



Ask our
experts



STAY HYDRATED

We invite our readers to ask a natural therapist their burning questions. Naturopath **Gemma Hurditch** is our expert for this issue, for the College of Naturopathic Medicine

Q How can I ensure that my children stay well hydrated during the hotter months. Neither of my kids like drinking water - they take tiny sips and rarely drink more than half a pint a day.

A For some children, drinking water is not a natural habit, but it can be encouraged. Kids generally respond well to exploring, learning and then putting into practice their new understanding, rather than drinking water just as a directive from you. Depending on their ages, could you investigate with them the importance of water and what it does for the body? Make water consumption fun; freeze water and enjoy 'ice' lollies on warmer days, choose a colourful reusable bottle together. Each of your children can select his or her own design to help with identification! And make sure that water is readily available; have a jug of

iced water on the table every mealtime, place filled bottles by the door or on bedside tables for example. Make sure you're carrying some for long journeys. Children's taste buds can be more sensitive, so it could be that your tap water doesn't taste good to them, a filter could change this. Adding half water to fresh juices and smoothies, offering watery fruits like watermelon, and serving cooled herbal teas such as peppermint can also increase their fluid intake. Adding sliced fruit and herbs to drinking water can also improve consumption.

Q I've read that sunscreen blocks Vitamin D production. How can I ensure that my family and I are sun-safe?

A The balance between natural vitamin D production and being sun-smart is going to be different for everyone as we all have varying levels of pigment (melanin)

in our skin which determines how quickly we produce vitamin D and how quickly we burn. Darker skin will need significantly more sunlight before producing vitamin D and also before burning. Some sun exposure on bare skin in the early morning and late afternoon can boost vitamin D and help skin conditions such as eczema. Natural protection is preferred in the middle part of the day. Sun induced skin damage happens surprisingly quickly. Keep exposure limited between 11am and 3pm in summer months and use sunscreen to avoid getting burnt. I prefer zinc-based sunscreens and natural sun protective oils such as Carrot Seed or Red Raspberry Seed oil. Stay in the shade and wear non-sheer protective clothing. Sunglare such as around pools and water can be a problem - check the UVP (ultraviolet protection) index on any sunshades. Boost

vitamin D with foods such as mackerel, sardines and egg yolks, and eat antioxidant foods such as citrus and leafy greens for extra skin protection.

Q I turned 40 this year and I have found that my skin condition has changed dramatically. I am much more prone to spots, redness, and dry patches. Is there something I can change in my diet to ensure clearer skin?

A This sounds like the balance of fats in your diet is in need of fine tuning. Reduce your intake of omega 6, which is a pro-inflammatory fatty acid found in vegetable oils such as sunflower, soybean and corn oils. Mayonnaise and salad dressings, processed, packaged goods and snacks often contain high levels of omega 6 rich oils, as does grain-fed meats and dairy foods - so limit these. Boost your anti-inflammatory dietary factors such as omega 3, found in oily fish; mackerel, sardines and anchovies, and walnuts or chia seeds. Grind a tablespoon of flaxseeds fresh daily and add to smoothies or salads. Avoid cooking with fat - poach, bake and steam where possible and favour lean cuts of any meat. Increase your intake of fresh, organic vegetables and fruit, and increase your use of spices such as turmeric, oregano and cinnamon. Going alcohol free may improve skin redness. Ensure hydration with plenty of filtered water. If you have changed skin products recently this may also be causing problems. Try using a microfibre cloth and warm water only to wash your face and use un-fragranced natural organic skin care products.

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