

your healthy living

OCTOBER 2021
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magazine

**SPECIAL
FEATURE**
**The A to Z
of healthy
living**

Switch up your skincare
for the new season

**Soothe your
menopause
symptoms –
naturally**

Natural immune
boosters to stay
fighting fit

**Healthy 'fakeaway'
recipes to make
at home**

**Gizzi
Erskine**

*"My passion for
sustainable cooking"*



The expert guide to living sustainably, in store advice on kitchen cupboard essentials, fantastic giveaway prizes, plus all the latest news from the world of natural health and wellbeing

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Images of Gizzi Erskine © Lateef Okunnu @Lateefphotography

Hello...

This issue we have a brand new feature in the form of the A to Z of healthy living. It's a handy guide full of tips and tricks for how to live a naturally healthier life, along with some great product recommendations that you can find in your local independent health store. Turn to page 22 to find out more.

Our celebrity interview this month is with chef and award-winning food writer Gizzi Erskine who talks to us about her food philosophy and her passion for sustainable cooking and eating. This theme is continued on page 14 with our expert guide to living sustainably in every aspect of your life courtesy of Nisha Ravat.

Our other features include a look at some interesting facts and stats about the immune system, plus some expert advice on how to tackle the symptoms of the menopause naturally. Our in-store expert this month, Izzy Hoden from Ganesha Wholefoods in Devon, talks us through her top picks for kitchen cupboard essentials, while our recipe pages include some delicious and healthy alternatives to takeaways. Why not give them a try this weekend?

Wishing you good health.

Liz Liz Parry | Your Editor

We're social!

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THE TEAM

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Plant-based diet may reduce risk and severity of Covid-19

A healthy plant-based diet is linked to a lower risk of getting Covid-19, a new study has revealed. The study, led by researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital in the US, also showed that a plant-based diet was linked with a lower risk of experiencing severe symptoms in people who were diagnosed with Covid-19.

Furthermore, there was a synergistic relationship between poor diet and increased socioeconomic deprivation with Covid-19 risk that was higher than the sum of the risk associated with each factor alone.

The researchers examined data from 592,571 participants between March and December 2020. The participants' diets were assessed using a scoring system that emphasised healthy plant foods such as fruits and vegetables. During follow-up, 31,831 participants



developed Covid-19. Compared with individuals in the lowest quartile of the diet score, those in the highest quartile had a 9 per cent lower risk of developing Covid-19 and a 41 per cent lower risk of developing severe Covid-19.

The co-senior author of the study, Andrew Chan, MD, MPH, said: "Although we cannot emphasise enough the importance of getting vaccinated and wearing a mask in crowded indoor settings, our study suggests that individuals can also potentially reduce their risk of getting Covid-19 or having poor outcomes by paying attention to their diet."

The results were published in the journal *Gut*.



Read more health news at www.yourhealthyliving.co.uk

24%

of consumers make a conscious effort to buy organic produce.

Source: Wren Kitchens

Blackcurrant extract can reduce muscle soreness after exercise, study shows

A new study shows that New Zealand blackcurrant extract can reduce muscle soreness by half in recreational exercisers undertaking strenuous exercise. The research showed that the anthocyanin-

rich blackcurrant supplement, CurraNZ®, provided a "stark" improvement to functional recovery when taken before and after a damaging bout of bicep curl exercises. The University of Surrey study was performed in men and women who were unaccustomed to exercise involving strength training to build muscle, otherwise known as "resistance" training. The same study's clinical data demonstrated three times faster recovery of muscle strength and reduced muscle soreness – great news for those of us who like to keep active, such as gym-goers and individuals looking to take up exercise. The findings were published in *Nutrients*.



DID YOU KNOW?

Adults who participate in daily physical exercise have a 20 to 30 per cent less risk of experiencing mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, PTSD and ADHD. And, research has shown that fitness fans who enjoy a heart rate increasing session lower their risk of cognitive decline by 38 per cent compared to their inactive friends.



AFTER MORE HEALTHY NEWS?

Head over and follow @YHLmag on social for all the latest news and healthy chat.



A RANGE OF GOODIES

Choose your own prize!

Choose your own prize and select from a range of CBD products (oil and balm) and/or AbsorbX, the liquid liposomal range which includes a 4-in-1 immune support formula, plus liposomal vitamin C, vitamin D3/K2, glutathione and B12. **One winner's prize of £100**, five runners-up prizes of £50, plus 100 vouchers worth £10 up for grabs.

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NATURAL VITAMIN C

Immune system support for kids

A.Vogel's Nature-C For Kids is packed with rich, naturally occurring, easily absorbed vitamin C from six real fruits. These tablets come in a tasty chewable form, making it easy to support your kids' immune system on the go! Suitable for children aged 4+. Eight lucky readers will each receive a pack of Nature-C for Kids, worth £6.40 each.

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HELPS RELAXATION

Ancient magnesium product range

It's your chance to win Good Health Naturally's Ancient Magnesium Oil Ultra topical spray and Ancient Magnesium Bath Flakes Ultra! The Ancient Magnesium range provides ultra-pure Zechstein Magnesium minerals to support optimal daily magnesium intake, relaxation benefits, along with bone health and nervous system support. **Five lucky readers** will win both products, worth a total of £28.94.

DRAW CODE: YHL-GHN-1021



CALMING MAGNESIUM

A top-notch women's supplement

Winner of Best Women's Product, MAG365 BF checks all the boxes for a top-notch women's supplement. Not only does it contain your daily dose of calming magnesium, but it also has nutrients that support hormonal balance, PMS, menopause, healthy ageing and more. Five winners will receive a tub of MAG365 BF worth £37.95.

DRAW CODE: YHL-MAG-1021

WIN!

FREE PRIZE DRAWS

££££s worth of fantastic health products to be given away this month.
Enter the free draws today!

PLANT-BASED FORMULAS

Sustainable cleaning essentials

Ecozone are a family-owned British brand that have been innovating eco-friendly products for over 20 years now. One lucky reader will win a bundle of sustainable cleaning products from Ecozone, **worth £50!** This bundle includes their Allergy UK-approved washing up liquid, tallow-free fabric conditioner and other cruelty-free favourites, all made from plant-based ingredients.

DRAW CODE: YHL-ECOZONE-1021



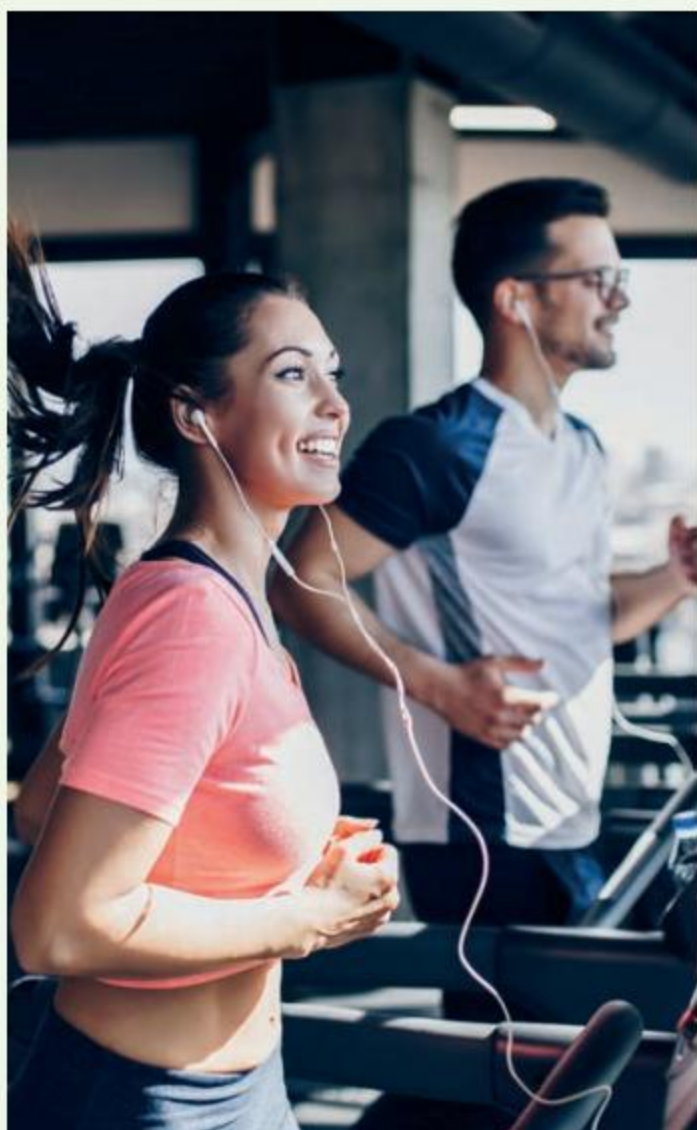
HOW TO ENTER CLOSING DATE: 30 November 2021

WEB Just visit www.yourhealthyliving.co.uk and enter your details and the Free Draw Code (eg YHL-GHN-1021)

EMAIL Or email win@jfnproductions.co.uk with the Free Draw Code (eg YHL-GHN-1021) in the email subject box.

POST Or post your name and address with the Free Draw Code (eg YHL-GHN-1021) to: Reader Offers, Your Healthy Living, JFN Productions, Unit G2, Blois Meadow Business Centre, Steeple Bumpstead, Essex, CB9 7BN. (Entries on postcards or sealed envelopes only please.) Also, please note that you can enter multiple giveaways on one postcard.

Your Healthy Living Prize Draw Terms & Conditions You October enter more than one draw but there is a maximum of one entry per person per prize. Prizes can only be dispatched to residential addresses within the UK. Winners are selected at random from all entries received at the closing date. By entering a prize draw you agree to us keeping your details on our database and that these details October be utilised by companies connected to JFN Productions and companies involved in these offers. If you do not wish us to retain your details for contact about news and offers, please select 'no offers' online or write 'no offers' at the top of your email or postcard. Prizes are not for resale. For full terms and conditions visit www.yourhealthyliving.co.uk



Researchers discover most effective way to improve fitness

Researchers have discovered that moderate-to-vigorous physical exercise is the most effective way to improve fitness, as opposed to simply walking or reducing time spent sedentary.

The team from Boston University School of Medicine studied approximately 2,000 participants who underwent exercise tests to measure their physical fitness. The participants wore devices that measure frequency and intensity of movement. These were worn for one week around the time of the study and approximately eight years earlier.

The researchers found that dedicated exercise (moderate-to-vigorous physical activity) was the most efficient way of improving fitness. Specifically, exercise was three times more efficient than walking alone and more than 14 times more efficient than reducing the time spent sedentary. Additionally, they found that the greater time spent exercising and higher steps per day could partially offset the negative effects of being sedentary in terms of physical fitness. The findings appear online in the *European Heart Journal*.

