

# Natural Health

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES FOR YOUR MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT

ask the experts

Sepia, where there is exhaustion and irritability towards loved ones, or Aurum, where there is a feeling of failure or not being the "perfect mum". However I would strongly advise consulting a qualified homeopath as PND needs careful professional support – see the Society of Homeopaths [homeopathy-soh.org](http://homeopathy-soh.org)

## "HELP! I'M CONFUSED ABOUT VITAMINS"

**Is it better to take a combined vitamin and mineral pill or to take them as individual supplements? And in what situations might one need to take an individual supplement? I take a very good multi-supplement, but I also take vitamin C (1000mg) and selenium. Could I be overdosing?**

**Henrietta Norton advises:**

Many vitamins and minerals work in synergy together to enhance the effect of one another and in general are of more benefit taken together in a quality multivitamin & mineral supplement. This is supported in nature where a variety of nutrients are found naturally in foods.

However there are certain situations where it is also important to take individual nutrients over and above a multivitamin and mineral. For example, in city dwellers or those exposed to pollutants daily, such as smokers, the body's demand for antioxidants is higher than those that are not. In this situation, taking an extra antioxidant such as vitamin C or selenium is highly recommended. Also, certain conditions such as PMS or stress-related disorders may benefit from higher levels of the B vitamins, which are high in demand during these times.

Being aware of EU guidance on food supplements is especially important when combining your supplements. RDAs (Recommended Daily Allowance) and USLs (Upper Safety Levels) have been set to guide you on those levels at which it is recommended to take nutrients (RDAs) and the higher levels at which it has been shown safe to take them (USLs). Often there is a wide margin between the RDA and USL, giving you the go ahead to increase your intake of certain nutrients. However, a consultation with a nutritional therapist is the most trustworthy way of working out exactly what your requirements are.

## "WHY DO I KEEP GETTING BENIGN BREAST LUMPS?"

**I've had two benign cysts come up in my breasts in the last 12 months. My doctor assures me they're common in women of my age (I'm 34), but I'd like to know why they keep occurring. I would like them to stop because each time I find a new lump I have to go through the worry that it might be breast cancer. Do you have any advice?**

**Dr Shamim Daya advises:**

Whilst it is reassuring that these recurring breast cysts are benign, it is still a sign that the body is struggling with an imbalance on some level.

If these cysts tend to appear more pre-menstrually, then it is likely that there is a hormonal component. Fibrocystic breast disease is very common, and can often be linked to having a toxic bowel. So a good starting point would be to do a herbal bowel cleanse programme as well as cutting out refined carbohydrates, including bread, yeast, coffee and alcohol. It is important to drink plenty of water to maintain good hydration.

If the cysts do not subside thermal imaging of the breasts would help to determine any abnormal asymmetrical heat patterns and would be good to establish a baseline for monitoring any change in these patterns in the future.

Finally it would be useful to consider if these cysts are related to oestrogen dominance. Increasing fibre intake not only helps the bowel, but will often reduce such dominance. Do not forget the need for omega 3 and 6 oils for reducing breast cysts. Electro lymph lite sessions will also help to reduce lymphatic congestion in this region.

## "HELP ME STOP MY THRUSH ATTACKS"

**I get recurring bouts of mild thrush which is very difficult to shift. It's not bad enough for me to keep bothering my doctor, but it's just a bit itchy and bothersome. It's always worse around my period when I'm using tampons. Why does it keep coming back?**

**Henrietta Norton advises:**

Thrush is an overgrowth of the yeast organism *Candida albicans*, which affects the sensitive pH level and balance of friendly bacteria in the gut and vagina. This can be provoked by many factors such as stress, a weakened immune system from illness or use of antibiotics, an unbalanced diet, and hormonal changes. Many women like you experience a flare up of thrush around the time of menstruation. This is due to the change in hormones around this time of your cycle which can disturb the pH level (acid/alkaline balance) in the vagina, providing ideal conditions for the uncontrolled growth of yeast. The use of tampons can exacerbate this problem as this also provides another warm and moist area for the yeast to develop further still.

Fortunately there is much that you can do to strengthen your body's own ability to tackle this overgrowth of yeast. As thrush can be encouraged by general nutritional deficiencies, taking a multivitamin and mineral is a very good place to start. Strengthening your immune system with 200mg of echinacea extract three times daily and 500mg of vitamin C twice daily will help your body to fight the infection. Stop the echinacea after three weeks for one week and resume if necessary. Taking a probiotic supplement to boost your body's supply of 'friendly' bacteria is essential. You can boost this further by eating live yogurt, whole-grains and vegetables, which feed the friendly bacteria, and avoiding sugary foods, white flour products, alcohol and processed foods, which reduce it.

## MEET THE PANEL

**DEE ATKINSON**



has been a practising medical herbalist since 1988 and now runs Napiers herbal health care in Edinburgh (the UK's largest herbal house), where she specialises in skin problems, arthritis and joint problems. She writes regular articles and columns in newspapers and magazines and has made

TV and radio appearances.

**STELLA NEW**



RSHom MBANT is a registered homeopath and nutritional therapist based in West Sussex, and technical consultant for Xynergy Health Products. Prior to her training she spent many years as an expedition leader, taking groups into some of the most challenging parts of the world, where she was inspired by the use

of natural remedies for treating all manner of ailments. Email info@stellanew.co.uk

**HENRIETTA NORTON**



has been a nutritional therapist since 2003. After working at The Harley Street Clinic and The Organic Pharmacy, she developed her interest in the link between food and mental wellbeing, working with Patrick Holford at The Brain Bio Centre. She is currently Senior Nutritionist at Healthy Direct ([healthydirect.co.uk](http://healthydirect.co.uk)), researching and developing new products. Henrietta is a fully insured member of BANT, an associate member of the Royal Society of Medicine, and a member of the Guild of Health Writers.

**DR SHAMIM DAYA**



BM DRCOG has 25 years clinical experience as a GP and holistic practitioner, focusing on women's health. She combines nutrition, herbal medicine and advanced biochemical testing to reach the source of persisting symptoms. She also specialises in alternative breast screening using thermal imaging.

The Wholistic Medical Centre, 020 7580 7537, [www.wholisticmedical.co.uk](http://www.wholisticmedical.co.uk)

Tea tree oil and calendula are both anti-fungal and anti-inflammatory and have been shown to enormous benefit. A few drops of tea tree oil can be added to a tampon, dipped in live yogurt and inserted into the vagina for half an hour, or make a douche by adding a few drops to water. If you prefer not to use tampons you can also add a couple of drops of tea tree oil with live yoghurt to a sanitary towel to wear overnight.

What else can you do? Synthetic underwear can create a warm environment so avoid by wearing cotton underwear; avoid feminine sprays or wipes and commercial douches. Use mild, unperfumed soap or preferably tea tree oil wash when in the bath or shower. If you are experiencing any colour, blood or smell to your discharge, you must contact your GP.