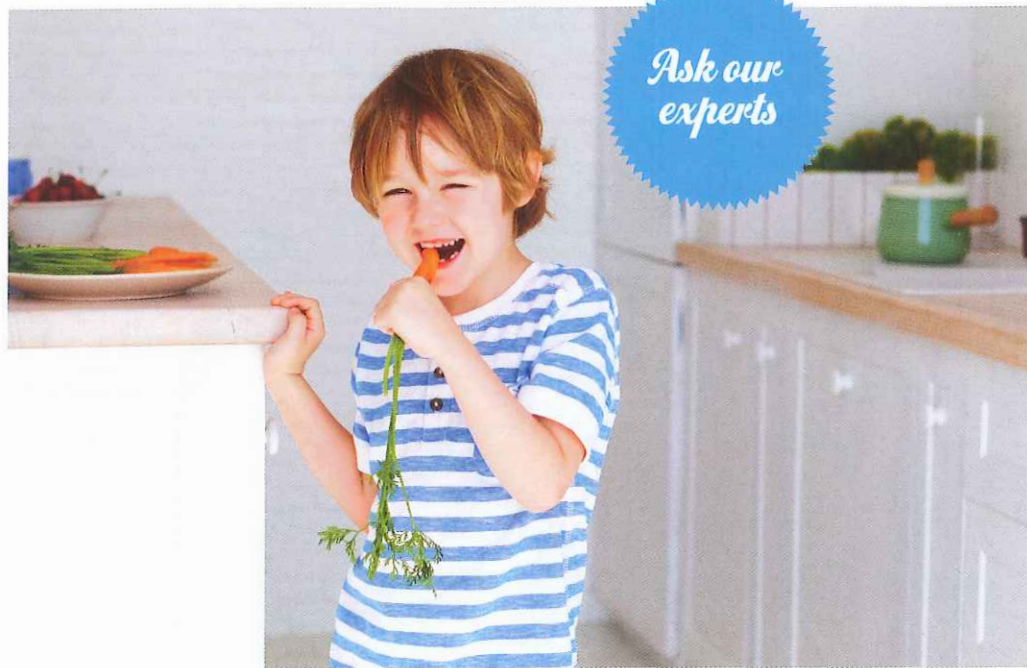


Ask our experts



NO FUSS EATING

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 My son is a faddy eater and is going through a 'white' phase of his diet - he'll only eat carbs. How can I encourage more variety into his diet? If this is just a phase do I need to worry about his future health?

A Fussy eating is not uncommon in young children. Occasionally it can be indicative of autism spectrum disorder so if you are at all concerned, it is worth visiting your GP. The GAPS diet by Natasha Campbell-McBride is something that you may like to investigate for support if that is the case; it is a big undertaking, but well worth the effort.

To encourage variety, offer some of his acceptable foods, with an additional couple of things to try if he wants to (without stress or emphasis) such as a single strip of red pepper, or a couple of circles of carrot. Improve the nutritional value of his 'safe foods' - for example add cauliflower,

ghee and/or coconut cream to mashed potato. Cannelini beans and organic tofu can often be enjoyed by 'white food only' fussy eaters for extra protein. Smoothies made of your choice of milk with natural yoghurt, banana, cashews or almonds can encourage a good dose of nutrients within the chosen colour-scheme. Switching from white to brown versions of food (ie. brown bread, whole wheat pasta, brown rice) would be good for the whole family, and sets a good example to follow.

Q What can I eat to protect my mental health this winter? Often at this time of year I find myself suffering from low periods. Is there a way to avoid these through my diet?

A It is particularly important to boost your vitamin D levels, so consider eating egg yolks, tofu, mushrooms and chesse and getting as much sunlight as possible. Clarified

butter (ghee) can be used for cooking, and organic eggs are a good regular breakfast choice. Look out for sun treated mushrooms that have a good vitamin D profile. Ideally take a blood test to track your vitamin D levels, as many people can find that supplementation is necessary. A vitamin D supplement containing 800-1000IU during and prior to winter is a good preventative measure. Eat plenty of organic berries as the phytonutrients can help with mood and are anti-inflammatory. Inflammation is being investigated as a major cause of mood disorders. Keep dietary inflammation to a minimum by following a Mediterranean diet, including plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit, extra virgin olive oil, nuts, seeds and a small amount of natural yoghurt. Increase spices, particularly turmeric, ginger, garlic, cloves

and cinnamon for their supportive properties. Avoid added sugar and processed foods. Daily exercise is crucial, 45 minutes daily should be a priority. Light therapy boxes can help mood, too.

Q I've started cycling and going to the gym in an effort to get fit this year. Can you recommend something that I can eat or drink post workout to help my recovery? I want to steer clear of energy drinks and gels if possible.

A I'm with you on steering clear of gels and energy drinks and opting for whole and natural foods. You will want to tailor your intake to suit your goals and intensity of training. Often people start an exercise regime with the intention of losing weight, but because working out increases our hunger levels, we can undo our 'good work' by using it as an excuse to eat above and beyond our requirements. Investigate the calories burnt by your activity and adjust accordingly. Focus on foods that give you a good dose of protein, and whole food carbohydrates (brown not white versions - brown rice, brown bread, whole wheat pasta etc or vegetables and fruit) to aid in muscle repair and recovery. Magnesium also soothes, so seek out magnesium rich foods such as nuts and seeds. Smoothies are great for convenient snacks to replace and replenish. Try spinach with frozen bananas, blueberries and cashew nuts for protein and healthy fats. It is best to refuel as soon as you can after your workout. Try avocado, almonds, hemp seeds and coconut milk with a pinch of sea salt for a savoury smoothie.

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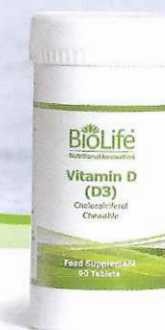
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