Men are more open about their medical conditions than women, study reveals

Although the majority of men are still not confident talking about their health, new research reveals that men are actually more open than women when it comes to talking about their existing medical conditions.

A survey of just over 2,000 UK adults has revealed that 40 per cent of men are open with others about their conditions, compared to only 25 per cent of women. In addition, the research by medical ID charity MedicAlert found that men feel less worried, uncomfortable, or stressed when talking about new or pre-existing conditions than women, showing that positive change is happening, and some feel more comfortable speaking up.

Whilst this is great news, it does mean that 60 per cent of men with underlying conditions are still struggling to open up to others about their health. The research reveals 24 per cent don't like to explain their condition to every person they meet, while 16 per cent don't discuss their health as they want to ease the burden on friends and family.

Editor's Choice

your **healthy**living



Dyeing hair at home has never been quicker or easier with this month's Editor's Choice product, the BioKap range of permanent dyes. Carefully developed with organic Argan oil and Tricorepair complex to protect your hair and scalp, the range of 16 shades is free from PPD, ammonia, resorcin and fragrance to ensure suitability for even the most sensitive scalps. With a development time of just 10 minutes, you can maintain great hair colour even with a hectic lifestyle!

BOOK SHELF

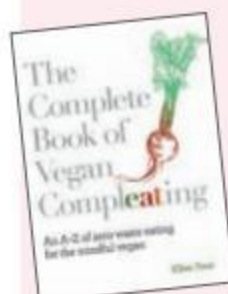
We take a look at some of the newest natural health reads



Wake Up to Sleep: 5 Powerful Practices to Transform Stress and Trauma for Peaceful Sleep and Mindful Dreams

by Charlie Morley (Hay House £10.99)

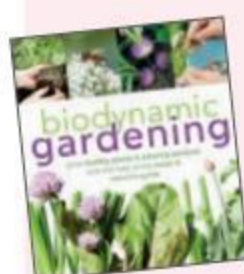
In this practical five-part book the author shows us how to combat the harmful effects of stress and trauma to achieve restful sleep and healing dreams. Using breath and body-work practices alongside deep relaxation techniques, this book will help you optimise the time you spend dreaming and show you how to sleep better and wake up healthier.



The Complete Book of Vegan Completing: An A-Z of Zero-Waste Eating For the Mindful Vegan

by Ellen Tout (£14.99, Watkins Publishing)

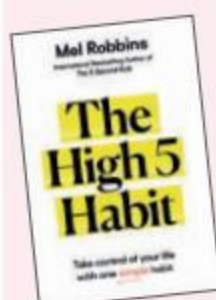
'Completing' is completely eating every part of a fruit or vegetable. In this comprehensive guide, the author explains how plant-based diets are a wonderful way to protect the planet, but fruits and vegetables still have carbon footprints, and often the parts we throw away or compost are the most nutritious and delicious bits.



Biodynamic Gardening

by Monty Waldin (£12.95, DK and Weleda)

The biodynamic approach takes organic gardening to the next level, being mindful of the natural cycles of the moon and other planets. This co-publication by DK and Weleda features an inspirational guide to growing veg, fruit and ornamental plants. Topics covered include lunar charts, composting, rich and healthy soil, organically controlling pests and more.



The High 5 Habit: Take Control of Your Life with One Simple Habit

by Mel Robbins (£15.99, Hay House UK)

The High 5 Habit reveals how leading personal development expert Mel Robbins discovered a powerful way to gain two things almost everyone lacks in their lives: self-confidence and self-love. The book details her year-long research project and holistic approach to life which promises to change your confidence, your mindset and your behaviour.

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Recovery during sleep is linked to eating behaviour and diet

Good sleep-time recovery is associated with a healthy diet and healthy eating habits, as well as with lower consumption of alcohol, according to a new study.

Researchers from the University of Eastern Finland carried out a study involving 252 participants who were described as "psychologically distressed" and "overweight". The researchers recorded the participants' alcohol consumption, the quality of their diets and also their eating behaviour, such as eating according to hunger and satiety cues. The participants' sleep-time recovery was measured via their sleep-time heart rate variability over three consecutive nights.

According to the findings, better physiological recovery was

associated with a healthier diet and lower alcohol consumption, and possibly also with eating habits, especially factors affecting our decision to eat. Participants with a good stress balance reported better overall diet quality, higher fibre intake, stronger dietary self-control and lower alcohol consumption than those with a poorer stress balance. The results were published in the *Journal of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology*.



Vitamin D deficiency highlighted in UK's Black population

According to a new study, over 75 per cent of the UK's Black population are likely to be deficient in vitamin D. The study was conducted by vitamin company Vitl and involved 2,500 participants from the UK's Black population. Of those respondents who were recognised as high risk, common symptoms included getting sick frequently (24 per cent) and feeling tired a lot of the time (22 cent).

"Whilst weight and time spent in direct sunlight are both factors that can affect vitamin D levels, research has shown that skin colour can play a part too" says Roxane Bakker, Registered Dietitian and Head of Nutrition at Vitl. "Our skin contains melanin, which is the pigment that gives our skin its colour. It's been found over years

of published studies that individuals who have more melanin, and therefore a darker skin pigmentation, are more likely to be deficient in vitamin D. This is because having more melanin reduces your body's ability to synthesise vitamin D from the sun, resulting in lower levels."

Roxane adds: "Although vitamin D can be found in sources of our food (such as oily fish, dairy products) as well as exposure from direct sunlight, here in the UK, we don't tend to see all that much sun, making it really difficult particularly in the winter to get the required daily dose of vitamin D. A convenient and easy solution is supplementing alongside your diet and sun exposure. This way you'll be able to meet your recommended vitamin D intake."



New research reveals confusion about healthy eating



Half of Brits say they are "confused" about healthy eating, according to a new study of 2,000 adults. The research found that 59 per cent struggle when it comes to knowing which foods are good or bad for you. Similarly, 48 per cent aren't sure what a balanced diet actually is – and as a result, may not be eating everything they need.

Many of those polled said they don't know which foods are a good source of protein (48 per cent), of healthy fats (56 per cent) or of complex carbohydrates (61 per cent).

The research, which was commissioned by Onken Yogurt, also revealed that many respondents confessed to relying on old wives' tales like "carrots help you see in the dark" and "an apple a day keeps the doctor away".

Nutritionist Lily Soutter says: "Many of us rely on what we remember from school when it comes to nutrition but we're learning new things all the time about what different foods do for our health, such as the benefit of fermented foods to our gut and immune system. Whilst some of what's passed down over generations is super advice, some of it isn't."

DID YOU KNOW?



As we age our skin starts to lose key lipids, reducing the skin's ability to lock in moisture. Plant-sourced collagen-forming lipids called Ceramides are a new anti-ageing ingredient. Clinically researched Ceramides are proven to improve skin moisturisation, reduce wrinkles and increase skin elasticity in just 15 days. This helps the skin to stay more hydrated and plump.



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Tell me more! Dormeasan® Valerian-Hops oral drops is a traditional herbal medicinal product for use in the temporary relief of sleep disturbances caused by the symptoms of mild anxiety, exclusively based upon long-standing use as a traditional remedy. Always read the leaflet.

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Available from? Independent health food stores. Visit www.avogel.co.uk



Did you know that 50 per cent of people may have vitamin D stored in their bodies but are unable to utilise it? This is because vitamin D relies on other nutrients for proper absorption in the body.

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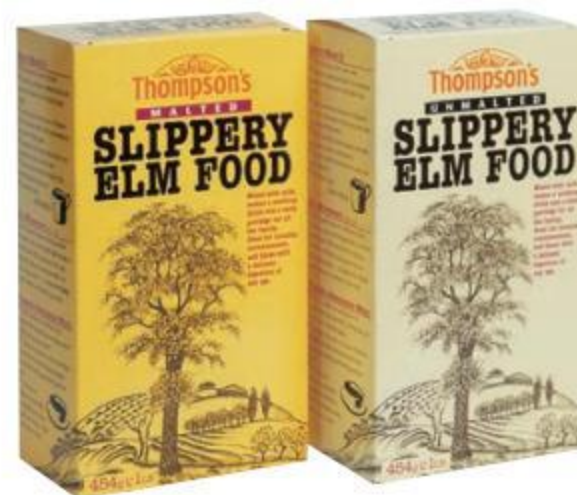
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Why should I try it? Clinically trialled **Pro Collagen** showed anti-ageing results in just 15 days when taking one capsule per day. It also includes colloidal silica, acerola berry and vitamin C to maintain skin health and support collagen formulation, naturally.

How much? £29.95 for 30 capsules.

Available from? Independent health food stores. Visit www.qsilica.com

“My passion for sustainable cooking”

Images © Lateef Okunnu @Lateef.photography

Chef and award-winning food writer **Gizzi Erskine** talks to *Your Healthy Living* about her food philosophy and her passion for sustainable cooking

Q How would you describe your food philosophy?

Gizzi: I want to know that the food I am consuming and working with, both professionally and domestically, gives back to the environment, whether it be regenerative agriculture, biofuels or using natural materials within all parts of the cookery process. When it comes to my style of cooking, I'm influenced by modern technique, world flavours and the highest welfare, confidently and regeneratively grown produce I can find.

Q Last year you published the book *Restore: a modern guide to sustainable eating*. Can you tell us a bit about this and why sustainability is a passion of yours?

Gizzi: I think at this stage you would have to be quite ignorant to not be aware of the impending global climate and environmental crisis we are all facing. I wanted to write a book that was full of practical solutions for

real people to help inform how to shop for produce and cook in the home. Thinking sustainably extends to all of the choices we make, including what we cook with.

I'm lucky that I really enjoy food full of vegetables and I try to keep my meat consumption down, but I do still believe that life is for living

Q Would you say that following a healthy lifestyle is important to you?

Gizzi: Honestly, what I consider healthy is balance. I'm lucky that I really enjoy food full of vegetables and I try to keep my meat consumption down, but I do still believe that life is for living and I'm not going to restrict myself from every so often having a treat.

Q What are some of your favourite healthy recipes?

Gizzi: I lived on gazpacho this summer, but I'm looking forward to eating lots of slow

cooked gelatinous stews this autumn, as I believe the body needs that kind of nutrition too.

Q What would you say are your top three favourite healthy foods or ingredients?

Gizzi: I live for garlic, which is amazing for your heart and blood pressure, oily fish and good oils. I eat boquerones by the bucketload for this very reason.

