



Nutrition CLINIC

PRACTICAL EXPERT ADVICE FOR
YOUR HEALTH AND DIET DILEMMAS

Q I've heard bottled water is bad for you – should I steer clear?

Gemma says: "Bottled water is highly convenient, particularly in countries where the tap water may be of poor quality. In these places I would recommend bottled water, however, in day-to-day life I would absolutely steer clear of it."

"To start with, there's the environmental impact of producing so many bottles and shipping water from one place to another. Chemicals from plastic bottles also leech into the water, particularly in warm environments, for example when a bottle is left in a hot car, and these chemicals are linked to cancer and endocrine disruption."

"I recommend you get a good-quality under-sink filter on your tap, preferably a solid block carbon filter, or multi-stage filter, and transport your own water in glass bottles."

Q I'm regularly reaching for late-night snacks. How can I avoid my midnight cravings?

Filip says: "The secret is organising your diet and lifestyle in order to avoid those midnight cravings."

"Make sure you get a good night's sleep as this ensures that your hormones will be working at an optimal level the day after, and therefore your craving and satiety sensors will do so too. Scientific studies have shown that sleep-deprived people tend to go for high-calorie and sugary meals – indicating that their craving receptors are not functioning well."

"Consuming meals high in fibre and protein, with a controlled amount of wholesome carbohydrates (known as a low-GI diet) will help you maintain a steady blood sugar level, which will also tame your cravings. And remember to listen to your body. It may be seeking the energy it didn't get during the day, so opt for a bigger breakfast and lunch and increase your fibre intake during dinner."

"Excessive alcohol also affects appetite, so ensure you maintain good hydration levels and have high-protein and carb-filled meals the morning after a big night."

Q I suffer with constipation. What can I eat to improve my digestive system?

Sandra says: "You need lots of fibre which is a type of indigestible carbohydrate. Focus on soluble fibre when you have constipation – it absorbs water and forms a gel-like substance. This helps your stool pass smoothly through your bowels and improves its form and consistency. Soluble fibre can be found in beans and pulses, oats, fruits like bananas and apples, veg such as sprouts and sweet potatoes, and flaxseeds. It's also very important to drink plenty of water – aim for six to eight glasses a day."

"Vitamin C and magnesium are nutrients which are also known to help



move things along. Try including foods rich in vitamin C into your diet, such as oranges, red peppers and broccoli, and foods high in magnesium too, like leafy veg, nuts, seeds, fish, avocados and also dark chocolate! Healthy fats found in salmon, sardines and olive oil also aid the digestive system – eat these instead of following a low-fat diet which slows down digestion."

30-second summary:

Weight gain

Q I'd like to put on a couple of pounds – how can I do this healthily?

Helensays: "If you have visited your GP and they have ruled out any underlying medical causes, make small changes, such as having a slightly larger cereal bowl for breakfast, thicker slices of wholemeal bread for lunch or switching to full-fat dairy products. Whilst we all deserve a treat now and then, it's crucial that you gain weight the right way, and not by eating fat and sugar-laden foods that offer little in the way of nutrition, and can push up cholesterol levels.

"To help you gain weight gradually and safely, try: eating regularly – grazing on six smaller meals a day can be less overwhelming than three big ones; not filling up on fluids before meals as this can blunt your appetite; adding extras for more calories – such as beaten eggs in rice or full-fat crème fraîche and Greek yoghurt in soups and over cereal; and finally don't forget exercise – strength training can help you gain weight by building up your muscles, and may also fire up your appetite."



Q I regularly catch colds – are there foods that can boost my immunity?

Lisa says: "Supporting a healthy immune system starts with a healthy gut. Foods rich in live, healthy bacteria such as live yoghurts, miso and pickles all help to maintain a healthy bacterial population – these bacteria need feeding, so add onions, garlic, cabbage, beans and oats to your diet.

"Add some spice too. Garlic (ideally raw), contains high numbers of sulphuric enzyme compounds that act as natural antibiotics. Chillies rich in vitamin A support healthy mucus membranes which are essential for protecting the body from invading microbes. Ginger contains natural antimicrobials and antibiotics, and turmeric contains the compound curcumin which is anti-inflammatory and able to boost the body's immune system – enhance turmeric's properties with a good serving of black pepper.

"For a super cold-fighting meal, try adding these spices to a big bowl of hearty chicken soup, which has been found to reduce inflammatory white blood cells which increase upper respiratory tract infections, and the broth helps to thin mucus secretions, too."



Q I want to watch my waistline this summer. Should I avoid the barbecue?

James says: "Barbecue season has an unhealthy reputation of fatty meats sizzling away alongside buttered baps, packed full with high-fat sauces, but they needn't be unhealthy providing that you choose sensibly.

"Instead of shop-bought burgers, give yours the homemade touch by mixing lean minced beef, lamb or pork with grated carrot, onion and herbs, and binding together with skimmed milk or a beaten egg to form burgers. If fish is your thing, make your own kebabs by cubing cod or haddock and mixing with onion, mushrooms, tomatoes and peppers.

"Veggies are always a low-fat alternative to meat and you can easily create a tasty skewer that's packed full of nutrients and helps towards your five-a-day – think mushrooms, red peppers, tomatoes, courgette and avocado for a vibrant mix.

"When it comes to your sides, ensure you serve jacket potatoes and corn-on-the-cobs without butter, and remember, don't ruin your hard work by using high-calorie dressings!"

Our Experts



Sandra Greenbank, nutritional therapist, sandragreenbank.co.uk



Helen Bond is a consultant dietician to Seven Seas, helenbond.co.uk



Lisa Hutson is a nutritionist at Spire Hull and East Riding Hospital, spirehealthcare.com



Naturopath Gemma Hurditch lectures at CNM (College of Naturopathic Medicine), naturopathy-uk.com



Filip Koidis, Clinical Nutritionist, W1 Nutritionist, w1nutritionist.co.uk



James Collier is a registered nutritionist and co-founder of huel.com

- Include healthy fats in your diet to help your digestive system
- Spice can help strengthen your immunity
- Grazing on smaller meals throughout the day may help you gain weight healthily
- Transport your own water in glass bottles when you're out and about
- A good night's sleep can help banish your late-night cravings
- You can have a healthy barbecue this summer!