suggest that GLA can decrease sensitivity to prolactin and it has been shown to be more effective for mastalgia than conventional painkillers. Omega 3 fatty acids, such as EPA and DHA, found in fish and cod liver oils, have also been indicated for both physical and psychological symptoms of PMS. These fatty acids have also been shown to reduce dysmenorrhoea."

Keri also highlighted B vitamins, adding: "Studies suggest vitamin B6 may help to clear excess oestrogen via the liver, increase progesterone production and support serotonin manufacture in the body. B6 supplementation significantly reduced PMS symptoms and was more effective and better tolerated than a conventional medication. Vitamin D plays several physiological roles in the body, which may be relevant to PMS and the menstrual cycle, including maintaining calcium balance, production of sex hormones and the function of neurotransmitters. Low vitamin D status is associated with an increased incidence of PMS symptoms and supplementation has been shown to reduce symptoms such as backache and crying."

And that's not all – there are plenty of other choices that, depending on your symptom range, can be really useful for PMS – your health food store will be able to advise on the right selection for your needs.

"Several minerals can be useful for a variety of PMS symptoms," Keri explained. "Changes in calcium regulation have been hypothesised as a cause for some symptoms

and calcium, in doses of both 600mg and 1000mg a day, has been shown to reduce symptoms such as fluid retention, fatigue, depression, food cravings and pain, as well as being useful for dysmenorrhoea.

"It is well known that magnesium intakes are low in most women, with up to 70 per cent of the female population in the UK not consuming the recommended level of 375mg a day. Low magnesium levels have been associated with PMS and supplementation successfully reduced both mood changes and pain scores. Magnesium is also associated with a reduction in the symptoms associated with PMS-H, particularly fluid retention. Plant compounds, known as anthocyanidins, are associated with improvements in collagen production. Some anthocyanidin supplements, at a dose of 160mg twice a day, have been shown to alleviate fluid retention in pre-menopausal women."

And Alice suggested: "Some research suggests that women experiencing PMS may have lower

levels of certain nutrients involved in hormone and neurotransmitter function. Magnesium, calcium, vitamin B6, and omega 3 fatty acids are among the nutrients most commonly discussed in relation to PMS. Low levels may be associated with symptoms such as fatigue, mood changes, or cramps. A varied, nutrient-dense diet is the foundation, but supplementation may be considered for women who struggle to meet their needs through food alone.

"Magnesium is often used for its role in muscle relaxation and nervous system balance. Botanicals such as ashwagandha and rhodiola are traditionally used to support stress resilience, while sage is often included in herbal blends aimed at cognitive and hormonal balance. Soya foods provide naturally occurring phytoestrogens and can be part of a balanced diet. Reishi mushroom is sometimes used in wellness routines for its association with calm and vitality. As always, women should choose supplements that suit their individual needs and seek guidance where appropriate."



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Natural Lifestyle Top Picks

Alteya Organics - Organic Microbiotic H.A. Serum: Rose Hydrobiome

Alteya Organics stands for the highest technological standards and the finest organic ingredients, focusing on minimalist formulas that deliver exceptional efficacy. Our commitment to purity and science ensures that every product provides visible, high-performance results. This hydrating serum features triple molecular weights of Hyaluronic Acid, enriched with rejuvenating Ectoin and balancing Prebiotics to support a healthy skin microbiome. Created in Alteya's advanced cosmetic lab, the serum boasts a proprietary Three-Rose Complex made from potent extracts of organic Rosa Damascena, Rosa Alba, and Rosa Centifolia, sourced from Alteya's own organic rose gardens. Learn more: www.alteya.co.uk



Helping You Feel Your Best, Every Month

HealthAid® FemmeVit™ is specially formulated to support women through the challenges of the monthly cycle. This advanced blend provides key vitamins and minerals that contribute to energy release, normal hormone function, nervous system health, and healthy skin. FemmeVit™ is designed for women who experience discomfort, mood changes, tiredness, or general imbalance during their cycle. Its carefully selected nutrients help support normal muscle function, smooth muscle relaxation, and overall metabolic balance. Ideal for women seeking daily nutritional support, FemmeVit™ helps maintain vitality and wellbeing, throughout the month. Femmevit retails at £14.99 for 60 tablets. Contact HealthAid Ltd on 020 8426 3400 for purchase and stockist information or visit www.healthaid.co.uk



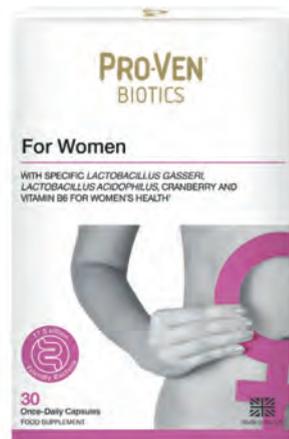
Biome Balance Intimate Flora for Women

Many variables can affect the intimate microbiome, including tight or synthetic clothing, heavily scented toiletries, hormone fluctuations and hot weather. When this microbiome becomes unbalanced it can cause the overgrowth of pathogens such as E. Coli. This in turn can lead to embarrassing and uncomfortable symptoms. Biome Balance Intimate Flora for Women is formulated with Lactobacillus plantarum, Lactocaseibacillus rhamnosus and Bifidobacterium animalis lactis, strains which have been shown to reach the vagina. It is supplied in easy-to-swallow, one a day capsules making it simple to incorporate into your daily routine. www.lambertshealthcare.co.uk