Q What projects are you currently working on?

Gizzi: I'm opening my first restaurant outside of London in Margate, which is scary but exciting! I've also been working with cast iron cookware brand Skeppshult for years now and will be doing more recipe development with them over the coming months, including some supper clubs across the country. Collaborating with Skeppshult made total sense for me. I'd used them professionally for years because of their durability and stylishness but as I got to know them I was more and more drawn to their history and how as a brand they are driven by a real ethos of producing their cast iron ware in a truly sustainable way. We share a common ethos in understanding that the current consumerist throwaway culture just simply isn't tenable.

The Skeppshult X Gizzi Edit of sustainable cast iron cookware will be launching in John Lewis in October.

GIZZI ERSKINE'S HANOI FISH

MAKES: 2

PREPARATION: 30 minutes
plus marinating time

COOKING: 10 minutes

FOR THE MARINADE

- 2 tbsp sunflower oil
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp fish sauce
- 1 shallot (diced)
- 1½ tsp ground turmeric
- 1 heaped tbsp grated ginger
- 3 cloves garlic, minced

FOR THE FISH

- Large, whole white fish
- 2-3 tbsp oil
- 1 large bunch dill, roughly chopped
- 6 spring onions, chopped
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 large bunch dill, chopped (stems and all!)
- 1 bunch coriander, chopped
- Handful of roughly torn mint
- Handful of roughly torn Thai basil
- 50g roasted peanuts, chopped
- 300g dried vermicelli noodles, cooked

FOR THE NUOC NAM DRESSING

- 4 tsp lime juice
- 3-4 tsp sugar
- 4 tsp fish sauce
- 1-2 red chillies, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4-5 tbsp water

METHOD

1. Slash the fish deeply down the bone on each side 10 times.
2. Mix together the marinade ingredients and rub them into the grooves on the fish. Marinate for a minimum of 2 hours, ideally overnight.
3. Make your dressing by combining all the listed ingredients. The key to this dressing is a perfect balance of sweet, sour, and salty so you might need to tweak it a little to taste.
4. When you're ready to cook your fish, preheat the oven to 250°C/gas mark 9.
5. Wipe off any excess marinade (don't discard it). Heat your pan over a high heat with a little oil – I like to use Skeppshult's oval fish pan.
6. Once hot, cook your fish for 3-4 minutes each side until the skin is crispy.
7. Put the pan in the oven for 3 more minutes to cook through.
8. Remove from the oven and transfer to a plate while you make the sauce.
9. Pour the residue marinade into the fish pan and fry it off for 2 minutes.
10. Add the onion for a couple of minutes and then the spring onion for one further minute.
11. Next, add the coriander, then the dill and mint. Wilt them down.
12. Return the fish to the pan to serve it at the table with the cooked noodles, crushed peanuts and plenty of dressing.



IN THE PRESS

YHL takes a look at some new and newsworthy natural health and wellbeing products. We will also be trying and testing these products on our social media channels, so look out for them on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram this month!



BURSTING WITH FLAVOUR!

Journey into a world of flavour with **Tideford Organics'** new 'Inspired' range of soups. There are six flavours to choose from including the new Mexican Spicy Bean Butternut Soup, Moroccan Spiced Chickpea Soup and Jamaican Spicy Jerk Jackfruit Soup, priced at £2.89, plus three varieties in single-serve pots (£1.79) and four veg pots (£2.50). Great tasting food that's 100 per cent plant-based, vegan and free from gluten and nuts.



ORGANIC CBD OIL DROPS

Are you looking to incorporate CBD into your everyday life? Why not try **Love Hemp® CBD Liquid Oral Oil Drops 1,200mg**, which come in a choice of four flavours. Shown here is the peppermint flavour. Simply place the drops under your tongue and hold for 60 seconds before swallowing. These organic liquid drops are infused with premium CBD and blended with coconut-extracted MCT oil. They are also 100 per cent gluten- and THC-free.



THE PERFECT RISOTTO

A risotto can sometimes take a lot of time to prepare, but **Lazy Vegan** has done all the hard work for you with this delicious Italian Risotto ready meal! It contains 200g of vegetables like green asparagus, mushrooms, chanterelles, spring onion and cherry tomatoes and is topped off with a creamy vegan sauce. The range also includes different dishes from around the world such as Mexican, Thai, Indian and French food.



New study finds there's no such thing as a healthy tippie



A new study has cast doubt on the notion that an occasional alcoholic drink could be good for your health. Researchers from Anglia Ruskin University analysed data from 446,439 UK participants over an average of seven years. Their findings showed that low level consumption of beer, cider and spirits was associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular events, coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease such as stroke, cancer, and overall mortality.

The only health benefit that the researchers found was a decreased risk of coronary heart disease through the consumption of wine. Previous studies into alcohol and health have identified a J-shaped curve, indicating that low levels of alcohol consumption can be beneficial. However, study author Dr Rudolph Schutte believes these studies are incorrectly making comparisons with non-drinkers. He said: "There is an undeniable protective beneficial relationship between coronary heart disease and consumption of both red and white wine. However, this is only seen with coronary heart disease and none of the other cardiovascular diseases. This relationship is also seen for alcohol-free wine, so it suggests the benefits are thanks to the polyphenols in the wine rather than the alcohol. Researchers commonly use coronary heart disease as a standard measure for health and this is one of the reasons we see so many studies claiming the health benefits of 'alcohol'."

The findings were published in the journal *Clinical Nutrition*.

IN THE PRESS

68%

of participants who took part in **Veganuary**, and continue to eat a fully vegan diet, have experienced health improvements, including increased energy, improved mood, better skin and a desired change in body weight.





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Your guide to SUSTAINABILITY

Nisha Ravat offers some tips for how to live more sustainably in different areas of life

There is a wealth of advice when it comes to living sustainably. This ranges from easy-to-do activities such as turning off lights when you leave a room and recycling paper, to more challenging changes like 'Going Zero Waste' (where you aim to send nothing to landfill) and 'Plogging' (picking up rubbish whilst out jogging).

To reduce our carbon footprint, we need to walk, cycle and use public transport instead of driving, as well as reducing long-haul flights; although this has not been difficult to do this past year and a half! We are encouraged to buy locally, eat home-cooked vegetarian meals and upcycle. Whenever we do make a purchase, we need to make sure it's 'ethical' and, when buying clothes, we should ensure they are second-hand or from a sustainable fashion company. When we consider all these necessary factors, is living this way actually sustainable?

Let's start with the official definition

Sustainability focuses on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The concept of sustainability is composed of three pillars: economic, environmental and social – also known informally as profits, planet and people. Essentially, this means considering future generations when we are making

decisions now, whilst taking a holistic approach and asking what impact today's actions are going to have on the economy, the environment and our community.

Every action we take must have these three pillars in mind in order to live sustainably. It's not essential to make all these changes at once as this will be difficult to maintain. Instead, make one small change at a time and build up to more ambitious ones when you are feeling adventurous. Here are a few examples of what you can do to start to live sustainably in different areas of life, split into 'easy', 'medium' and more 'challenging' categories.

Economic changes

Easy: Buy quality goods that will last longer and reduce the number of times you need to replace them. This may mean paying a little extra initially; however this will be offset by fewer future purchases due to an increased product lifetime – you may even end up saving money!

Medium: Source locally produced items (at least European, if not British) to ensure your goods have not travelled far and by buying British you are supporting our economy. You will also help the economy recover after the pandemic by supporting small, local businesses; they need all the support they can get to stay afloat and flourish. You are also less likely to spend time and money travelling to get your goods, which reduces your carbon footprint, and you'll probably be using less packaging compared to online shopping.



Challenging: Support businesses that are environmentally friendly; however beware of 'Greenwashing' – an attempt by a business to make you believe they are doing more for the environment than they actually are in reality. This may mean reading into claims in more detail – replacing plastic straws with paper ones sounds ideal, but only if the replacement paper ones are fully recyclable. It may also be beneficial to educate yourself on terms and phrases such as 'offsetting', where a company excuses one set of bad practices

by employing a separate, much more ethical practice, and thus claims a net benefit.

The real benefit would be in not committing to this bad practice in the first place!



Environmental changes

Easy: Walking to school and work may not be possible for us all, but we can manage to park a little further away and walk the rest. This will not only impact on your immediate environment, but you'll also feel better for getting that extra bit of fresh air, exercise and daylight.

Medium: Look at biodegradable packaging on goods such as fresh produce. Refill store-cupboard essentials at a zero waste shop near you and make healthier, home-cooked meals, rather than relying on ready meals. This is less about recycling our plastic waste and more about not producing it in the first place. Think carefully before that next big purchase for your wardrobe or house – consider reusing, buying and selling unwanted goods online and upcycling.



Challenging: Have you ever considered a product's life cycle? This means thinking about all the production stages of a product, its use and the disposal of waste when we're done, and the impact each stage has on our environment. This may include the mining of raw materials; transport to and from a factory, warehouse or shop; carbon footprint, whilst the product is in use (for example if it needs fuel or electricity) and, finally, the disposal stage. Can the product be reused, upcycled or recycled? This will reduce the carbon footprint at the disposal stage.

Social changes

Easy: There are many local schemes where you can 'swap' or give away quality items for others to reuse. This means supporting local communities and returning to a 'mend and make do' ethos. It's a great way to meet like-minded people in your area, and you'll find out about ways in which you can support your local community. Local charity shops are full of quality goods, cleared out during lockdown, and are becoming very popular as restrictions are lifted.

Medium: There is a plethora of organisations you can support from the comfort of your sofa. Some examples include citizensclimateeurope.org and friendsoftheearth.uk. Offer your support to the ones that resonate most with you.

Challenging: Start your own campaign on matters that mean most to you. Write or speak to your local MP and attend your local constituency surgery to find out about what others are doing and events you can attend and support. Why not even start your own petition? Visit www.change.org/start-a-petition

Future generations must be foremost in our minds with every decision we make. There is little doubt we all need to make changes now in order to safeguard a greener planet for a time to come. Taking small steps to sustainable living is a good start; these soon become habit and make way for bigger steps that we can take as a community to fundamentally change the way we do things. It is about embracing a whole new way of life, one small step at a time. Initialising and stabilising a 'new normal' is within each of us. Everything we do matters.



Nisha Ravat is a science teacher and founder of Green Tomato, the first environmentally friendly, emission-free greengrocers in Leicester. To find out more, visit greentomato.club

IMMUNITY

101

Fascinating facts and stats about the immune system



As the autumn and winter draw nearer, so does our likelihood of catching colds and flu. Here we take a look at some natural ways to support your immune system, as well as some fascinating facts and figures about immunity.

