
Your Healthy Newsletter from Anna
Your Weekly Health Prescription - 25 February, 2009

I never thought I would describe garlic as tasting like liquorice, but check out one of this weeks items for the hottest health product to be launched in the UK, and some hopeful news for anyone with kidney disease - although it does mean giving up the fast food treats. I have also just discovered a new green tea with rice, so I will keep you posted on whether that has the same health benefits as regular green tea.

Wishing you the best of good health from Anna

In this issue:

- SYNTHETIC BONE BREAKTHROUGH
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- MALE INFERTILITY CAN POSE INCREASED TESTICULAR CANCER RISK
- NEW BLACK GARLIC BOOSTS IMMUNE SYSTEM

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- Astrological health profiles - Virgo 24 August-23 September
- Calcium and decreased digestive cancer risks
- Feast on Feta!
- Eggs are not the villains

SYNTHETIC BONE BREAKTHROUGH

Australian researchers at Queensland University of Technology have developed a synthetic biomaterial that encourages the body to create bone. This breakthrough could be the answer to successful bone grafts and treating bone disease because the new material interacts with blood and activates the initial stages of bone healing.

When you break a bone your body responds immediately by attracting blood clots and specialized cells to the site. The necessary proteins, hormones and other cells are immediately dispatched to create new bone, but sometimes

the body cannot carry out this natural process if the break is too great, or a tumour has been removed which leaves too great a gap for the body to fill. There are already bone grafts or synthetic materials being used but they have their limitations.

The new biomaterial encourages the body's natural clotting process, and promotes bone growth. The difference lies in its surface structure, which is coated by a special arrangement of polymers that attract the right proteins to the damaged bone. Some polymers attract proteins and others repel them and the Australian team believe that they have got the right balance so that the new material induces the proteins and hormones needed for the initial inflammatory response that starts the bone regeneration process.

It is hoped to run a patient trial later this year and that this will be a significant move in treating the many patients who are not able to have bone grafts or other treatments to deal with their fractures.

FOODS TO AVOID WITH KIDNEY DISEASE

Anyone with kidney disease must avoid foods that have a high level of phosphorus such as certain meats, dairy products, whole grains, potatoes and nuts because their kidneys have difficulty in processing and expelling it. The risks are not small; a high level of phosphorus in such patients can lead to heart disease, bone disease, and even death.

That's all very well if you know which foods contain it, as most patients do, but new research from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland has discovered that a great deal of processed and fast food actually contains phosphorus additives which can be just as dangerous. Apparently it has become an increasingly common practice by food manufacturers to include phosphorus additives, such as sodium phosphate or pyrophosphate, to processed foods. The reasons are the usual commercial ones; to improve the flavour and extend the shelf life, particularly in meats, cheeses, baked goods, and drinks.

The law requires labels to state calorie, fat, and sodium content but not phosphorus which makes it impossible for kidney disease patients to know how much phosphorus they are eating. One 'culprit'

is chicken from fast food chains or restaurants although chicken is listed as a 'safe' food for dialysis patients.

Although this is primarily of concern to those with severe or moderate kidney disease, it also affects the population as a whole. Previous research has found that high phosphorus diets appear to lower bone density and increase fracture risk because they decrease the level of calcium in your blood.

Phosphorus is already abundant in naturally-occurring foods and these are some of the highest sources that you might want to limit in your diet:

- * Milk and milk products
- * Whole grains, including bread, crackers, cereal, rice and pasta
- * Dried beans, peas and lentils
- * Potatoes
- * Organ meats, including liver, tongue, kidney, heart and giblets
- * Nuts and seeds, including peanut butter and other nut butters
- * Chocolate and other sweets made with milk, such as caramels
- * Cola soft drinks

MALE INFERTILITY CAN POSE INCREASED TESTICULAR CANCER RISK

Testicular germ cell cancer is the most common cancer among young men living in industrialized countries. The rate of increase has almost doubled from 1972-2002, and has been accompanied by a decline in semen quality and male fertility during the same period.

Many factors have been cited, including environmental pollutants, and this new research linking infertility and testicular cancer comes from a study of men who have come with their partners to get treatment for their infertility.

