

ASK *the* EXPERTS

We put your fitness, health and nutrition questions to our panel of experts...



Q I am curious about dairy free milks – what are the benefits?

Nutritionist AMANDA HAMILTON, who is working with Vita Coco says:

“With an increase in veganism and an estimated 70 percent of the world’s population diagnosed as lactose intolerant, it’s no wonder that the demand for ‘dairy-free’ products has increased in recent years. Yet a concern for many consumers when switching to a non-dairy alternative is the reduction of calcium in their diet. The advantage of the high plant based content in coconut milk is that the nutritional value of the milk remains intact, with 100ml equating to 45 percent RDA of calcium, compared to just 15 percent in almond milk. Oat and soya milk are good for protein levels and both low in fat, as is rice milk which is just 1g of fat per 100g compared to 4g in full fat cow’s milk. If you’re trying to limit your carbohydrate intake, then almond is a great option at 0.1g per 100ml. Coconut milk is one of the lowest calorie milks available, with some supermarket brands containing just 30 calories per 100ml. Coconut and oat milk are also shown to have the highest fibre content when compared to other dairy and ‘non-dairy’ products.”

Q Are there any foods that can boost my brain power?

Naturopath GEMMA HURDITCH, lecturer at CNM College of Naturopathic Medicine (naturopathy-uk.com), says:

Insufficient intake of nutrients can affect memory function, so avoid the empty calories of highly processed foods, alcohol, and high sugar snacks. Instead, choose a close-to-nature, nutrient-dense low glycemic-load diet. Oily fish such as small mackerel, herring, anchovies, sardines and salmon have essential fatty acids linked to brain function. Minimise red meat intake, and eat lots of green leafy vegetables. Choose quinoa and brown rice over processed grains. Incorporate seeds and nuts into your diet, plus herbs and spices. Buying organic helps reduce our exposure to chemicals. Exercise (at least a brisk walk daily) keeps your brain active, and get good sleep too will all help.

Q How can I balance my hormones naturally?

ANGELIQUE PANAGOS, nutritionist and hormonal expert (angeliquepanagos.com) says:

The idea of hormonal harmony may seem out of reach for many of us (especially if you suffer with mood swings, bloating, or heavy periods), but it can be achieved with a little know-how. The problem is, our hormones are hugely affected by our busy lifestyles. Things such as stress, diet, lack of sleep and no exercise can all throw things out of sync, sending our bodies into hormonal chaos. To restore that balance, try to follow these simple steps:

1. Avoid the sweet, white and fluffy – However tempting

they are, ditch processed carbs and sugars, such as cakes and pastries, and embrace whole foods instead to prevent blood sugar spikes.

2. Nourish – Our hormones need a steady flow of nutrients from the foods we eat. One that’s often over-looked is fats. Our sex hormones are made from fats (the good kind), and we need them to thrive! Try enjoying a sprinkling of flax seed, some avocado, oily fish or olive or coconut oil.

3. Get moving – Even if it’s just a stroll around a park with a friend, get moving every single day! Enjoy a brisk walk, yoga, Pilates, HIIT, a run or jog, or a swim.

4. Prioritise sleep – Sleep is a necessity, not a luxury! Make sure you enjoy a good night’s rest every night, and your hormones will thank you for it.

5. Stress less – This may be easier said than done, but try to ensure you do some deep breathing or daily meditation, practise gratitude and ditch the smart phones before bedtime to see cortisol levels balance out.

STAR BUY

Lucy Bee Extra Virgin Coconut Oil, £6.99
Planet Organic

LITTLE HELPERS

OOOMEGA Flaxseed Milk, £1.99, Waitrose

Clearspring’s Organic Coconut Milk, £2.19, clearspring.co.uk

Almond Breeze Original Almond Milk, £1.50, Tesco