"Echinacea's immune-boosting properties are partly attributed to its polysaccharides which stimulate white blood cell production," says consultant herbalist Klayr Hunter, MNIMH, (www.herbalmedicineglasgow.co.uk). "White blood cells form part of your immune system that destroy invading organisms such as viruses. In vitro research show Echinacea's antiviral properties are effective against SARS-CoV-2 which is the virus that causes Covid-19."

"Walking doesn't just make you feel good, studies also suggest that it may reduce your risk of developing a cold or flu by boosting your immune system," says Penny Weston, fitness, wellness guru and nutrition expert (welcometomade.com) "It does this by increasing the amount of white blood cells circulating in your blood. These are the cells that fight infection and disease as part of the body's natural immune system."



"Mushrooms can be used for everyday support in boosting the immune system to prevent infections or to speed up recovery time," says Hania Opienski, a naturopath and mycotherapy specialist consultant working with www.hifasdaterra.co.uk. "Beta-glucans from mushrooms provide a synergistic effect that naturally activates the innate immunity and triggers reactions that allow the body to better identify viruses and bacteria. "As a practitioner, I recommend medicinal mushrooms to everyone (unless allergic) to add to their daily self-care. As adaptogens, these miraculous fungi are safe for long-term consumption, as they help the body to harmonise itself."

"Elderberry has been traditionally used to treat colds and flus in Britain for hundreds of years," says Klayr Hunter. "Studies have already proven it to be effective against influenza A and B. It reduces the length of time a respiratory infection lasts, and trials started earlier this year to test it against Covid-19 in an East Kent hospital."



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"A lesser-known hero nutrient for a well-functioning immune system is selenium," says Olga Preston, registered nutritional therapist from the Institute for Optimum Nutrition, (ion.ac.uk/nutrition). "Selenium is a mineral found in Brazil nuts, seafood, fish, organ meats, meat, poultry and grains. Brazil nuts are particularly high in selenium (containing 68-91 micrograms per nut). This means that just two Brazil nuts can contain more than the daily recommended intake (60 micrograms for women and 75 micrograms for men). However, if you already have a balanced diet you may not need to take in extra. Too much selenium can cause selenosis, a condition that can lead to loss of hair and nails, so check with a registered nutritional therapist or a GP if you have concerns."

"Vitamin D plays a key role in immune function," says Klayr Hunter. "A deficiency in vitamin D is associated with increased complications with Covid-19 including Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS). The *British Medical Journal* also found it protective against acute respiratory tract infections. Foods rich in vitamin D include oily fish, egg yolks and mushrooms."

"Yellow, orange, red and green vegetables contain beta-carotene, which can be converted to vitamin A, which in turn helps support the body as it fights off infection and illness," says Olga Preston.



"Chronically raised levels of the stress hormone cortisol can result in the immune system becoming resistant to the stress response," says Olga Preston. "Swollen glands, a sore throat and aching limbs can all be signs that the body is trying hard to cope, and a good indicator to take time to rest and relax. Gentle exercise such as meditation, yoga or walking can help you to do this."



"The immune system activates itself to send chemicals, cells and a system-wide response in an attempt to defend the body and repair the damage," says Dr Jess Braid, cofounder of adio Health (adio.org). "This is a healthy response that keeps us alive, but sometimes, it can go wrong. Chronic (long term) inflammation is at the root of many diseases: autoimmune diseases, heart disease, eczema, diabetes, cancer, dementia, autism, obesity, premature ageing, asthma and arthritis. The immune defence system can fail to switch off, or get inappropriately triggered, creating ongoing inflammation. This immune response can create many symptoms and long-term (chronic) illnesses."

"Our immune system is a group of cells, organs and tissues that work together to defend the body against infection, repair damage and maintain our overall health," says Dr Jess Braid. "Without our immune system, we would die; killed by an infection, like the common cold or the flu."

"Almost 70 per cent of our entire immune system resides in our gut so having a healthy digestive system and microbiome is vital for good immune health," says Klayr Hunter. "Gut bacteria enhance our immune response and probiotics have shown an improved response to vaccination. You can support your gut flora and immune system by eating plenty of fruit, vegetables, fermented foods and taking a probiotic daily."

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Available from? Independent health food stores. Visit www.bio-kult.com



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THE A-Z OF HEALTHY LIVING



A IS FOR ... ASHWAGANDHA

Ashwagandha has numerous health benefits. It is most commonly used to help treat stress and mood disorders like anxiety and depression. Ashwagandha can be used to alleviate mental and physical stress, which helps to boost mood and energy levels, while improving focus and memory. Studies have revealed that high-concentration supplements containing Ashwagandha root extract can help to balance mood, prevent and manage stress and anxiety and boost energy levels, thereby drastically improving quality of life. Try **The Good Guru's Organic Ashwagandha+Black Pepper**, £17.95



www.thegoodguru.com

B IS FOR ... BRAIN HEALTH

Did you know that around 60 per cent of the human brain is composed of fat? Consuming two portions of oily fish per week provides the body with a rich source of brain-supporting omega-3 fats EPA and DHA. Vegan sources of omega-3 include chia seeds, ground linseed, hemp seeds and walnuts.



C IS FOR ... COLLAGEN

With so many collagen supplements available, how do you choose? Look for fast-acting hydrolysed collagen peptides with an average molecular weight of 2,000 Da. With hydrolysed collagen peptides, all the hard work has been done for you! The molecules have been broken down into peptides and amino acids which can be rapidly absorbed and delivered to where they are needed most. Since over 90 per cent of the collagen found in your body is Type I, try supplementing with bovine collagen, such as **Neutrient Advanced Collagen**.



www.abundanceandhealth.co.uk

D IS FOR ... DARK CHOCOLATE

According to research, dark chocolate can reduce your stress hormones, including cortisol. What's more, the antioxidants in cocoa lead the walls of your blood vessels to relax, reducing blood pressure and improving circulation. Opt for varieties that contain at least 70 per cent cocoa.



E IS FOR ... ESSENTIAL OILS

Essential oils are natural aromatic essences extracted from plant material such as trees, flowers, grasses, leaves, fruit and seeds. They are used in aromatherapy and are thought to possess distinctive therapeutic, psychological and physiological properties. Around 150 essential oils have been extracted, each with their own unique scents and health benefits.

F IS FOR ... FERMENTED FOODS

Fermented foods include things like kimchi, yogurt, kefir, kombucha and sauerkraut. They are rich in probiotics which support gut health and mood. Since up to 90 per cent of the body's serotonin levels – the so-called happy hormone – are produced in your gut, a healthy gut may correspond to a positive mood.

G IS FOR ... GUT HEALTH

There are trillions of microorganisms including different types of bacteria that live alongside us in our gut, known as our gut microbiome. This community of microorganisms which reside naturally within the body's gastrointestinal tract play a really important role in maintaining overall wellbeing. Try **Bio-Kult**, from £9.48.

www.bio-kult.com



H IS FOR ... HOMEOPATHY

Homeopathy is gentle, safe and effective in people of all ages and the majority of remedies are made from plants and minerals. It is holistic in that it treats the whole person and works on emotional and physical complaints. It works well alongside conventional medicine too. For longstanding or serious complaints, the expertise of a qualified homeopathic practitioner should be sought. For minor ailments and first aid situations homeopathy can be used safely and with confidence at home. Try **Helios Sleep** for temporary relief of sleep disturbances.

www.helios.co.uk



I IS FOR ... IRON

Iron is a vital trace mineral needed for making red blood cells which transfer oxygen around the body. Spinach is a good source of iron and is even more nutritious when cooked as opposed to raw as its iron content becomes more bioavailable.

J IS FOR ... JOINTS

Collagen is essential for healthy joints. It is the most abundant protein in the human body – the 'glue' that keeps us together. From the age of 25, collagen levels reduce around 1.5 per cent every year. Joints stiffen and, by 45, collagen can reduce by 30 per cent. Adding a collagen supplement to your daily regime – especially one also containing glucosamine and chondroitin – can strengthen joints and improve general mobility. Try **Collagen Plus** from **Arthrovite**.

www.arthrovite.com



THE A-Z OF HEALTHY LIVING

K IS FOR ... KALE

Kale is known as a superfood – and for good reason. It is rich in beta-carotene, vitamins C and K and folate. It's also a great source of chlorophyll, calcium and iron. The less you cook it, the more nutrients you retain. And, if you serve it with a lemon dressing, you'll be boosting the absorption of its iron and calcium content.

L IS FOR ... LIPOSOMAL

True liposomal supplements are evidence-based and provide maximised absorption so that our bodies can utilise the nutrients they hold. Here's how to identify a real liposomal formula:

1. No flavourings. The fewer the ingredients, the more likely it is you have the real deal.
2. Can you spot the manufacturer on the label?
3. Consistency and high content of phosphatidylcholine (the essential extra active ingredient) supporting nutrient delivery to reach the cellular level. Try **Altrient C Liposomal Vitamin C**.

www.abundanceandhealth.co.uk



M IS FOR ... MAGNESIUM

Magnesium is needed for 80 per cent of the biochemical reactions in your body, making it one of the most foundational nutrients for good health. Magnesium promotes sleep, stress relief, immunity, muscle recovery, bone, heart and hormone health and more! Not all magnesium supplements are created equal: look for a best-absorbed brand like **MAG365**, £16.95.

www.itlhealth.co.uk



N IS FOR ... NATURE

Spending at least two hours a week in nature has been shown to benefit our health and wellbeing. Research led by the University of Exeter and published in *Scientific Reports* found that people who spend at least 120 minutes in nature a week are significantly more likely to report good health and higher psychological wellbeing than those who don't visit nature at all during an average week.

O IS FOR ... OLIVE LEAF EXTRACT

Medical experts have discovered the wonders of an extract from olive leaves which is a natural, safe and effective herbal with unequalled health-giving properties. Often called nature's "smart" germ killer, this powerful extract seems to only attack harmful micro-organisms – viruses, bacteria, fungi and parasites – without harming helpful ones. **Eden Extract** is a patented 100 per cent natural alternative that works with, and helps support, the body's defences when our immune systems are compromised.

www.oliveleaf.co.uk



P IS FOR ... PROBIOTICS

Probiotics or live bacteria are the "bugs" that live in different parts of the digestive system (as well as other body systems such as the skin and hair). They may help us maintain good immune and digestive health, along with communication with the brain to control things like appetite, mood and sleep. Try **Bio-Kult Boosted**, £24.98.

www.bio-kult.com



Q IS FOR ... QUINOA

Although it is technically a seed, quinoa is classified as a whole grain. It is naturally gluten-free and is also a complete protein, which means that it contains all nine essential amino acids that the body cannot make on its own. Called the "mother grain" by the ancient Incas, one cup of cooked quinoa provides about 8g of protein.