The study found that the men who had male factor infertility were nearly three times as likely to develop cancer as those free from the condition though the researchers are keen to stress that the absolute risk of developing testicular cancer remained low in this study and the link has yet to be confirmed

but that compared with what would be expected among the general population, men with male factor infertility showed a trend toward an increased risk of testicular cancer.

If a man is undergoing fertility treatment this could be an early warning to watch for any physical signs of testicular cancer though it cannot be diagnosed on symptoms alone, so it is important to also see a doctor if you are concerned.

The most common symptom of testicular cancer is a painless lump on a testicle. In some cases the lump is uncomfortable, but severe pain is rare. Sometimes the testicle may be enlarged or swollen without a lump. Men with testicular cancer may also have a heavy or aching feeling in the lower belly or scrotum. Each normal testicle has an epididymis, which feels like a small bump on the upper or middle outer side of the testis. Normal testicles also contain blood vessels, supporting tissues, and tubes that conduct sperm. These can feel bumpy and are sometimes confused with cancer if doing a simple self-examination.

If you have any doubts, ask your doctor.

BLACK GARLIC BOOSTS IMMUNE SYSTEM



Sounds like something from a voodoo ritual, but if you like the health benefits of garlic, but not so keen on the taste then this new strain might be just the thing for you. Black garlic is just aged natural white garlic which in its 30 day fermentation process turns black and changes its texture, taste, odour and flavour.

Black Garlic has almost double the natural antioxidant of white raw garlic and the fermentation process gives it a sweet and sour flavour much like a fruit - the texture is different too, being almost jelly-like and with a slight liquorice flavour.

During the fermentation process the powerful antibiotic and anti-fungal compound naturally occurring in garlic called allicin turns into a new chemical compound called S-allylcysteine which is more easily absorbed by the body and is not found in white garlic.

You can get this new health boost in several ways including whole garlic bulbs, peeled and prepared cloves, juice and black garlic paste. For more information visit www.blackgarlic.co.uk

HEALTH BITES:

1 ASTROLOGICAL HEALTH PROFILES

Virgo 24 August - 23 September

Virgoans have a strongly self-critical nature, and you are rarely are satisfied with your achievements. This can lead to a number of potential health problems and you need to watch out for:

- * Excessive worrying and anxiety which can lead to high stress levels
- * Your stomach reflects your mood and you can have digestive problems, particularly when upset
- * Constipation and diarrhoea are particularly common

You can see that one of the first places to start is to make a conscious effort to be kinder and less critical of yourself. Stress affects every area of your life, including your physical, mental and emotional health and being overly critical and judgemental of yourself is setting yourself up for trouble.

No one is perfect, so try to tackle your worry through counselling, calming practices such as yoga and meditation and never, ever eat when you are upset. Don't ratchet up your anxiety levels through over use of stimulants such as alcohol and caffeine but drink some calming green tea instead.

2 CALCIUM AND DECREASED DIGESTIVE CANCER RISKS

Women who have a higher calcium intake than the average may be reducing their risk of colorectal and other digestive cancers. A seven year review of a large clinical database in the US by the National Cancer Institute has made this link and its findings also apply to men, but not in such a significant way as for women.

The total cancer risk decreased in women as their calcium intake increased, but that was not the case in men who got no overall benefit. For digestive cancers - particularly colon cancer - the increased calcium seemed to protect both men and women equally.

The recommended daily amount of calcium for adults over the

age of 50 is 1,200 mg in order to protect bone health and a recent addition in the USA has been a guideline to add three cups of fat-free or low-fat dairy products to the daily diet. The benefit appears to be the same whether the calcium is from food or from supplements.

3 FEAST ON FETA!

Eating native is not just a pleasure, it can also help your holiday health. Feta cheese made from raw milk has natural anti-food-poisoning properties. When in Greece that Greek salad has more health benefits than you thought!