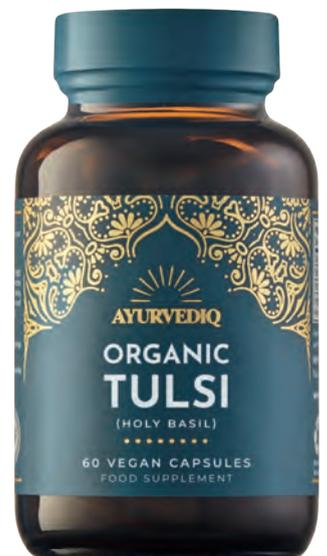
Helping your hormone balance

ProVen For Women has been developed specifically with women and the female microbiome in mind. It contains three strains of Lactobacillus bacteria, the species that dominates the vaginal microbiome, including two Lactobacillus acidophilus and Lactobacillus gasseri, which is one of the primary strains found in this area of the female body. Along with 17.5 billion live bacteria, this product also contains cranberry extract and vitamin B6, which helps to support hormonal balance. www.provenbiotics.uk



Find Your Calm, Naturally

When life feels relentless, Tulsi has a quiet answer. Known as Holy Basil and treasured in Ayurveda for thousands of years, this sacred herb has long been traditionally valued for supporting the body through everyday stress and encouraging a genuine sense of calm and clarity. Ayurvediq Organic Tulsi Capsules deliver 500mg of pure, certified organic Tulsi per capsule. No fillers, nothing unnecessary, just one of Ayurveda's most loved herbs, ready for your daily routine. Available at independent health stores and online at ayurvediq.co.uk



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Ask the experts



Q How common are skin conditions in children, and what skincare considerations are important?

Meghna Patel advised: Skin conditions in children are quite common due to the skin being so delicate. Babies that are susceptible to conditions like eczema can also react to the food the mum is eating when they are breastfeeding and even some formula milks. Many people will also be using chemical-based shower gels and bubble baths that can affect our long-term skin health. Most contain chemicals such as sodium lauryl sulfate that strip skin of its natural oils and disrupt the water content of cells. An increase in central heating, double glazing and carpeting has produced warmer, more comfortable homes – both for humans and for dust mites, which can cause allergies and exacerbation of skin conditions if susceptible.

Avoid detergents and surfactants. This can range from household cleaning agents to things we use to clean our bodies. Typical culprits include sodium laureth sulfate, or sodium lauryl ether sulfate (SLES). These are found in body washes and shampoos as a cheap foaming agent and can strip the skin of natural oils. Don't over-wash and choose natural, unperfumed products.

Pick products that have high levels of natural actives for maximum therapeutic benefit. On the label, ingredients are listed in order of descending percentage content so if the natural ingredients are right at the bottom and not in meaningful quantities, then the product will not have many beneficial natural skin healing properties. The quality and the ingredients of skincare products are very important. This is why I recommend products with a high content of natural active ingredients for therapeutic benefit. Select products with calendula, which reduces inflammation and soothes the skin, active manuka honey, which has antibacterial, soothing and healing properties, and aloe vera, which stimulates cell regeneration, has antibacterial and wound healing properties and acts as a potent emollient.

Making sense of modern nutrition advice...

by Alice Bradshaw

Why does nutrition advice feel so confusing?

Nutrition guidance has never been more visible – or more contradictory. One day, low-carb eating is essential, the next high-carb diets are celebrated. Supplements are equally confusing, with advice ranging from 'must-have' to 'completely unnecessary'. Social media doesn't make it easier: personal routines are shared as if they apply to everyone. The result is understandable – people feel unsure about what really supports their health.

What's the difference between general nutrition advice and nutritional therapy?

General nutrition advice works for most people. It's the foundation of good health: balanced meals, plenty of vegetables and fruit, wholegrains, quality protein, healthy fats, regular movement, enough sleep, and stress management. These are the building blocks that support wellbeing day to day. Nutritional therapy is personalised. A trained practitioner takes a close look at your health history, lifestyle and goals before offering guidance. Recommendations can include specific, tailored dietary changes, lifestyle strategies, and carefully chosen supplements. The focus is on what works specifically for you, rather than following one-size-fits-all rules.

Personalised support is invaluable for complex or ongoing issues, such as chronic symptoms, diagnosed health conditions, or life-stage

transitions like pregnancy, menopause, or intense training. A Nutritional Therapist can create safe, tailored strategies that complement general nutrition advice and help you feel confident about your choices.

How do supplements fit in?

Strong nutritional foundations come first. Balanced, plant-rich meals, adequate protein, regular movement, sufficient sleep, and sensible stress management provide the most lasting benefit. Supplements can support this foundation, but when it comes to targeted or personalised strategies, a Nutritional Therapist can help ensure your approach is both safe and effective.

Some supplements are sensible for everyday use. Vitamin D3 supports general health, essential fatty acids contribute to overall wellbeing, and a balanced multivitamin can fill small gaps in the diet. Beyond these basics, supplement needs become highly individual, influenced by life stage, activity, and health concerns. Targeted supplementation works best when guided by professional advice.

Health food shops have knowledgeable staff who can explain products, clarify options, and offer general guidance for everyday needs. They're a great resource for understanding which supplements may provide general support, while keeping advice safe and non-medical.



ALICE BRADSHAW

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



MEGHNA PATEL

has a background in Medical Science and has been in the natural health industry for over 20 years. For the last 15 years, she has run Mahi Naturals, which imports and distributes premium natural wellness brands, including the Hope's Relief brand.



KERI BRIGGS

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SLAWOMIR GROMADZKI

is author of health-related articles, health promoter and lecturer, certified Herbalist and health consultant. He has a Master's degree in Public Health and Bachelor's degree in Health Promotion. He works as a Nutritionist for HealthAid.

ABOUT THE EXPERTS



SELENIUM

–the key to a healthy thyroid

A growing body of research highlights selenium as a key player in supporting thyroid function.