R IS FOR ... REFLEXOLOGY

Reflexology is a complementary therapy based on the belief that there are reflex areas in the feet and hands which are believed to correspond to all organs and parts of the body. Some practitioners may also include work on points found in the face and ears. Reflexology works on an individual basis and may alleviate and improve symptoms such as everyday stress and tension.

S IS FOR ... SEROTONIN

Serotonin is known as the happy hormone because it stabilises our mood and our feelings of wellbeing and happiness. Low levels of this neurotransmitter are linked to depression. Foods that contain tryptophan are thought to increase serotonin production in the body. Tryptophan is an essential amino acid found in foods such as milk, turkey and chicken.

T IS FOR ... THROAT CARE

Minor throat irritations can strike at any time of year and for a whole host of reasons. When they do, it's good to have **Ricola Soothe & Clear cough drops** by your side to bring you soothing comfort. Ricola swears by the nurturing effect of Swiss herbs. To their secret 13 herb mixture they additionally add ingredients like natural menthol, lemon juice, echinacea and fair trade honey to give your throat the extra care it needs.

www.ricola.com



U IS FOR ... UTI

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are one of the most common bacterial infections which affect more than 50 per cent of women at some point in their lives.

They can affect any part of your urinary system — your kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra. Most infections involve the lower urinary tract — the bladder and the urethra. Women are at greater risk of developing a UTI than men. Infections limited to your bladder can be painful and uncomfortable, but serious consequences can occur if a UTI spreads to your kidneys. Try the unique food supplement **Bladapure**.



V IS FOR ... VEGAN

The past few years, veganism has become more than a diet. People are concerned about the planet and the side effects of meat and dairy products. Violife is relevant to today's realities and trends, to all needs and occasions, to all age groups and genders. Following a vegan lifestyle means living life to the full, so that's why Violife's delicious dairy-alternative products are 100 per cent vegan but can be enjoyed by everyone! Try **Violife Smoky Cheddar Flavour Slices**, £2.79.



www.violifefoods.com

W IS FOR ... WATER

Did you know that up to 60 per cent of the human body is water? The recommended amount of water that we should drink is six to eight 200ml glasses a day. However, a good way to check if you are drinking enough water is to check the colour of your urine. It should be a pale-yellow colour. Dark, cloudy or strong-smelling urine is a sign that you are dehydrated.



X IS FOR ... XYLITOL

Xylitol is a naturally occurring sugar alcohol found in most plant material, including many fruits and vegetables. It is a lower-calorie sugar substitute with a low glycaemic index. It is widely used in "sugar-free" chewing gums and mints and is thought to help prevent cavities and the build-up of tooth plaque. It is important to note that xylitol can be very toxic to dogs so should be stored in a safe place out of their reach.



Y IS FOR ... YOGA

Yoga is an ancient mind and body practice which is thought to have originated in India over 5,000 years old. The word yoga comes from the Sanskrit word "yuj," which means "union" or "to join." Various styles of yoga combine physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation or relaxation to promote mental and physical wellbeing. The different types include Ashtanga, Hatha, Vinyasa flow, Kundalini and many more.

Z IS FOR ... ZINC

Zinc is an essential mineral for male reproductive function. Studies show that a deficiency in zinc has been associated with low testosterone levels, poor sperm quality and an increased risk of male infertility. Oysters contain more zinc per serving than any other food, but other good sources include pumpkin seeds.

SWITCH UP YOUR SKINCARE ROUTINE

Our experts explain why you should consider switching up your beauty routine during the changing of the seasons

During the summer months we naturally wear less make-up and opt for lighter moisturisers. But now that autumn is here and winter is looming, it's time to change our skincare routine for something befitting the colder months.

"During the winter season, the temperature drops dramatically, along with a reduction in humidity," explains Kathryn Danzey, a health coach and the founder of supplement brand Rejuvenated (www.rejuvenated.com). "This causes our skin to lose moisture, especially on the hands and lips, which in turn affects our skin's natural lipid barrier causing dryness, flakiness and cracked skin. Eczema and psoriasis sufferers are especially prone to this. Colder temperatures cause blood vessels to constrict in the skin to conserve your core body temperature. This reduction in blood flow leaves skin looking tired and dull, so now's a good time to step up your skincare regime to prepare for the winter ahead. The combination of cold environmental temperatures and centrally heated buildings can lead to our skin being more reactive, so it's important to choose your products carefully."

Change up your products

"Choose your cleanser according to your skin type," says Kathryn Danzey. "For normal/dry skin, switch to a richer cleanser for winter to nourish your skin and give it some extra TLC. This type of cleanser can also be used to remove make-up without irritation. If your skin is dull and drier in texture, use a cleanser containing Alpha-hydroxy acids (AHAs) to promote cellular turnover and brighten the skin. Lactic acid for example not only increases cell turnover but also helps hydrate the skin as it promotes natural hyaluronic acid production."

Kathryn adds: "Opt for nourishing serums rather than heavy moisturisers. Hyaluronic acid can hold up to 1,000 times its own weight in water and draws moisture to the skin."



Feed your skin

"As we move into autumn and winter, we want to be really nourishing our skin and using products that feed the skin on a much deeper level," says Holly Zoccolan, nutritional health coach and founder of the Health Zoc (www.thehealthzoc.com). "Products containing vitamin C and vitamin E are a great way to do this. It's also important that we are eating healthy fats, good quality protein and enough fibre too. This is particularly important as we move into winter and the air gets drier and cold. Feeding your skin from within is the best thing you can do for it."



Go organic

"By supporting local farmers in their crops, and also staying away from pesticides and herbicides, you're not only benefiting your skin but also your gut health and overall health," says natural skincare expert Lisa Harris (www.lisaharris.skincare.co.uk). "If you eat vegetables that have been sprayed with pesticides, those chemicals are killing your microbiome. An imbalance of the normal gut microbiota has been linked to gastrointestinal conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome. It can also play havoc with the skin, resulting in a number of skin complaints from acne to dry skin and premature ageing. Eating organic fruit and vegetables will allow you to reap the nutrients without taking the harmful pesticides into your gut and damaging your microbiome."

Rebuild your collagen levels

"After the summer months many people can find that they notice signs of premature ageing caused by the increased exposure to the sun's UV rays," says Lisa Harris. "Ultraviolet rays cause collagen to break down more rapidly and can damage the collagen that's present. When this happens, abnormal elastin can build up, causing irregularities, wrinkles and folds in the skin. Increasing your intake of vitamin C in your diet can help to rebuild collagen naturally. Foods high in vitamin C are good

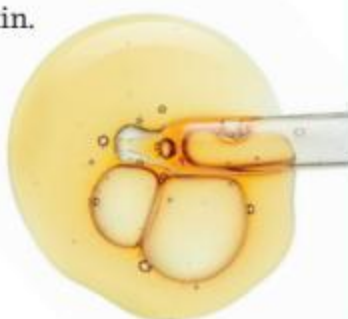
collagen promoters and include citrus fruits, red and green peppers, strawberries and kiwi fruits, cabbage, broccoli, Brussel's sprouts and cauliflower. Remember to make sure they're organic! Looking for skincare ingredients with active ingredients such as vitamin C and vitamin B3, or niacinamide, also help to boost collagen production and improve the appearance of the skin after the damage that has occurred over the summer."



Consider a supplement

"A collagen supplement will help to nourish and support skin throughout the whole body from top to toe," says Kathryn Danzey. "Collagen contains amino acid proteins which provide all the building blocks for strong, healthy skin.

Make sure that the collagen you choose is hydrolysed, which means it is broken down into tiny particles so that it can be absorbed more effectively. Hyaluronic acid can also be taken in supplement form to boost hydration levels internally."



Tackle pigmentation

"Skin ageing from the sun is not seen for 10 to 20 years after sun exposure," says Lisa Harris. "The skin produces more melanin to protect the skin from exposure to the sun. Because melanin is the pigment responsible for giving skin its colour, this can make dark spots or patches occur. Applying a broad-spectrum SPF is vital to prevent further pigmentation from occurring. Apply this to any skin that is exposed to the sun using the rule of a teaspoon per limb. Vitamin C, also known as ascorbic acid, may help to prevent sun damage and pigmentation."

Time for a change?

As the seasons change, we often think about changing our skincare, but this can be a good time to freshen up our make-up routine too.

"Depending on your make-up style, you may like the idea of switching things up seasonally," says Denise Rabor, the founder of Wow Beauty. (wowbeauty.co). "If you are a minimalist who only ever wears a red lip, then keep on doing it. If, however, you like to switch things up, chances are that you've been wearing slightly different make-up this summer, so as we head into winter here are some possible alternatives."



1. You may want to consider switching your foundation from a lighter, dewier formula to something more satin. This will guarantee a flawless look throughout autumn.
2. If you love using a bronzer, maybe you can switch to one with less shimmer that gives you a 'lit from within' healthy glow! Try not to use too dark a highlighter as you want to make sure the skin on your body matches that of your face (and your dwindling tan!)
3. If you like making a feature of your eyes, you are spoilt for choice with a multitude of textures, so why not try a metallic eyeshadow, soft smoky eyes or a brightly coloured eyeliner for a pop of colour during the drearier months.
4. You may also wish to switch up your lip game from using a lip gloss to one of the new tinted lip balms that deliver a shot of colour and nourishing, lip-loving ingredients.
5. A good primer makes all the difference to your make-up, helping to make it last longer and hiding minor imperfections as well as providing much-needed hydration during the colder months.

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Try this! Award-winning **Skin Salvation** from **Balmmonds Skincare** (Best Balm for Eczema, Beauty Shortlist 2021) is a one-pot wonder for sensitive, sore or irritated skin.

Tell me more! Approved by dermatologists in clinical trials, this family essential is a rich, 100 per cent natural ointment made with nourishing beeswax, hemp and calendula. Use on rough, dry or cracked skin anywhere on the body.

Available from? Independent health stores and the Balmmonds website: www.balmmonds.co.uk

Your health &A



You asked: "Do you have any tips for how to reduce the pain of migraines naturally?"

