



ASK THE EXPERTS

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

I often have dry red eyes in the cold weather, can you recommend any natural ways to soothe them?

Dr Sheraz Daya, chairman and medical director at Centre for Sight (centreforsight.com), says:

“There are numerous reasons why your eyes can become more dry during the cooler months and these can be all or a combination of: colder temperature, wind, central heating and lower humidity levels inside your home. All of these promote drying of the eyes and in turn inflammation leading to irritation and redness. In order to reduce these problems it is best to use artificial tears or a tear gel prior to going out, perhaps wear a pair of protective glasses when going outside, and when indoors consider a humidifier. It is also very important to keep well hydrated – so drink lots of water.

“Evaporative dry eye is frequently a result of poor meibomian gland secretions which are caused by omega 3 deficiency. Long term it is worth looking at your diet and upping your omega 3 intake with these groups of foods – seafood, dairy and grains and nuts. Natural or re-esterified omega supplements such as Omega Eye (from Scope Pharmaceuticals) can also be taken to increase your intake in omega.”

My lips are feeling really dry, how can I combat this naturally?

Sarah Hawkins, accredited master coach and registered nurse (sarahhawkins.com) says:

“There are several things that we can do to look after our lips. Remembering to not lick them is at the top of the list as although this makes them feel moist briefly, it will dry them out as your saliva evaporates off them. Resist the licking and slap on some oil or use a lip balm. Natural oils like coconut, almond, jojoba, olive, cocoa, rosehip and shea butter will all add moisture to your lips.

“There are ingredients in many lip balms that will actively dry the affected area out, so avoid petroleum jelly and petrolatum, mineral oil, phenol, flavours like camphor, menthol, eucalyptus and limonene and lip balms with a long list of un-pronounceable ingredients, chemicals, colours and fragrances. Make sure you apply balm at night too, to ensure your lips stay hydrated. If they are dry and scaly, use a natural, gentle sugar or salt exfoliator to remove dead skin, then moisturise with oil or a balm.

“Using a humidifier will add moisture to the dry air and ultimately your lips. A deficiency in vitamins A, B, C, B2 (riboflavin) and E will cause problems, so eating a nutritious diet and staying hydrated will help keep your lips in good condition. Be pro-active and you'll soon notice a difference!”

What are some ways to ease the side effects of menopause?

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

“The best ways to try and ease menopause side effects are related to diet. Choose organic foods for more beneficial plant chemicals and fewer toxic residues. Be sure to eat a handful of raw nuts and two tablespoons of freshly ground flaxseeds daily. Reducing your intake of red meat, and instead choosing only grass-fed lean meats is also important. Boost your intake of oily fish and switch all white flour products for wholegrain. Increase your consumption of green leafy vegetables and limit your intake of sugary products and alcohol. A more heavily plant-based diet can support an easier transition through menopause. Maca is useful for menopausal symptoms with sexual dysfunction and be sure to source products containing ‘standardised extract’ for their active ingredients. You can also use coconut oil as a vaginal lubricant.”