Most of us go through life without thinking much about the thyroid, a small but essential gland at the base of the neck. This butterfly-shaped organ releases hormones that regulate our metabolism, the rate at which cells convert food into energy. Metabolic rate affects vital functions such as breathing, heart rate, nervous system activity, body temperature, and weight management.

Many people with weight issues may have an underactive or overactive thyroid. Hyperthyroidism occurs when metabolism is too high, while hypothyroidism (with an 'o') occurs when it is too low. Graves' disease is the most common hyperthyroid disorder, and Hashimoto's thyroiditis is the most common hypothyroid disorder. Both primarily affect women aged 30-50 years.

Rich in selenium

The thyroid is one of the body's tissues with the highest selenium concentration, leading scientists to theorise that selenium is critical for normal thyroid function. Patients with autoimmune thyroid disorders (AITD), where antibodies like anti-TPO attack thyroid tissue, often have low blood selenium levels.

Calms an 'overactive' immune system

Several studies in AITD patients show that selenium supplementation can reduce inflammation and help regulate the immune response. In a placebo-controlled study¹, daily supplementation with 200mcg of selenium for three months decreased anti-TPO antibody levels by 40 per cent, compared with a 10 per cent reduction in the placebo group, demonstrating selenium's immune-calming effect.

A superior source of intervention

Another randomized, placebo-controlled study² of 65 AITD patients found that daily selenium supplementation reduced anti-TPO levels by 46 per cent after three months and 55.5 per cent after six months. In the placebo group, treated with thyroid medication alone, reductions were only 21 per cent and 27 per cent. Selenium clearly showed superior results.

Endocrinologists are taking notice

A review in *Diagnostics*, an international peer-reviewed scientific journal, reported that more endocrinologists now include selenium in AITD treatment, even though it is not yet part of international guidelines.

Supplementation may be particularly useful in Hashimoto's patients with low selenium levels, even for

those already on standard therapy.

A challenge for Europeans

Much of Europe, including the UK, has selenium-poor soils, leading to lower dietary intake.

Selenium supports 25-30 selenoproteins that regulate many functions, including converting T4 into the active T3 thyroid hormone. A deficiency can impair this conversion and thyroid function.

How much selenium is needed?

Selenoprotein P is one key selenium-dependent protein. Research suggests 100-110mcg daily (from food or supplements) is needed for full saturation. A Danish trial³ tested whether a seafood-rich diet could achieve this. Participants consumed 1,000g of seafood weekly for six months, but the diet alone did not reach full saturation.

For supplementation, organic selenium yeast has been shown to provide best absorption and bioavailability. This was shown in, among others, the groundbreaking KiSel-10 study from 2013.

• References available on request.

Ask the experts



The science of stress...

by *Slawomir Gromadzki*

What happens in our body when we are stressed and how does it affect our health?

When we experience stress, whether emotional, mental, or physical, the body initiates a rapid biological response known as the stress response. This is triggered by the hypothalamus, which sends signals to the pituitary gland to release ACTH, prompting the adrenal glands to produce stress hormones such as cortisol, adrenaline (epinephrine), and noradrenaline (norepinephrine).

These hormones mobilise energy and increase alertness to help us deal with a perceived threat. Physiologically, this results in increased blood sugar, elevated blood pressure, faster heart rate, and increased blood circulation to the brain and muscles. These are normal and useful in short bursts. However, when stress becomes chronic or uncontrolled, as is common in modern life, these responses cause harm. Long-term elevation of stress hormones disrupts hormonal balance, weakens the immune system, and contributes to adrenal fatigue. Prolonged stress accelerates ageing due to increased production of free radicals, which damage cells, DNA, and mitochondria. Stress also raises blood pressure and damages the lining of blood vessels, increasing the risk of heart attacks and strokes. Chronic stress is linked to obesity, diabetes, digestive disturbances, anxiety, depression, and autoimmune diseases.

Can stress deplete us of nutrients?

Elevated cortisol increases glutamate production, a process that generates free radicals. To neutralise these free radicals, the body relies heavily on antioxidant nutrients, including vitamins C, E, B complex, zinc, magnesium, selenium, and other protective compounds such as glutathione, coenzyme Q10, and alpha-lipoic acid. When stress is persistent, these nutrients are used up quicker than they can be replenished.

Recommended supplements include magnesium, essential for nerve function, mood balance, relaxation, and sleep, B complex, which supports energy, brain function, adrenal health, and mood, and ashwagandha, which helps balance cortisol, supports adrenal recovery, and reduces anxiety. Recommended interchangeably with rhodiola. Probiotics with beneficial strains such as *Lactobacillus helveticus* may regulate cortisol and improve mood. 5HTP supports serotonin production and Siberian ginseng supports energy, resilience, and stress adaptation.

What lifestyle factors can ease the stress effect?

Regular exercise, especially outdoors, helps lower cortisol, improve circulation, stabilise blood glucose, and enhance mood. Even walking significantly reduces stress markers.

A diet rich in whole plant foods improves hormone balance, supports the gut microbiome, and reduces inflammation. Reducing sugar, refined foods, and animal products can regulate blood pressure and improve adrenal and metabolic health. Hydration is essential for kidney and cardiovascular function, both of which are sensitive to stress. Caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, and excessive sugar exacerbate stress by overstimulating the adrenal glands and increasing cortisol. Eliminating or significantly reducing these substances supports long-term stress resilience.

Consistent sleep patterns, reduced screen time in the evening, and magnesium supplementation can significantly improve sleep quality, one of the most powerful tools for reducing stress hormones. Deep breathing, prayer, meditation, mindfulness, and relaxation exercises reduce sympathetic nervous system activation. These practices shift the body into parasympathetic (rest and digest) mode, lowering blood pressure and calming the brain.