DR XANDRA MIDDLETON ANSWERS: "In the UK, as many as six million people suffer from migraines. From my experience of seeing thousands of patients who suffer from migraines, these are the best methods I have found to help treat them:

Posture adjustment: This is the best way to set up your workstation to avoid putting pressure on the top joints of your neck. Sitting this way helps to balance body weight more evenly across your body and lets your chair and desk better support your weight:

- Angle your seat back into a more reclined position
- Rest your feet on an angled step
- Rest your arms on your desk
- Let your chair do the work

Self-massage: One issue that many people find triggers a migraine is tension in their upper backs. It's easy to loosen them up with a ball – ideally something about the size of a tennis ball. Place the ball behind your shoulder, near your neck and lean back onto it against a wall. Work the ball into different spots in your upper back (never use one directly on your spine). You can also do this lying on the ground.

Ice therapy: Next time you feel a migraine coming on, try putting an ice pack (or a bag of frozen peas) at the top of your neck. Make sure there is a layer of clothing between you and the ice pack or wrap your pack in a towel. Try and keep the ice pack there for 15–20 minutes. This can dramatically help cut the frequency and intensity of your migraines."

■ **Dr Xandra Middleton is a chiropractor and the co-founder of the new health and wellness platform Adio Health. For more information visit adio.org**

You asked: "How can I help to manage and reduce the symptoms of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)?"



DR MARION GLUCK ANSWERS: "PCOS is a hormonal condition which affects 1 in 10 women. If you have been diagnosed with PCOS then some simple dietary changes could help.

Women with PCOS have a higher level of oxidative stress, which can be combated by higher levels of antioxidants. So, try eating more berries and nuts and drink more green tea. Also eat lean, grass-fed meat instead of non-organic meat, which usually contains higher levels of hormones that are given to the livestock and which can directly impact human hormone levels. Healthy fats are a source of essential fatty acids, which help to balance your hormones and help control weight. High fibre foods such as oats, beans, nuts, dried fruit or wholegrain rice are slow-release carbohydrates. This means that they release sugar into the blood at a slower, more regular pace, and are less likely to cause spikes in blood sugar levels.

Foods to avoid include those which have saturated or hydrogenated fats in, including dairy products, fatty red meats and processed or fried foods. These unhealthy fats can increase oestrogen production, which can make your PCOS symptoms worse. It's also advised to cut out gluten because it can lead to inflammation which can lead to insulin resistance and increase your risk of developing diabetes. Lastly, more than 80 per cent of women who suffer from PCOS have been shown to be deficient in vitamin B so you might want to consider supplementation."

■ **Dr Marion Gluck is the founder of the Marion Gluck Clinic, which pioneered the use of bioidentical hormones to treat menopause, perimenopause and other hormone related issues. Visit www.mariongluckclinic.com**

You asked: "What are the health benefits of Ashwagandha?"



MICHELLE SANCHEZ ANSWERS: "Ashwagandha is an excellent tonic herb to support the body in times of stress and anxiety, protect cells from free radical damage, balance hormones and boost energy, which is especially important during the change in season. Here are some of the health benefits:

- It supports the body against stress and lessens anxiety by exerting a calming effect and reducing cortisol levels. It also lifts mood and depression by balancing hormones and enhancing nervous system function.
- Ashwagandha is high in iron and has been shown to increase both red blood cells and haemoglobin, therefore boosting the body's capability to transport more oxygen around the body, helping to reduce fatigue.
- It improves brain function, including memory and concentration. Ashwagandha is a nerve tonic that protects nerve cells from toxins and free radicals. It also slows down, stops and reverses nerve damage due to its neuroprotective properties. Ashwagandha is highly effective for neuro-degenerative conditions like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and Huntington's disease.
- Lastly, it promotes a deep, restorative sleep as it contains a compound called triethylene glycol that encourages sleep induction."

■ **Michelle Sanchez is a Naturopath, Nutritionist and Medical Herbalist from the College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM). CNM is the no 1 training provider for natural therapies. Visit www.cnmcourses.com or call 01342 777 747.**



Email your questions to liz@jfnproductions.co.uk

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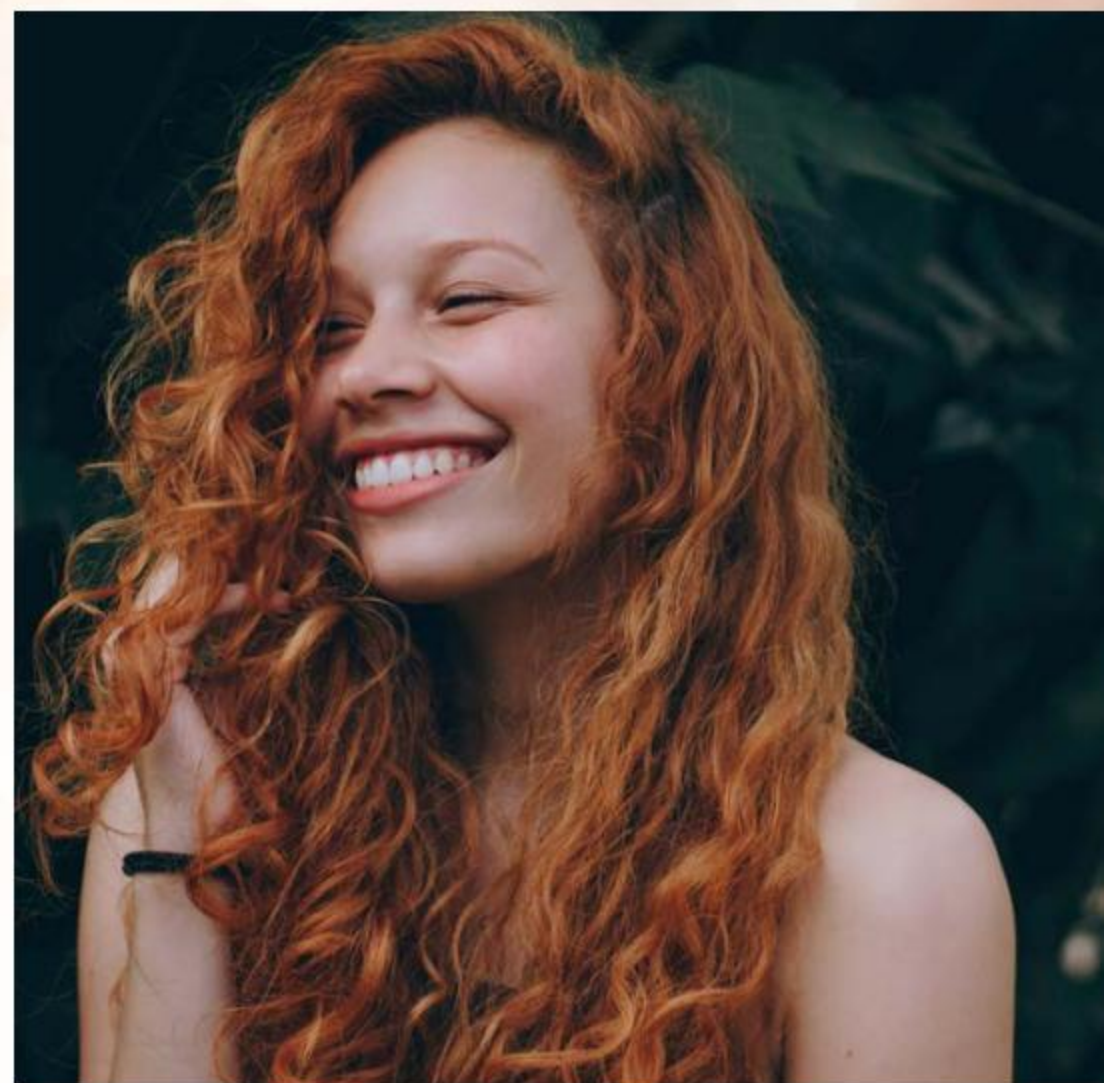
See www.yourhealthyliving.co.uk for terms & conditions. We reserve the right to edit or shorten questions, and regret YHL and our experts cannot reply individually to your health and beauty questions.

ECO LIVING

Swap your everyday essentials with these eco-friendly alternatives

THE ORIGINAL AND THE BEST

The original and the best Ben & Anna deodorant in Vanilla Orchid is the body care essential you need in your bathroom. This 100% vegan and cruelty free deodorant offers reliable protection against body odour and sweat without the use of aluminium. With a sweet scent, it contains sodium bicarbonate as well as seed oils to keep your skin feeling dry and you smelling fresh all day. With Ben & Anna you will have Zero Waste, Zero Worries. Available from health stores and online at www.benandanna.uk | £9.95



HEAD TO TOE CLEANSING

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When you would like your hair to be soft and smooth, make the move to the lavera Basis Sensitiv Shampoo Bar. This shampoo bar is enriched with soothing organic aloe vera and quinoa and is kind to sensitive scalps, while the foamy lather gently cleanses and provides intense moisture for your hair. The plant based vegan formula revitalises and adds shine to your hair. 0% plastic. 100% care. Available from health stores and online at www.lavera.co.uk | £8.95



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Who doesn't want firmer, more toned skin? The SOiL Organic Aromatherapy Toning Massage Body Oil is blended with a cleansing infusion of fennel, rose geranium, rosemary and juniper berry organic essential oils which help to reduce cellulite by detoxifying, toning, and stimulating the skin. Skin will feel softer, smoother, and toned. Available from health stores and online at www.soilorganics.co.uk | £13.20



MANAGING THE MENOPAUSE

Sarah Burt ND offers some tips on how to handle the symptoms of the menopause naturally

Menopause, the time in a woman's life where the monthly periods cease to happen, can be an unstable time of life for many.

The lead-up to this period can take up to 10 years of what is known as perimenopause, in which many of the symptoms which hit full force in actual menopause can start to happen. This is an ideal time for women to begin making changes to their diet and lifestyle to try to minimise the severity of some of these common complaints.

Menopause officially occurs after a woman has not had a period for three consecutive years. There may be two or three episodes where she might think she is going through the menopause due to no bleeding for nearly two years, and then out of the blue she can bleed again.

It is a time where hormones, including oestrogen, progesterone and androgens, are altering radically in the body. These fluctuating hormone levels are the reason why some women suffer with many symptoms whereas others might have none. This is why a healthy lifestyle and diet are so important during this time of change.

Love your liver

It is critical to follow a diet that is rich in plant protein (such as nuts, pulses and grains) as well as high in fresh fruit and vegetables and fish oils. It's also important to drink as much water as possible. The liver is responsible for healthy hormone production, so following these dietary tips will help to ease the way it handles these altering hormone levels as we mature. A poor diet full of too much meat, processed foods, fat, tea, coffee, sugar and alcohol puts excess pressure on the liver, making it less effective at managing alterations in hormone levels. Stress also plays a big part in the severity of menopausal symptoms, so it is highly advisable to deal with any underlying issues that might be causing tension.



