

The naturopathic advisor



Natural Lifestyle has teamed up with experts at CNM (College of Naturopathic Medicine) to answer some of your burning health questions. This issue, you asked:



Q What home-made skincare treats can I make as great Christmas gifts?

How about bath bombs? They are a great way to relax and warm up on a cold winter's night, and can be imaginatively presented, too. You'll need to invest in a bath bomb mould, which is a round mould like a tennis ball that opens in two

halves. You can also have fun experimenting with some essential oils to see which scents you like best. Make sure you use good quality essential oils, though, not fragrance oils, which can be full of toxic nasties. Try this simple recipe, for

which you will need:

Dry ingredients:

- ½ cup Epsom salts
- 1 cup baking soda
- ½ cup citric acid
- Add dried lavender or rose petals if you want to get fancy!

Wet ingredients:

- 1 tsp water
- 3tsp oil (argan or almond oil, or hemp oil or olive oil)

• 2 tsp in total of your choice of essential oil: Lavender or chamomile is soothing and suits all skin types, patchouli and sandalwood are traditionally considered to be more 'masculine' scents, peppermint and lemon are reviving and refreshing and orange and geranium are purifying and uplifting.

• **Optional:** You can add several drops of natural food colouring to give the colour of your choice.

To make:

- Thoroughly mix the dry ingredients together.
- In a separate bowl or jug, mix the wet ingredients.
- Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients slowly with a whisk.
- Once combined, you have to work quickly or the mixture will dry out: Press your mixture into each half of

the bath bomb mould then press together. When removed from the mould, allow the bath bomb to stand and dry. Avoid using 'fresh' ingredients unless your gift is for immediate use. Other ideas for making products that will keep include foot balms. Coconut oil is very rich and nourishing and will stay firm in the cooler months. Decant some into small gift jars from a larger jar of organic coconut oil (you may need to stand the jar in warm water until it becomes liquid), pour into your gift jars and add 10 drops of peppermint essential oil per 30ml, for a special 'feet treat'.



Your question has been answered by Naturopath, Gemma Hurditch, for CNM. For information on CNM training in a range of natural health therapies, visit www.naturopathy-uk.com

HERBAL HEALTH

Get going

Soothe bowel trouble with the help of natural health options.

Constipation, even when suffered at a minor level for short periods of time, is often a factor in other problems, such as bloating, abdominal discomfort, and lethargy. Resolving constipation can, therefore, benefit you in many ways.

To prevent constipation, it is necessary to have a soft and bulky stool, most easily achieved by eating foods that are high in healthy fibre and promote the proliferation of friendly bacteria.

Foods that contain healthy fibre include:

- **Green vegetables** (most easily digested when cooked rather than eaten raw), for example, broccoli, kale, spinach, cabbage, leeks, broad beans, runner beans, and courgettes.
- **Dried fruit** (especially if soaked in water overnight and then heated up, or simmered in a little water for five minutes before eating), for example, prunes, figs, sultanas, mango, pineapple, dates.
- **Tip:** Prune juice is also very helpful, especially for children with a sluggish bowel.

Look out for an organic prune juice with no added sugar.

People whose diet contains a large quantity of wheat-based products sometimes find that reducing the amount is helpful for their gut function, but ensuring that any eaten are wholegrain will also help. Similarly, going for brown rather than white rice can be beneficial.

Get going with herbal laxatives

Most herbal laxatives are found in tablet form and this can be for a number of reasons. Many well-known herbal laxatives are reasonably bulky (for example, linseed has a mucilaginous coating that swells in the presence of water) and it is their bulking action in the bowel that prompts the bowel to move. The feeling of pressure on the bowel wall triggers nerve messages that tell the body the bowel is full and needs to empty. This type of laxative works well when someone has hard, dry stools that are small in circumference and make no impact on the bowel wall, which tends to happen when the diet is full of highly processed, refined foods. Obviously, the



bulking effect will not be had by anything except a physically bulking agent. A tincture cannot have this effect.

Linseed is known to exert its action 12-24 hours after taking it. It must be taken with plenty of water to swell the linseeds. Maximum results are usually seen after two to three days of daily use.

Additionally, some of the herb constituents that affect the bowel do not transfer well into alcohol. Sennosides A and B, found in senna, are quite large molecules and are not soluble in either water (tisanes or percolates) or tinctures.