Q What are the most important nutrients we should take to prepare for the onset of the hay fever season?

Keri Briggs recommended: Hay fever occurs seasonally, triggered by pollen. Symptoms include runny nose, sneezing, itching and congestion, watery, dry, or itchy eyes, coughing and disturbed sleep. The cause is an inappropriate immune response, and symptoms can occur at different times of year depending on the type of pollen.

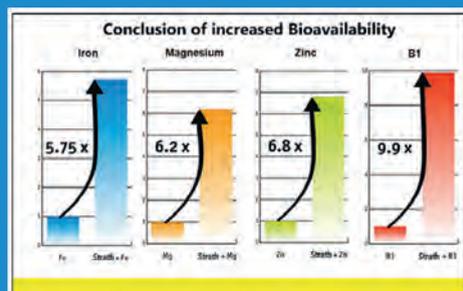
Foods which are high in histamine can make an existing bout of hay fever worse and avoiding these foods may be useful. High histamine foods include shellfish, processed meats, aged cheese, and alcohol. Vitamin C-rich foods such as citrus fruits and tomatoes can be useful for reducing symptoms. Onions, apples, and capers contain a flavonoid called quercetin, which reduces the release of histamine. Including spices such as turmeric and ginger can also help to reduce the irritation associated with hay fever.

Nutrients which support normal immune function, including vitamins C and D, iron, selenium, and zinc, can be helpful. Omega 3s, such as those found in oily fish, and fish and algal oils can also encourage the production of compounds which reduce inflammation. Using a probiotic supplement is recommended to maintain a diverse microbiome, as any disruption can make the immune cells overreactive and reduce excretion of allergens, increasing hay fever symptoms. Studies show that several strains of probiotic bacteria can be useful for reducing symptoms and medication use. Quercetin has been studied widely for its effects on inflammation and allergy. Studies using a level of 500mg have shown positive results on symptoms such as itching, sneezing and sleep, as well as improvements in quality-of-life scores.

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Joint SUPPORT GUIDE

Keep your joints in the best of health through the years with the help of *Natural Lifestyle's* holistic guide.

We often associate joint pain of the arthritic type with ageing, but that is far from the full story. Of course, getting older is a contributor, but there are so many other factors that can degrade our joints, leaving us in pain, with stiffness and feeling unable to move as we want to.

It's important to note this joint degradation can be accelerated through a poor diet, lacking in key joint nutrients, not moving enough or doing the right activity to support your flexible friends, and just living a generally poor-quality lifestyle. Prevention is, by far, the best approach, but ultimately you can still support your joints at any

time through some healthy changes.

Keri Briggs, Senior Brand Specialist at Lamberts, explained: "Musculoskeletal conditions, which can include arthritis and back pain, affect over 20 million people in the UK, with many more affected by shorter-term soft tissue injuries. Many joint issues have historically been considered a disease of wear and tear, caused by overloading the joints and dysfunctional movement. However, it is now widely accepted that inflammation plays a significant role in the development and progression of these issues."

Alice Bradshaw, Head of Nutrition Education and Information at Terranova, added: "Prevention plays a significant role in long-term joint comfort

and mobility. The same foundations that support overall wellbeing – balanced nutrition, regular movement, good hydration, and adequate rest – are also commonly associated with maintaining joint function."

Joint signs

Our body is clever and can tell us when something isn't quite right.

William Jordan, Nutrition Advisor at Viridian, explained: "Joint problems might show up in different ways. It might show up as swelling, inflammation, loss of motion, heat on the joint area, noises like clicking or grinding. It might be more difficult to bend or straighten the joint or



there might be more stiffness. Joint issues can get better or worse through the day or the year. Many people find joint pain gets worse in winter due to the colder weather and reduced vitamin D. Others find pain or stiffness is worse in the morning, which gets better through the day."

Alice continued: "Early signs of joint imbalance often appear gradually. People may notice stiffness first thing in the morning, mild swelling after activity, or a sense of creaking or reduced flexibility. Occasional discomfort during movement, difficulty gripping objects, or feeling less stable on stairs can be early indicators. These symptoms don't always signal a serious issue, but may suggest joints are under strain and could benefit from supportive lifestyle habits. Symptoms may fluctuate, with some days feeling easier than others. Even mild symptoms can affect daily tasks."

Focus on arthritis

There are a number of joint-related conditions, with arthritis being the most common.

Alice advised: "Arthritis is an umbrella term covering several types, including osteoarthritis, which is often associated with age-related changes, and autoimmune forms such as rheumatoid. Factors discussed in relation to arthritis include previous injuries, long-term mechanical stress, genetics, immune system activity, and lifestyle influences. Different forms of arthritis involve varying changes to joint tissues and structure."

Keri added: "Osteoarthritis (OA) is one of the most common musculoskeletal conditions in the UK and is characterised by stiffness, discomfort and a lack of mobility. Almost nine million people in the UK over the age of 45 have sought treatment for this painful condition, according to Arthritis UK. It occurs when the cartilage which sits in the joint space becomes degraded over time. An increasingly ageing population means cases of OA are becoming more common. Whilst the primary tissue involved is cartilage, other structures involved include synovium, ligaments and bones. Eventually, there is a complete loss of cartilage and associated bone deformities, such as spurs, can also develop."

We should also mention another type of arthritis, which has very different causes.

William explained: "Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune condition that causes inflammation and swelling in the joints. It affects around 400,000 people in the UK and women are more commonly affected. Although the exact cause is unknown, genetics are thought to play a role in the risk of developing the disease."