Signs and symptoms

Here are the most common symptoms experienced during menopause plus some ways to help treat them:

Sleep problems

Midlife women go through many changes in their sleep patterns, which can result in needing more sleep than ever, suffering from insomnia or not feeling refreshed after sleep. Hot flushes are by far the most common reason for sleep deprivation.

Try this: A natural progesterone cream made from wild yam plants may help. Try a quarter to half a teaspoon of the cream rubbed into the skin before bedtime. It binds to receptors in the brain and has a calming effect. It also helps to increase progesterone in the bloodstream, which has a calming effect on hot flushes.

Valerian is a botanical herb that can enhance relaxation – try 150 to 300mg of valerenic acid at bedtime. Milk thistle is a well-known herbal plant which helps to cleanse and renew the liver, so if you are waking feeling unrefreshed from a night's sleep it may be because the liver needs some support.



Hot flushes

These are one of the most common symptoms experienced during the menopause. They are triggered by neurotransmitter changes in the brain that result, in part, from erratic oestrogen levels which act as a cerebral irritant.

Try this: The wild yam progesterone cream mentioned previously, applied twice a day, can really help to reduce these. Also, the herb sage is traditionally used as a tea to help diminish the severity and frequency of hot flushes. Stress reduction is the biggest factor in treating the hot flushes as high adrenal output of adrenaline and cortisol radically enhance symptom during menopause.



this

Depression and anxiety

Oestrogen boosts serotonin and acetylcholine, which are neurohormones associated with positive moods. So the decrease of oestrogen during the menopause may lead to symptoms such as depression and anxiety.

Try this: Deficiencies of certain nutrients can be linked to depression, so good supplements in the following are recommended:

- Vitamin B6: in a B complex formula, of at least 50mg/100mg daily.
- Vitamin C: 1,000mg daily.
- St John's Wort: 300mg standardised daily has been shown in trials to help with mild to moderate depression. If after two months you do not notice a difference add in 5-HTP.
- Anxiety can be greatly reduced through the powerful and underestimated Bach flower essences. The individual essences deal with different expressions of anxiety, so it is best to choose them for yourself. They are widely available in most health food shops.



Memory loss

Decreasing oestrogen has an effect on acetylcholine, which regulates memory, leading many women to experience frightening memory loss. This is often greatly improved by taking a small amount of bioidentical oestrogen. However, for many women where there is a history of breast cancer in their families, feeding the brain with nutrients is a preferable approach.

Try this: DHEA acts as a neurotransmitter in the brain, promoting the same connecting branches between brain cells that are seen with oestrogen. Pregnenolone (25–50mg) is a precursor to DHEA and is widely available over the counter.

Herbal supplements that are also effective are Ginkgo Biloba, which increases blood flow to the brain, and is widely suggested at 100mg three times a day, and Gotu Kola, known as “the memory herb”, which increases circulation to the brain with a recommended dose of 100mg daily.

Irritable bladder

Strong urges to urinate, or loss of bladder control, are other symptoms commonly reported amongst perimenopausal women. Involuntary contractions can start to occur in the bladder muscle which can be caused by a localised lack of oestrogen in the bladder and urethral area. This can also start to cause recurrent urinary tract infections.

Try this: Drink copious amounts of water and consider taking a cranberry extract which contains a substance that prevents bacteria from sticking to the bladder walls. A daily probiotic that is specific for women's health may also help.

Vaginal dryness

This is another result of declining oestrogen levels as the lining of the vaginal mucosa deteriorates.

Try this: This is usually rectified by using an oestriol cream which, if given locally, is safe to use as it doesn't affect oestrogen in the whole body, but equally can be done by using a non-hormonal natural lubricant. A number of herbal remedies can also be used to restore vaginal lubrication: black cohosh, wild yam, dong quai and chaste tree are good examples.

Skin ageing

This seems to happen very quickly without the levels of oestrogen and can leave the skin very dull, sallow, dry and with uneven pigmentation.

Try this: Research has shown that antioxidant therapy, such as high doses of vitamin C, green tea extract, vitamin E and vitamin A can all be applied topically if they are in a form that is absorbed effectively into the skin. Additionally, these nutrients can be taken as supplements:

- Alpha-lipoic acid (ALA) is a natural antioxidant molecule which works on the surface of the cells and deep within them. It quells inflammation, a condition that precedes lines and wrinkles, and prevents the damage that can occur within the cell in the first place from free radical damage.
- Omega-3 fish oils are essential for building up all cell membranes, so these should be included in the diet, and in the form of flaxseed oil if the woman is a vegetarian.
- Soya is a natural plant oestrogen which can help to strengthen collagen in the body: 100–160mg soya isoflavones daily can help to improve skin, hair and nails.

Overall, promoting good liver function through a healthy diet and lifestyle and living as stress-free as possible are primary factors in avoiding severe symptoms during this time in our lives when natural changes in hormones are taking place.

Sarah Burt ND is a qualified naturopath and a member of the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council as well as the General Council and Register of Naturopaths. To contact her and find out more, visit www.sarahburtnd.co.uk

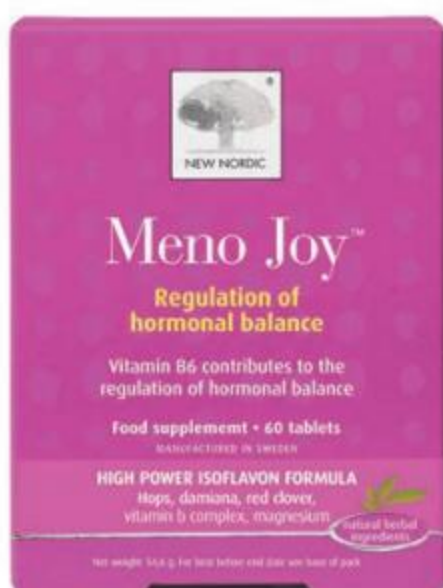
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Great buys at your health store

For the menopause



What's this? Natural Health Practice Meno Multi Support is specifically formulated to give you all the essential vitamins and minerals needed to help you through the menopause and support good bone health. **Tell me more!** It contains good levels of antioxidants, calcium and digestive enzymes for maximum absorption; biotin for the normal release of energy; magnesium and all the B vitamins for reduction of tiredness and fatigue; and choline, which contributes to the maintenance of normal liver function and is important for healthy memory and cognitive function. **Available from?** Independent health food stores. Visit www.naturalhealthpractice.com

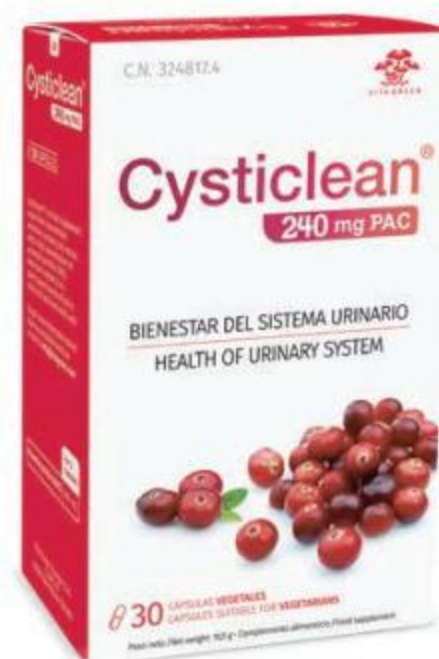


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Why is it so good? Not all cranberry extracts are the same. This one works due to a superior level of PAC in this premium formulation – proven to be hostile to toxins on the bladder wall. PAC is the active in cranberries and its effect is dose-dependent.

Tell me more! Drug-free, harnessing the power of nature, Cysticlean has invested in research and development to ensure the best possible answer to your urinary system needs.

Available from? Independent health stores and pharmacies. Visit www.cysticlean.co.uk



Time of change: Menopause is a natural stage of life that every woman goes through. **New Nordic Meno Joy** provides nutritional support during this period of change.

Tell me more! The Meno Joy tablet is based on a combination extract of hops and red clover. Red clover helps coping with the typical signs associated with menopause, such as hot flushes, sweating, restlessness and irritability.

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Meno Multi Support

A very special multivitamin to assist with the effects of the menopause



Meno Multi Support contains all the essential vitamins and minerals needed to help you through the menopause and support strong healthy bones. The ingredients are of the highest quality to ensure maximum effectiveness and absorption. It contains optimum levels of antioxidants, B vitamins, calcium and digestive enzymes in their most bio-available form.



Available from your local health food store.

Call Tree of Life on 01782 567100 for your nearest stockist.

HERE TO HELP

Independent health store advice on kitchen cupboard essentials



Looking for advice on natural health and wellbeing? Your local independent health store can offer a wealth of expertise. This month we talk to Izzy Hoden, assistant manager of Ganesha Wholefoods in Axminster, Devon.

We all lead busy lives and sometimes it can be hard to find the time to cook healthy food. It can really help to have some staple foods and ingredients in your kitchen cupboards that you can use to whip up a quick nutritious meal. Here are some of my top picks.

Herbs and spices

Adding a bit of spice to a meal can completely transform it from a bland, flavourless dish to something more interesting. I think chilli powder and chilli flakes are great kitchen cupboard staples, as they can give some dishes a much-needed kick. Cumin and coriander are good too as they can be added at the start of a dish and will really bring out the flavour towards the end. They're a nice option if you want some spice but not too much heat.

Mixed herbs can be added to pretty much anything and I particularly like to use them in homemade pasta sauces. Cinnamon is great for sweetening dishes when you don't want to use sugar, and some research has shown it may help to balance blood sugar levels. Turmeric adds colour to dishes and has long been used traditionally for its anti-inflammatory properties.

Cooking oils

I use extra virgin olive oil for everything from roasting and light frying to sautéing and

drizzling. It's high in monounsaturated fats and vitamin E, so it's a good, healthy kitchen cupboard staple. Flax oil is a great source of omega-3 and is good for drizzling on salads, whereas sesame seed oil is good for high heat cooking as it has a high smoke point and works well in stir frying as it brings a lovely flavour to the dish.

Tinned items

Chopped tomatoes are great kitchen cupboard staples as they are the base to so many meals. I use them in curries, sauces, and soups among other things. Chickpeas are fantastic too, and they're an excellent source of protein, particularly for those eating a plant-based diet. Lentils and beans are so versatile too. You can add them to many different recipes, and they're brilliant for bulking out certain dishes such as soups. I like to make a vegetarian Bolognese using lentils instead of veggie mince as it's so tasty and filling.