4 EGGS ARE NOT THE VILLAINS

We've always been told that eggs are bad for our heart, and especially for raising cholesterol levels. But now researchers have reported in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry that they can reduce high blood pressure, another risk to heart health. Boiled and fried eggs act as a natural ACE inhibitor, which reduces blood pressure levels - and fried eggs are the more powerful of the two. This new study follows recent papers that suggested healthy people can eat eggs without increasing their heart disease risk, and just to celebrate I am off to have egg and chips!



I hope you have found this information useful, but do remember I am not a doctor and cannot give you medical advice, so please always take appropriate action by consulting your own medical advisor if you have concerns about any aspect of your health. Please feel free to pass on any of this information to your friends, or suggest they sign up for the newsletter themselves at my website.

Best wishes for a healthy week - AnnA

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Your Healthy Newsletter from AnnA
Your Weekly Health Prescription - 18 February, 2009

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A couple of natural ways to better health, and ones that will also make you look good and feel better as well. Prevention is better than cure, so if breast cancer is a risk for you then two simple tips to reduce that risk, and a belated kiss for Valentines' day, despite what the scientists say.

Wishing you the best of good health from AnnA

In this issue:

- GOOD NEWS FOR THOSE NEEDING BONE MARROW TRANSPLANTS
- WHY SKIN BRUSHING HELPS MORE THAN JUST YOUR SKIN
- SCIENTISTS TAKE THE MYSTERY OUT OF KISSING
- HOW RUNNING COULD HELP YOUR EYESIGHT
- TWO NEW BREAST CANCER NATURAL PREVENTIVES

HEALTH BITES:

- Astrological health profiles - Leo 24 July-23 August
- New Vitamin D treatment for psoriasis
- Homoeopathy - A Presidential Pedigree

GOOD NEWS FOR THOSE NEEDING BONE MARROW TRANSPLANTS

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Finding a compatible bone marrow donor can be a heartbreaking process. Even if family and friends come forward they are not always an ideal match and the wait for the perfect donor can sometimes be longer than the time available to the patient.

Now there is good news from the American Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation which can effectively bypass the bone marrow route in appropriate cases by using a unit of mismatched blood from umbilical cords.

This work was presented by Duke University Medical Center who reported on a ten year study on children with malignant and genetic disorders, including leukaemia. Using cord blood for transplants offers some advantages over bone marrow

because it is more widely available, has more immature cells, involves fewer complications, and donor match is not as important.

The study found that there was a four of six HLA matches of blood given to children and this meant low rates of failure and graft-related disease from the patient's own body. Survival rates over one, three and ten years were also impressive for this type of patient, being 54.8%, 46.6%, and 43%, respectively which is comparable to those achieved with unmatched bone marrow transplants and substantially better than if the patients had not received transplants at all. In many cases the patients would have died without a transplant and although there was a failure rate in 6.7% of the patients, a slightly higher figure than the norm for bone marrow transplants, this is still low. Nor is that the end of the road for those patients as in many cases they can get a second transplant, something that is rarely available with bone marrow.

The time element is also an important factor and for patients who need an urgent transplant it could be a lifesaver. On average it takes two to three months for an unrelated bone marrow donor to become available and only about two weeks for an unrelated cord blood donor.

This breakthrough opens up the possibility of transplant to many more patients and although considered to be at a preliminary stage will make surgery available for those who previously were unable to find a matched donor.

WHY SKIN BRUSHING HELPS MORE THAN JUST YOUR SKIN

Our skin is the biggest organ of elimination that we have, in fact we get rid of more than 1lb a day in waste products through our sweat glands and pores. If our elimination is poor then the toxins become trapped in the system. One of the major factors in poor elimination is that the skin is being clogged with dead cells. Regular exfoliation is needed to keep these pores open and one of the simplest, and cheapest ways to do this is through regular dry brushing. The action of the brush stimulates the lymph and blood circulation and removes impurities from beneath the surface of the skin. This helps keep your pores clear, and as the bristles work directly on the lymph vessels and capillaries, you are stimulating the circulation so

that toxins can be easily expelled through the pores.

When you brush daily you will see improvements in your skin texture, digestion and general energy levels. Because you are always brushing upwards you are also encouraging the flow of blood towards the heart and this is where the majority of lymphatic nodes are. In this way you are therefore improving the lymphatic drainage to your whole system and a sluggish lymphatic system can be the cause of many common ailments.