Prevention and protection

It's important we recognise what factors can lead to joint problems, and how you can protect them. Let's first look at the role of inflammation.

William advised: "Joint conditions are associated with long-term or chronic inflammation. Several things can cause this, from being overweight or obese and putting undue stress onto the joints, a Westernised or highly processed diet low in nutrients, or even overuse injuries, causing repeated bouts of inflammation."

Keri added: "Originally, OA was considered to develop due to wear and tear and dysfunctional movement of the joints, but more recently, studies have found inflammation plays a significant role. Increased inflammation can trigger or accelerate the breakdown of joint tissues such as collagen and cartilage. As cartilage in the joints, which acts as a cushion between the bones, has no blood vessels or nerves, it cannot repair itself. Therefore, as we age, damage to the joint tissues accumulates and worsens."

And what steps can be taken to manage inflammation?

Keri suggested: "The importance of a healthy diet cannot be underestimated for joint health, and this should focus on foods to reduce inflammation. A Mediterranean-style diet is a good basis for a joint healthy diet. It focuses on fruits and vegetables, foods such as nuts and seeds, which contain minerals and omega 3 and 6 fatty acids, olive oil and lean meats and oily fish, such as herring, mackerel, salmon, and sardines, which are also rich in omega 3 fats. Processed foods are avoided, and the emphasis is on the consumption of fresh, unprocessed, or minimally processed foods which are naturally much lower in sugar, salt and trans and hydrogenated fats. This diet is high in foods which reduce inflammation such as omega 3 fatty acids and herbs and spices and lower in added sugars, red meat and carbonated beverages, which are associated with inflammation."

Alice went on: "Many people choose diets rich in colourful plant foods, omega 3 fats, herbs and spices such as ginger and turmeric, and minimally processed ingredients as part of general wellbeing. Managing stress, prioritising sleep, and staying physically active are also widely recognised as important components of a healthy lifestyle."

Wendy Atkinson, founder of the hyaluronic acid brand, Syno-Vital, added:

"Drinking plenty of water is essential and where possible, avoid certain foods, known as deadly nightshade foods such as potatoes, tomatoes and peppers, as these have higher level of alkaloids which are one of the root causes to inflammation."

Move more

Staying active is one of the most important steps to look after your joints, both as a preventive measure and if you do suffer with problems.

William explained: "Regular activity that is low impact can build muscle around the joints and protect them from injury. Activities such as walking, swimming, cycling and strength training can help support joints and build muscle around them to increase stability and act as a protective brace."

Keri added: "Gentle exercise is recommended for those with joint issues and back pain, to help strengthen and support the affected areas. Many people choose low impact activities such as swimming and avoid higher impact such as running. However, most evidence suggests running is good for joint health as long as precautions are taken. These include wearing well fitted, suitable speciality footwear, assessing form and correcting any issues and running on softer surfaces where possible."

Symptom relief

If you are suffering with joint issues, you might find certain supplements can help.

William advised: "Vitamin C should be considered as it may help support joint and bone health, as well as reducing inflammation and oxidative stress. A high-quality fish oil, or cold pressed seed oil providing omega 3 is key for managing inflammation markers. As the Western diet is generally high in omega 6, omega 3 supplementation can help support the balance of the ratio of omega 3 to 6 and manage systemic inflammation. Boswellia has been reported to reduce pain and stiffness and improve joint mobility in osteoarthritis, which is thought to be a result of its anti-inflammatory effects."

"Beneficial bacteria, such as *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*, can support joint health. This bacterium helps reduce inflammation, and human clinical trials have found it can reduce inflammation in joints and relieve pain. Black seed oil has been shown to reduce inflammation and improve joint function. White willow bark is often called 'herbal aspirin' as it is chemically similar to the medication."

Keri highlighted glucosamine: "This is an amino sugar found in most body tissues and in the highest concentration in cartilage. It is needed for the production of compounds called glucosaminoglycans (GAGs), which are found in cartilage, synovial fluid and discs in the back. Studies comparing glucosamine sulphate to ibuprofen have found it to be comparable or better at relieving knee pain. Chondroitin (and its plant-based equivalent, Phytodroitin) and MSM are believed to have similar roles to glucosamine as chondroitin is a GAG and MSM is involved in the production of GAGs. Both have been shown to reduce symptoms of OA, and a 2017 study showed glucosamine, chondroitin and MSM worked better than the combination of glucosamine and chondroitin and a placebo. Ginger has been shown to reduce inflammation, and rosehip and quercetin reduce inflammation."

And don't forget hyaluronic acid (HA), Wendy explained: "HA is a double-bonded molecule made up of acetyl-glucosamine and D-glucuronic acid, which is a key component of the synovial fluid of the joints. It keeps the synovial fluid viscous, providing a cushion around our joints. When joints are damaged, the loss of synovial fluid makes them stiff and painful, and bone rubs on bone. By supplementing with HA, this miracle molecule has the ability to get into this critical space within the joint capsules, and produces synovial fluid, which keeps our joints mobile and moveable."

"The best way to top up HA can be aided by magnesium-rich foods, which help absorption of HA, green leafy vegetables, and sweet potatoes, one of the richest sources. Supplementation is the best way, in particular after the age of 50, as we lose 50 per cent of HA per day after this age. A high molecular weight HA is better absorbed and preferably in liquid form, taken with plenty of water, as HA attaches itself to and expands in water, and this transports it to where it needs to be within the joints and the body."