Pulses and grains

Rice is a staple for so many easy, filling dishes. Pearl barley is like lentils in that it's great for adding bulk to dishes such as stews. Split peas make a great base for soups and dahls and are a great thing to keep in your cupboard as you can use them in an abundance of recipes.

Pasta and flour

Pasta and flour are ubiquitous kitchen cupboard staples, and we stock a wide range of them at Ganesha. In addition to traditional flours such as strong bread flour, rye, spelt, and multipurpose self-raising and plain flours, we also stock a variety of free-from varieties. These range from buckwheat and coconut to brown rice flour, to the Doves

Farm Freee™ flours. In terms of pasta, we have all the regular wholewheat and white varieties as well as free-from options such as buckwheat, brown rice, and even an edamame and mung bean pasta.

Cereals

Oats are incredibly versatile and can be used in many dishes from porridge to puddings. In our stores we stock our own organic porridge and jumbo oats that we hand pack, but we also stock a gluten-free porridge for those who can't have traditional oats. We also have a range of mueslis, as well as brown rice flakes, buckwheat flakes, quinoa flakes and millet flakes, which can be used as a breakfast alternative to oats.

Nuts, seeds and dried fruit

We stock a huge range of top-quality nuts – I'd say they make up the bulk of what we sell the most. My favourites include walnuts, which are full of omega-3; almonds, which are high in magnesium; and Brazil nuts which are an excellent source of selenium.

All seeds are nutritious in their own way, but my top picks include chia seeds, which are packed full of minerals and are high in protein; pumpkin seeds, which are high in iron and zinc; and linseeds/flaxseeds which are high in omega-3.

We stock a plethora of dried fruit. Dates are particularly good if you're looking to make sweet treats but don't want to use refined cane sugar. Prunes and figs are both high in fibre which can help promote a healthy digestive system.

As you can see, your local independent health food store is a great place to stock up on all these kitchen cupboard essentials!

Ganesha Wholefoods

Ganesha Wholefoods has three Devon-based shops located in Axminster, Honiton and Sidmouth. Their story began in 1979 when Fred and Penny Easton opened a vegetarian-vegan restaurant in which they handmade everything from the soy milk to the hummus and the beanburgers. They then moved on to a market stall where they sold some of the healthy ingredients that they used in their restaurant dishes. This led to the opening of the three health food shops which are now run by their son, Richard Easton, who has been imperative in bringing the business to where it is today. Izzy says: "They are a fantastic family to work for and I couldn't ask for a better job! It's a great place to work because you are always learning something, whether it's discovering new supplements or a new fact about food or nutrition."

For more information and to shop online, visit: ganeshawholefoods.co.uk

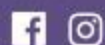
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FABULOUS FAKEAWAYS!

Why shell out for expensive takeaways, when you can create your own fakeaway! Try these recipes from fitness influencer, author and personal trainer Courtney Black

CHEAT'S CHICKEN KATSU CURRY

Courtney says: "The nation's favourite Japanese restaurant dish made healthy. We've teamed this crispy chicken with a sweet-and-sour red onion pickle, but you can add basmati rice if you prefer."

CARBS 58.7G

CALORIES 469

FAT 6.7G

PROTEIN 43.8G

SERVES: 2

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CHICKEN:

- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 1 large free-range egg, beaten
- 60g cornflakes, crushed in a ziplock bag
- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, bashed with a rolling pin to just over 1cm thick
- ½ bunch fresh coriander leaves, torn, to serve
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely sliced, to serve

FOR THE RED ONION PICKLE:

- 1 large red onion, finely sliced
- 2 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 2 tbsp caster sugar
- Crunchy leaves, to serve

FOR THE SAUCE:

- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 3 garlic cloves, finely grated
- Thumb-sized piece of fresh ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 tbsp plain flour
- 1 tbsp curry powder (mild or hot)
- 1 heaped tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar
- 250ml chicken stock
- 2 small tsp honey or maple syrup

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas 6. Line a baking tray with non-stick baking paper.
2. To make the red onion pickle, simply place all the ingredients in a small bowl and add a splash of very hot kettle water. Leave to pickle while you get on with the rest of the dish. When ready to serve, use a fork to pick out the onion, allowing the excess water to drip off.
3. To make the curry sauce, heat the oil in a large saucepan and fry the onion over a low heat for 10–12 minutes until softened but not browned. Add the garlic and ginger and cook for 2 minutes. Stir in the flour and cook for another minute.
4. Add the remaining sauce ingredients and turn the heat up to medium. Simmer for 15 minutes until thickened. Taste and season if necessary. Keep warm.
5. Grab three plates, placing the flour on the first, the beaten egg on the second and the crushed cornflakes on the third.
6. Dip each chicken breast in the flour, shaking off any excess, then in the egg, ensuring they are fully coated. Dredge the breasts in the cornflakes, patting down to ensure they are evenly coated all over.
7. Pop the chicken breasts on the lined baking tray and cook in the oven for 25–30 minutes, flipping halfway through, until the chicken is piping hot and cooked through (when it is no longer pink and the juices run clear).
8. At this point, you can either blitz the curry sauce in a blender until smooth, pass it through a sieve or simply eat it as it is.
9. Slice the chicken breasts into thick pieces and transfer to plates or bowls. Pour over the curry sauce and top with the red onion pickle, torn coriander leaves and sliced chilli. Serve with crunchy salad leaves on the side or rice, if you like.





When you bake, make sure all that's left are the crumbs



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EASY SEA BASS PARCELS

Who needs fish and chips when you can cook your own delicious fish dish at home? Courtney says: "This is the quickest and easiest way to cook fish (in my opinion). You can pop everything in some baking paper, wrap it up, pop it in the oven and get on with a workout. Your food will be done in no time."

CARBS 17.8G

CALORIES 248

FAT 7.6G

PROTEIN 27.2G

SERVES: 2

INGREDIENTS

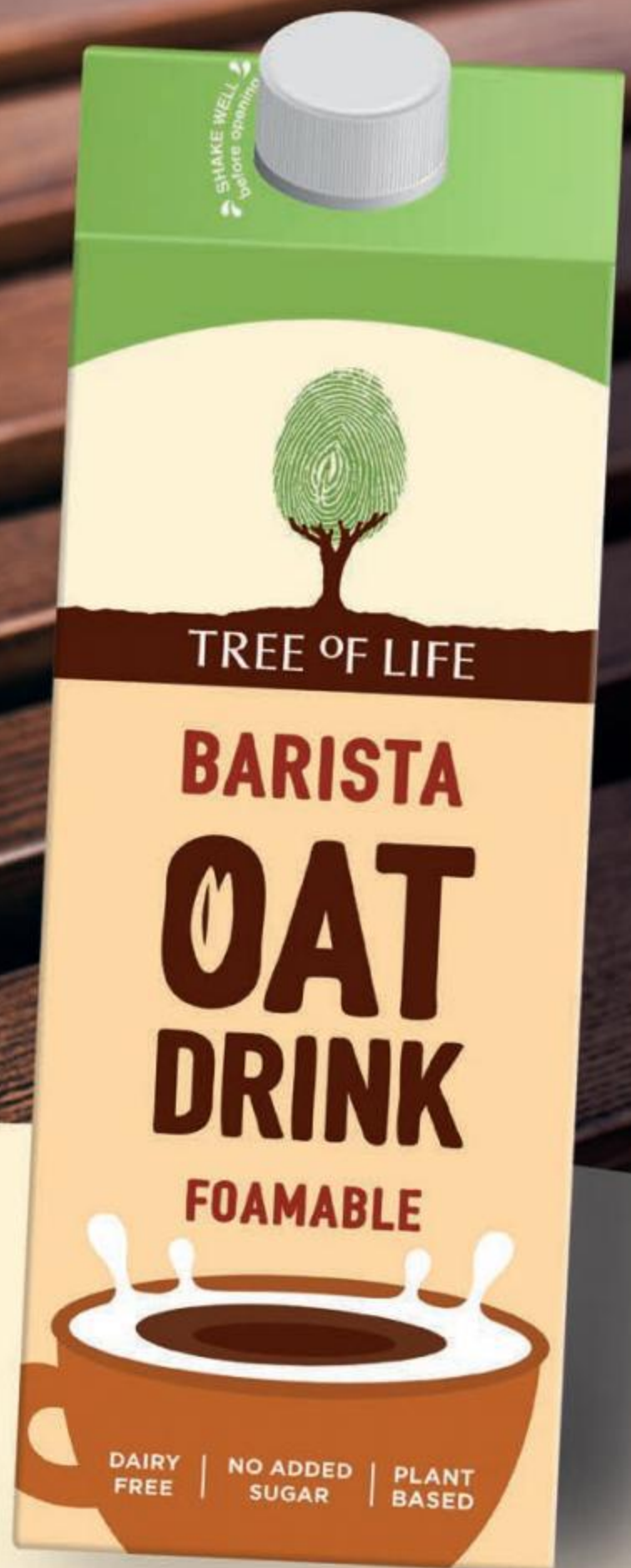
- 8 cherry tomatoes
- 1 red onion, finely sliced
- 1 fennel bulb, finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- 2 tsp capers
- Small handful of fresh dill (or use fresh basil leaves)
- 2 sea bass fillets (or use cod/trout/bream)
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 heaped tsp red pesto
- 1 lemon, cut into slices
- 2 tbsp white wine (optional, but works great)
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/gas 5.
2. Grab some non-stick baking paper (or foil) and cut two squares large enough to encase the fish and the vegetables in two parcels – about 40 x 40cm each should do the trick.
3. Divide the vegetables between the two squares, then add the garlic, capers and dill (or basil) and pop the fish on top. Season well with sea salt and black pepper and drizzle with the olive oil. At this stage, you could also add any additional flavours you might like, such as chilli flakes or different herbs.
4. Spread the pesto over the fish and place the lemon slices on top. Spoon over the wine, if using.
5. Pull the sides of the paper up and wrap the fish tightly, making sure that it's completely enclosed (the secret to this recipe is to ensure there is nowhere for the steam to escape, as it is this that will cook the fish and vegetables).
6. Bake the parcels for 15–20 minutes until the fish is cooked and the vegetables are tender but still have a nice crunch.



Recipes extracted from *Fit Foods and Fakeaways: 100 Healthy and Delicious Recipes* by Courtney Black (£14.99, Harper Thorsons).



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'A great pick me up after an illness.'



'A must have item in your medicine cupboard!'



'Highly recommend if you need a pick me up'



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



'Excellent after illness to regain strength and appetite.'



'Great stuff, really fights fatigue!'



93% of users rate Strath® 4 or 5 stars!

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