



ASK THE EXPERTS

Don't suffer in silence – our wellbeing wonder team of experts is on hand to answer your health questions.

Is there a limit on how many supplements I should take? If so, which are the ones to prioritise?

Gemma Hurditch, naturopath lecturer at College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM) (naturopathy-uk.com), says:

“This is an important question to ask a qualified nutritional therapist on an individual basis. The questions that need to be addressed include: What isn't being met by the diet? Food-sourced nutrients are by far the best and confer the greatest health benefits. An organic plant-based and predominantly wholefood diet goes a long way to providing what we need.

“You also need to ask if any of the supplements you plan to take reduce the absorption or efficacy of the others. Calcium supplements, for example, can reduce the absorption of other minerals like iron or zinc. What is the health status of the supplement taker? Is there any disease that needs to be considered? Some supplements can exacerbate certain health conditions. How much should be taken? More isn't necessarily better, and when taking a number of supplements the possibility of getting into ‘toxic doses’ of certain nutrients is a risk.”

My hormones are driving me crazy. What can help control them and get me back on track?

Susie Perry Debice, nutritional therapist at Cleanmarine (cleanmarinekrill.co.uk), says:

“There's nothing quite like the ebb and flow of monthly female hormones to make you feel emotionally and physically challenged. Changing what you eat can really help to smooth over the edges – cut out caffeine, reduce sugar and focus on eating meals containing protein and slow release carbs to help balance out blood sugar as this has a positive impact on mood and energy.

“Concentrate on eating plenty of natural foods – nuts, seeds, fruits and vegetables and top up on foods that contain hormone balancing phyto-oestrogens such as soya sauce, miso, soya yoghurt, flax seeds, flax oil, cucumber, chickpeas, lentils, alfalfa, sunflower seeds and sesame seeds. Next, take a nutritional supplement to support your monthly cycle – a combination of omega 3 krill oil, B vitamins, soy isoflavones, rosemary oil and vitamin D works in synergy to help with hormone balance, metabolism, combat fatigue and tiredness and also contribute to a better mood.

“Finally, it's time to stress check! Anxiety impacts the body in many ways and it can send hormone levels out of whack causing your monthly symptoms to intensify. Massage, counselling and even exercise are all effective tools for disarming your stress.”

What are some of the best natural contraceptives to try?

Meg Wilson, consultant gynaecologist (london-gynaecology.com) says:

“The idea of a ‘natural’ method of contraception is appealing and a good option for many women, however it does require a bit of consideration as to whether it is the right choice for you.

“There are many contraceptive apps available but ‘Natural Cycles’ is the first app to be certified as a recognised form of contraception in Europe (European Medicines Agency). It asks you to input your menstrual period dates and take a daily temperature reading. It then uses an algorithm to determine which days you may be fertile. It will give you a green light on days you are not fertile and a red light on the days you may fall pregnant. On the red light days you will have to think about a backup method of contraception or perhaps not have sex at all.

“It could be an option for women who have not got on well with other contractive methods due to side effects or health problems. No contraceptive method is 100 percent effective and if used perfectly the app has been found to be 99 percent effective. Natural Cycles is a good choice for those who don't want to use condoms and are not at risk of sexually transmitted diseases.”