Natural Lifestyle Top Picks

Regenerative Omegas® - Omegas that don't cost the Earth

Regenerative Omegas® Plant-Based Omega 3-6-9 supplement is a sustainable, vegan-friendly source of essential fatty acids derived from Ahiflower® seed oil. Grown using regenerative agriculture, this fish-free oil is rich in Omega-3, Omega-6 and Omega-9, supporting optimal wellness while promoting health and sustainability. We're saving 550,000 anchovies one acre at a time. Each bottle is fully traceable from soil to oil, ensuring a transparent and eco-conscious choice for your omega needs. Learn more: www.regenerativeomegas.co.uk



NutraJoint – Joint Health Tea

NutraJoint® by NutraTea® is a powerful herbal tea blend designed to help keep you moving with ease. Expertly developed by pharmacists and nutritionists, it supports joint flexibility and overall joint health. This unique infusion contains 100% active botanicals that have been sustainably sourced, including Turmeric, Green Tea, and Piperine to help protect joints and support healthy bones. Each biodegradable tea bag contains 2 grams of pure herbs, completely free-from flavourings, oils, and filler herbs, making them perfect for multiple brews throughout the day. NutraJoint is a convenient and natural way to care for your joints, so you can stay active and comfortable every day. www.nutraatea.co.uk



Feel Good From the Inside Out

Your joints do a lot for you. Taka Turmeric Joint Care Capsules are a little daily thank you. Every ingredient is 100% certified organic, from the golden turmeric at the heart of everything we do, to ginger, moringa leaf, white willow bark and natural Vitamin D. Black pepper extract helps your body absorb every bit of goodness. Vegan-friendly, no fillers, no fuss. For an extra golden boost, pair with our Turmeric Ginger Lemon Tea and make it a morning ritual worth looking forward to. Available at independent health stores and online at takaturmeric.com



NaturesPlus BioAdvanced Joint Complex

Move freely. Live fully. Enjoying life to the fullest means being able to move with ease and confidence — but everyday wear and tear, lifestyle factors, and ageing can all affect joint comfort. That's why BioAdvanced Joint Complex is expertly formulated with a powerful blend of herbs and nutrients to nourish, protect, and support your body. This advanced formula features ApresFlex® (Boswellia serrata gum resin extract) and Phytodroitin® (vegan chondroitin) combined with vitamin C and manganese, plus bromelain, glucosamine, hyaluronic acid, and the traditionally used botanicals ginger, tart cherry, and turmeric. Together, these targeted ingredients work in synergy to deliver a unique and highly effective formula. www.naturesplus.co.uk - £29.95

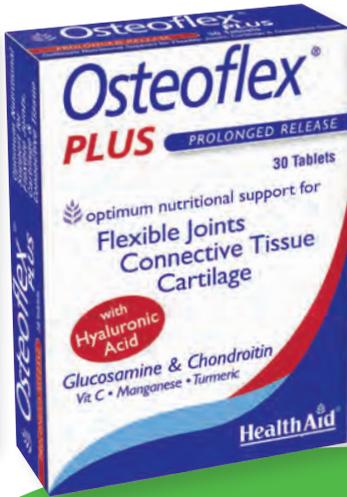


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How to choose a MULTIVITAMIN

There are so many multivitamins on the shelves that it can be hard to know what to is right for you – here, we bring you the essential advice to help make an informed choice.

Multivitamins are sometimes viewed as broad or general supplements, yet when well formulated, they can play a valuable role in supporting overall nutritional intake.

The human body is complex and relies on a wide range of vitamins and minerals that work together to contribute to normal functions, rather than acting in isolation. For this reason, focusing on a single nutrient is often not sufficient to support overall wellbeing.

Multiple benefits

A multivitamin can help provide a nutritional foundation, particularly during periods when we may feel run down or experience increased physical or mental demands, such as busy work schedules, long days, or family life.

Nutrients such as complete B complex, vitamins C and D, and minerals including zinc and chromium, contribute to normal energy-yielding metabolism, immune system function, and nervous system function, making adequate intake important as part of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle. Additions such as digestive enzymes and beneficial flora, antioxidant-rich foods and herbs, or a full amino acid spectrum, can be very helpful and valuable additions to feel a difference.

Even with a healthy, balanced diet, some individuals may benefit from an occasional nutritional top-up. As nutritional needs can change over time, it may be appropriate to review and adjust supplement choices for different situations. The most effective

option is often one that balances quality, formulation, suitability, and value for money. Once an appropriate multivitamin is found, it can become a useful and supportive addition to a long-term health routine.

Questions over quality

Beyond the range of nutrients included, it is also important to consider the quality of ingredients, nutrient forms and dosages in a multivitamin. Some forms of vitamins and minerals may be more readily absorbed or better tolerated by certain individuals. Products providing nutrients at or around the Nutrient Reference Values (NRVs) can help contribute to daily requirements, particularly where dietary intake alone may not consistently meet nutritional needs.

Practical considerations are also key when choosing a multivitamin. These include the number of capsules or tablets required per day, whether liquid or powder formats are preferred, and whether the product aligns with personal choices such as vegetarian or vegan, as well as the use of organic ingredients where possible.

A multivitamin should take a whole-body approach, providing meaningful levels of nutrients rather than simply offering long ingredient lists. At different times, you may prefer a more comprehensive formulation or one with higher levels of selected nutrients, depending on your current nutritional needs and dietary intake.

Higher strength or higher price does not always indicate a better product. Choosing the most suitable option involves understanding your own requirements and selecting a formulation that supports the body's normal functions during different life stages or periods of increased demand.

READER GIVEAWAY

Life is an adventure, and on your journey, you want to make sure you experience peak wellbeing. NaturesPlus Her and His Journey is a convenient, comprehensive, 'one tablet and done' daily multi to meet – and exceed – your basic daily requirements! His and Her Journey by NaturesPlus offer a full vitamin and mineral range with activated forms, digestive enzymes and friendly flora, and a range of complementing botanicals looking at specific women and men needs. These multivitamins are vegan, gluten free and non-GMO. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of six bundles, each comprising His and Her Journey. See opposite page to enter.



