

Your health

Q & A



You asked: "I'm 81 and whilst I lost my husband of 60 years two years ago, who made me very happy, I still have lots of great things in my life. I worry about things, but deep down I know I should be happy. Please tell me how to get rid of these stupid feelings?"



NICOLE BARTON ANSWERS: "Thank you for your beautifully vulnerable and honest letter. I'm so sorry you lost your husband when you were so close and shared so much together. I want you to know it's absolutely normal to still have sad feelings and that it's okay, even though they feel uncomfortable. There are no 'shoulds' in this situation; don't beat yourself up. Remember that 'unhappy' feelings, whilst inconvenient, are perfectly okay – and will pass. What we also know is that these feelings are not there all the time – and they don't mean anything about you as a person. Just because you have unhappy thoughts, which create unhappy feelings, doesn't mean you are always unhappy. Our experience of life changes, moment to moment – and I can see from your appreciation of the great things that you have moments of joy! The thing you mention about the 'deep down' knowing that happiness is underneath shows that this intuitive place is within you: deep down you know that underneath your sad thinking you are okay – even when it doesn't always feel like that. I hope that helps! Remember – less of the 'shoulds'; just be gentle with yourself and follow what feels right, moment to moment. Now you know this, you'll probably notice happy feelings when they're there too!"

■ Nicole Barton is a holistic wellbeing specialist, mentor and journalist. Visit www.wellbeingwriter.co.uk

You asked: "Why should I consider supplementing with vitamin C? And what should I bear in mind when choosing a supplement?"



SUSIE DEBICE ANSWERS: "What many people don't know about vitamin C is that somewhere along our evolutionary journey, we humans lost the ability to make our own vitamin C. This is an unfortunate twist of fate considering vitamin C is phenomenally important for a tremendous number of physiological and cellular activities. The many roles of this vital antioxidant include supporting normal immune system function, contributing to energy production and metabolism, assisting with neurotransmitter production, aiding nerve transmissions, supporting hormone balance, contributing to a healthy stress response, acting as a co-factor for collagen synthesis and promoting skin anti-ageing. Nowadays, we must obtain enough vitamin C from our daily diet (berries, citrus fruits, green leafy vegetables, parsley), since vitamin C can't be stored in the body. Stress and poor diet are factors that could leave you short on vitamin C, making a daily supplement a sensible solution. But which type of vitamin C should you buy? Ascorbic acids tend to be unsettling for sensitive tummies and aren't very absorbable, mineral ascorbates or chelates are a step in the right direction, but it's liposomal vitamin C that has the wow factor when it comes to absorption, fighting free radicals, recharging collagen and supporting the body's vitamin C levels."

■ Susie DeBice BSc Hons Dip ION is a food scientist and nutritional therapist with 20 years' experience as a health writer, spokesperson, therapist and advisor for Liposomal Altrient C. Visit www.abundanceandhealth.co.uk

You asked: "I'm 65 and suffer with insomnia. I don't like taking insomnia drugs for risk of falls. Can you suggest any natural solutions?"



GEMMA HURDITCH ANSWERS: "Cherry juice could be just the thing. Research (although funded by the Cherry Marketing Institute), found that Montmorency (sour) cherry juice taken twice daily improved sleep time in insomniacs by about 1.5 hours. Cherry juice shows promise on improving memory and cognition and reducing symptoms of dementia. It is also a great antioxidant and immune- and cardiovascular-supportive nutrient, so it makes a wonderful tonic for the 50-somethings. Organic juice for maximum nutrients and minimal pollutants is best – sold in glass bottles in your local health food shop. Take 200ml morning and night. Also, make sure you take no stimulants after 11am (tea, coffee, cola or chocolate) and no more than one glass of wine or beer. Initiate a sleep routine that gets you ready to relax – lavender essential oil on the pillow, chamomile or lemon balm tea and no computer screens (including e-readers and mobile phones) for 90 minutes before bed. Ensure no wifi routers are on or that any equipment is on standby. If you're prone to a worrying mind, write down your concerns so you can pick them up in the morning and have some 'time off' in the evening. A dark, quiet bedroom at a comfortable temperature is ideal. Stick to a bedtime before midnight so your body gets into a regular rhythm. Watching the sunrise and sunset can also help reset your sleep-wake cycle."

■ Naturopath Gemma Hurditch lectures for CNM (College of Naturopathic Medicine). CNM trains students for successful careers in natural health therapies in class and online. Visit www.naturopathy-uk.com



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