



# ASK THE EXPERTS

Our brilliant panel of wellbeing experts solve your health issues

*“What are some of the ways I can keep my skin protected during the warmer weather?”*

**Gemma Hurditch**, naturopath at the College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM) ([naturopathy-uk.com](http://naturopathy-uk.com)), says:

Sun-induced skin damage happens surprisingly quickly. Zinc based sunscreens and natural sun protective oils, such as carrot or red raspberry seed oil, are preferable to the cocktail of chemicals in many commercial sunscreens. Keep exposure limited between 11am and 3pm. During the hottest part of the day stay in the shade and wear non-sheer protective clothing. Be mindful of sun glare off water, sand and concrete.

UVB rays from the sun stimulate healthy vitamin D, but also skin damage and sunburn. Limited but regular sun exposure is preferable to sun baking or getting burnt. If you do get too much sun, apply aloe vera sap directly from the plant. Aloe is also a worthwhile houseplant for improving air quality.

Antioxidant-rich foods such as brightly coloured fruit and vegetables can minimise sun damage and inflammation. Top up with (preferably organic) in-season red peppers, carrots, spinach, and cooked tomato products.

*“My work has been very challenging of late, thanks to a tricky relationship with a colleague, and I can feel it having an impact on me. Is there anything you can recommend to help me get back on track with them?”*

**Anne James**, a coach at Sea Change ([sea-change.me](http://sea-change.me)), says:

Work and relationships are two huge elements that influence how we experience life. We invest a lot of time and energy in both. When one of them feels a bit off kilter, we feel the ripples in all kinds of ways. The ‘impact’ that you mention is another way of describing those ripples, and do you know what? They are giving you great information that can support you in getting to a better place. You mention getting ‘back on track with them’, suggesting that there have been times when this relationship was better. If so, what was good about it? Can you identify moments when it still feels OK now? What has changed? Is this something that you can tackle alone, or is there a trusted colleague who could offer support? There are possibly other non-work relationships that have had occasional ‘hiccups’ – think about how you tackled those and what skills you used. Exploring the situation using some of these suggestions may give you new insights and perspectives, and a greater chance of influencing where this relationship goes next.

*Are there any dietary changes I can make to ease menopausal symptoms?*

**Dr Louise Newson**, GP and menopause expert at Spire Parkway hospital, says:

“The menopause can be a tricky time but there are many things that you can do to ease its symptoms. For starters, it’s very important to eat a healthy, balanced diet when you go through the menopause. Having lower levels of oestrogen in your body, as is the case during the menopause, can increase your future risk of heart disease, diabetes and also osteoporosis. To help balance this, eat food containing phyto (plant) oestrogens, which binds with oestrogen receptor sites in the body cells, increasing the effect. Soya milk and flour, linseeds, tofu, tempeh and miso, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, celery, rhubarb and green beans all contain phytoestrogens. Eating seeds and legumes containing vitamin E and zinc can also help normalise hormone levels. There are things you should avoid, too. Cutting down on alcohol and stopping smoking can help to reduce the number of hot flushes, and reducing caffeine intake can also help with any symptoms. Other foods likely to trigger or worsen hot flushes are spicy foods and high percentage chocolate.”