NATURAL LIFESTYLE Giveaways

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



Pharma Nord SelenoPrecise
Selenium is such an important nutrient for good health, contributing to immunity, metabolism and even our hair and nails. Unfortunately, our foods may not contain the same amount of selenium as they did years ago. SelenoPrecise is an evidence-based organic selenium product and one of the most rigorously tested selenium supplements on the market. SelenoPrecise has the highest recorded bioavailability of selenium for an effective product. In the last 35 years, it has changed the lives of millions of people in more than 45 countries worldwide. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of five packs of SelenoPrecise 100mcg (60 tablets).

FAIR SQUARED REUSABLE COSMETIC PADS

Revolutionise your beauty routine with Fair Squared Reusable Cosmetic Pads, the ultimate zero-waste alternative to disposables. Each pack features seven pads crafted from 100 per cent GOTS-certified organic cotton, ensuring a chemical-free, hypoallergenic experience for even the most sensitive skin. These durable, machine-washable pads effortlessly remove make-up and apply toner, offering a sustainable, eco-friendly solution that protects both your complexion and the planet. *Natural Lifestyle* has 10 packs to give away.



Pure Encapsulations Magnesium (glycinate)

Natural Lifestyle has teamed up with Pure Encapsulations to offer readers the chance of winning one of five pots of Magnesium (glycinate) bioavailable magnesium chelate for sensitive individuals. Well tolerated and highly bioavailable magnesium glycinate provides 120mg of magnesium per capsule to help replenish low levels. Magnesium contributes to normal functioning of the nervous system and psychological function, to normal energy-yielding metabolism and the reduction of tiredness and fatigue, to normal muscle function and the maintenance of normal bones and teeth, and to electrolyte balance.



REVIVE ACTIVE IRON COMPLEX

Widely recognised as a key component of maintaining optimum health, getting a good level of iron from your diet can be tricky. Revive Active's new Iron Complex features eight active ingredients that combat the issues associated with iron absorption, providing 20mg of highly absorbable forms of iron, that are also gentle on the stomach. Suitable from age 14 and over, Iron Complex supports menstruation to pregnancy, those low in iron with absorption issues and those who are particularly physically active. Iron Complex is also vegan approved. We have five to give away.



Pukka Teas bundle

Ease into sleep with Pukka's calming Night Time teas, blended with chamomile and lavender to help you feel relaxed, with juicy blackcurrants and blackberry adding a nourishing finish to the Night Time Berry teas. Delight your digestion with cooling Three Mint and warming Three Ginger teas, traditionally known to help maintain normal digestion. Each homecompostable tea bag is packed with essential oils and high quality organic ingredients, naturally caffeine free and ethically sourced. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one bundle, comprising both the sleep collection and the digest collection.



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, Hudson's Farm, Fieldgate Lane, Ugley Green, Bishop's Stortford CM22 6HJ. Closing date: April 1, 2026 Or you can enter online – visit www.mynaturallifestyle.com

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Mindful EATING

Take inspiration from the new cookbook, *The Mindful Table*, for recipes and affirmations to support intuitive, seasonal eating.

Feel-good fuel bars

We need to fill our cup so that it can overflow into the world, because if we are drained and depleted, everyone loses! Nourishing your mind, body, and soul has a tremendous effect on how you interact with everyone you encounter during your day. These feel-good bars are super addictive, delicious, and nourishing, and perfect for a meal on the go.

Makes 12 to 15 bars

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tsp flaxseed meal
- 1 tbsp (15ml) water
- 2tbsp (24g) raw extra-virgin coconut oil, divided
- 192g gluten-free oats
- 67g dried goji berries (or your favourite dried fruit)
- 80ml brown-rice syrup
- 60ml unsweetened almond milk
- 40g hemp protein powder
- 3tbsp (30g) hemp hearts
- 2tbsp (32g) cashew butter
- 3tbsp (19g) halved walnuts
- 3tbsp (13g) sliced almonds
- 3tbsp (13g) coconut flakes
- 3tbsp (26g) chopped raw unsalted cashew nuts
- 3tbsp (12g) pumpkin seeds
- 3tbsp (25g) sunflower seeds
- 4oz (112g) vegan sugar-free chocolate chips

METHOD:

- To make the flax 'egg', mix together the flaxseed and water in a small bowl and set aside for five minutes, until thickened.
- Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C, or gas mark 7). Grease a medium baking pan with 1tbsp (12g) coconut oil.
- In a large bowl, combine the flax 'egg' and remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly, until it is clumpy and granola like in texture. Pour onto the baking pan and spread evenly.
- Bake in the oven for five to 10 minutes, or until the edges begin to toast (keep an eye on them and be sure they do not brown). Set aside to cool. Use a sharp knife or pizza cutter to cut the granola into 12 to 15 squares.



BATH-TIME MEDITATION

Draw a hot bath with your favourite bath oils or salts. Light some candles and turn down the lights. Relax into the warm water, place hands over your heart centre, and close your eyes. Turn your focus to your breath and heart space. Take long, deep breaths and allow any thoughts that come up to float by, returning focus inward. Ask your body, how can I better take care of you? Honour what you hear, and if nothing comes up, keep your attention at your heart centre and breath. When you are ready to close the meditation, take a deep breath in and hold it, feeling loving energy from your heart centre circulate, and release.



