

HEALTH notebook

PICK OF THE MONTH



BREATHE EASY

Olbas Nasal Spray, £5.99 for 20ml; chemists nationwide. Clinically proven to unblock nasal passages within two minutes, this spray helps prevent the spread of viral infections and bacteria.

NATURAL HEALTH Q&A



Q How can I reduce inflammation?

Inflammation is your immune system's natural response to a 'threat' or trigger. If it persists, inflammation can become chronic and lead to conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, eczema, irritable bowel disease, diabetes and heart disease. Crucial triggers include diet, emotional stress, environmental factors, smoking and alcohol. Here are some tips you can try to fight inflammation naturally:

- Reduce triggers!
- Integrate turmeric, a top anti-inflammatory herb, into your diet as much as possible. Warm almond milk with a tsp of turmeric powder and a tsp of cinnamon tastes delicious.
- Adopt an anti-inflammatory organic diet, rich in omega-3 (wild salmon and avocados), antioxidant and detoxifying foods (cruciferous veg and berries), and avoid refined sugar.
- Get tested for food intolerances, particularly gluten, yeast and dairy.
- Useful herbs and supplements include omega-3, serrapeptase, bromelain, turmeric root, devil's claw, ginger, rosemary and green tea.

Naturopath and Herbalist Vera Martins graduated from CNM (College of Naturopathic Medicine). CNM trains students for careers in natural therapies (naturopathy-uk.com)



LET'S DANCE!

Love dancing? Good news, getting down with the beat is good for your brain, say scientists at the Centre for Neurodegenerative Diseases in Germany. During an 18-month study, one group took a 90-minute dance lesson a week and the other did 90 minutes of strength training. While both groups had an increase in the volume of the hippocampus – the area of the brain associated with learning, memory and emotion – the increase was greater for the dance group. The dancers also had more neural connections in the part of the brain linked to memory formation. Jive on!

40%

of Brits regularly sleep an hour less than is recommended. With insufficient REM sleep implicated in dementia risk, it's worth getting more kip!



PREGNANCY NEWS

If you're planning to start a family, you may want to consider taking vitamin B3 along with the recommended folic acid. Scientists have found that the vitamin (also known as niacin), described as one of the greatest discoveries in pregnancy research, can reduce the chance of miscarriage and birth defects. Researchers in Australia discovered that without a vital molecule known as NAD, a baby's organs may not develop correctly in the womb, but niacin can correct any deficiency. Take the optimum dose, 250mg, twice a day, and opt for timed-release capsules for easier absorption. Try LifePlan Vitamin B3, £7.99 for 90 capsules; lifeplan.co.uk.

WORDS: Eve Bogenpool PHOTOGRAPHY: iStock