A MEDITATION FOR SELF-FORGIVENESS

You can do this in a cross-legged seat with palms facing up or whenever you need to forgive and reset. Take a deep breath in and out. On your inhale, breathe in love, and on exhale, release guilt or shame. Repeat for one to three minutes. Silently say: I forgive myself for what I have done and choose to do better. I choose to begin again with a clean slate. Take a deep breath in and hold it, filling yourself up with love and forgiveness, exhale, and relax.



Spicy squash soup

How often do we let one little mistake send us off the deep end? When we are having trouble processing our feelings, we may also have trouble with our digestion. This soothing soup's little kick of spice will help you keep moving forward!

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 2tbsp (24g) raw extra-virgin coconut oil
- 1 acorn squash, halved lengthwise and seeded (a smaller butternut squash works as well)
- 2 red peppers, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 2tbsp (30ml) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 480ml vegetable broth
- ½ tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp ground coriander
- ½ tsp curry powder
- ½ tsp paprika
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

METHOD:

- Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C, or gas mark 7). Grease two medium baking sheets with coconut oil.
- Slice 1 in (2.5cm) from the bottom of each acorn squash so that they sit flat on a prepared baking sheet. Scatter the peppers on the other baking sheet. Roast both for 20 minutes, until the squash has softened and the peppers get colour. Set aside.
- Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add the onions and sauté for five minutes until softened, then add the garlic and sauté for another minute. Transfer the mixture to a high-speed blender or food processor and then add the vegetable broth and spices.
- Once the squashes are cool enough to handle, trim off the skin from each and cut both into chunks. Add the squash and peppers to the blender or food processor and purée until smooth and creamy.
- Season with salt and pepper, transfer the soup to a saucepan, and heat over medium heat until warmed through. Serve.



Barely baked brownies

Nothing reminds me more of the emotional disasters that have resulted from being too attached to something than indulging in a tray of brownies! Well, now you can eat these healthier brownies from a place of joy.

Makes 8

INGREDIENTS:

- 2tsp flaxseed meal
- 2tbsp (30ml) water
- 1tbsp (12g) raw extra-virgin coconut oil, for greasing
- 197g gluten-free 1-to-1 flour
- 244g unsweetened applesauce
- 224g vegan sugar-free chocolate chips
- 65g unsweetened cocoa powder
- 120ml brown-rice syrup (or maple syrup)
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp baking soda
- Chopped walnuts, to garnish
- Berries, to garnish

METHOD:

- To make the flax 'egg', mix together the flaxseed and water in a small bowl and set aside for five minutes, until thickened.
- Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C, or gas mark 5) and grease an 8in (20cm) baking dish with coconut oil.
- In a medium mixing bowl, combine all of the remaining ingredients (except the walnuts and berries) and flax 'egg' until thoroughly mixed and pour the batter into the prepared baking dish.
- Bake for 15 to 20 minutes and then remove to cool. Cook for less time if you really want them 'barely baked'.
- Garnish with chopped walnuts or fresh berries.



BUTTERFLY RECALIBRATION MEDITATION

This helps shift your nervous system from fight-or-flight to safe, peaceful, and trusting in the unfolding of life. Sit in a chair, feet on the floor, arms crossed over your chest, palms against the front of the opposite arm. Close your eyes and bring to mind a situation where you feel impatient, frustrated, or disappointed. Begin tapping or 'butterflying' palms of your hands, alternating 'wing flaps' of each hand, as you breathe. Continue for three to five minutes or until you feel relaxed. Repeat this affirmation: Everything in my life is happening for me. It is leading me to my greatest desires. I am safe to trust the process. Repeat in your head while holding the situation until it feels true in your body. Open your eyes and shake out your hands to close.

Lentil shepherd's pie

Who doesn't love a nice hearty dish, especially in the winter, that makes you feel like you are wrapped in a blanket? I like making this dish for friends on a Sunday and eating the leftovers all week for lunch.

Makes 8 servings

INGREDIENTS:

FILLING:

- 2tbsp (30ml) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 white onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic
- 264g dried green lentils
- 960ml mushroom stock
- 3 sprigs of rosemary, plus extra to garnish
- Coconut oil cooking spray, for greasing
- 61g thinly sliced and halved carrots
- 73g peas
- 34g baby kale
- 41g corn kernels
- 2tbsp (30ml) arrowroot powder (optional)
- Salt, to taste

TOPPING:

- 5 Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and sliced, salt, to taste
- 2tbsp (30ml) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 white onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 56g vegan butter
- 60g unsweetened almond milk
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

METHOD:

- To make the filling, heat the oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add the onions and sauté for five minutes until softened, then add the garlic and sauté for another minute. Add the lentils, mushroom stock, and rosemary. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 35 minutes.
- To make the topping, put the potatoes in a large saucepan, cover with water, and add salt. Bring to a gentle boil over medium-high heat, then cover and cook for 20 minutes, or until the potatoes have softened. Drain and set aside.
- Heat the oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté for five minutes, until softened, then add the garlic and sauté for another minute.
- Transfer the potatoes, onion mixture, vegan butter, and almond milk to a blender or food processor. Pulse until just combined. Season with salt and pepper.
- Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C, or gas mark 7). Lightly grease a round 2L baking dish.
- Add the carrots, peas, baby kale, and corn to the frying pan of lentils and cook for another five to 10 minutes, until the carrots are tender. Add the arrowroot powder to thicken the mixture, if desired. Remove the sprigs of rosemary, season with salt, and transfer the mixture to the baking dish.
- Scoop the mashed potato topping over the lentil mixture until it's entirely covered. Bake in the oven for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the potatoes start to brown. Garnish with chopped rosemary and serve.



The Mindful Table, Recipes & Affirmations for Intuitive, Seasonal Eating, by Cassandra Bodzak. Published by Rockpoint.



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