Clearing cellulite

Alternative practitioners have long advocated the use of dry skin brushing, but it is only in the last few years that its effect on cellulite has been recognized. There are many expensive anti-cellulite regimes on the market, but most experts agree that some simple steps are the most effective. The aim is to get rid of the toxins in the body, as it is these that cause the lumpy deposits we recognise as cellulite. Skin brushing works by gradually breaking down the fatty tissues and releasing the toxic fluids they contain so that they can be eliminated. It also stimulates the blood flow to the heart and the lymph to the lymphatic ducts and this is the best way to gradually reduce those stubborn cellulite deposits.

Cleansing the Colon

Many practitioners advise skin brushing as the best start to any new health regime. It is a vital part of any colon-cleansing programme, and herbalist Kitty Champion recommends it to all her clients as a first step on their way back to health. As well as its acknowledged health benefits she believes it helps prevent premature ageing and brings a sense of well-being and energy as the blood and oxygen supply to the body is stimulated.

What's Involved?

Dry skin brushing is suitable for everyone except if you have broken skin, eczema or psoriasis. The right brush is essential, you need one with sufficiently hard natural bristles to produce the necessary stimulating effect.

Dry skin brushing is simple, and is best carried out before your bath or shower. Your skin may feel tender at first, but you will soon gain the benefits if you persevere. Always begin with light pressure and move up the body from the feet to the head. Use long strokes upwards towards the heart for all of the body except for the head and shoulders where you will be

brushing down towards the heart. For the buttocks circular movements will bring you the most benefit, particularly for working on cellulite. After a few weeks you can adjust the pressure of your strokes to what feels comfortable for you.

Never brush over areas of broken skin or varicose veins, and you can help the elimination process by paying attention to your diet. Make sure you are drinking a lot of water and minimising red meat, dairy, caffeine and sugar.

If you can't find a good natural skin brush locally there is a very good one from Simply Nature. Call them on 01580 201687 or visit their website at www.simply-nature.co.uk

SCIENTISTS TAKE THE MYSTERY OUT OF KISSING

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Trust a scientist to take the romance out of life - and as we have just celebrated Valentines' Day I saved this story until now as I didn't want to take the fun out of it for you.

A professor of neuroscience at Lafayette College, Louisiana has examined what exactly happens during a kiss. You think she would have known from her own experience, but hey ho. In case you are wondering, kissing releases chemicals that ease stress hormones in both sexes and encourage bonding in men, though not so much in women. Personally I don't find kissing always eases stress, but maybe I am kissing the wrong people.

If you are a sloppy kisser then you get even more stress release as it is the chemicals in saliva that change the levels of chemicals in the body. Some lucky pairs of college students got drafted for this research which involved kissing a partner for 15 minutes while listening to music. Presumably Mantovani and not Meatloaf, as it was found they experienced significant changes in their levels of the chemicals oxytocin, which affects pair bonding, and cortisol, which is associated with stress. Their blood and saliva levels of the chemicals were compared before and after the kiss which must have taken some of the romance out of it. Though as the experiment took place at the Student Health Centre that's probably not the most atmospheric of settings.

Every subject showed a decline in cortisol when their 15 minutes was up which showed their stress levels had gone down also. In

the men, oxytocin levels increased, indicating more interest in bonding, while oxytocin levels went down in women. Just to be sure they also tested couples that just held hands, and they had similar changes in body chemicals - but not to the same extent.

As proof that scientists can be just as obvious as the rest of us, I will leave you with the good professor's final observations: "When you kiss an enormous part of your brain becomes active," Oh really, just the brain? And to reassure you as you dust off that Valentine card, "Romantic love can last a long time if you kiss the right person."

## HOW RUNNING COULD HELP YOUR EYESIGHT

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Yet another good reason to get out the old running shoes has come a study done at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory that tracked approximately 41,000 runners for more than seven years. They found that vigorous exercise, particularly running, can help reduce the risk of both cataracts and age-related macular degeneration.

Cataracts are the leading cause of blindness and macular degeneration can cause irreversible vision in older people and so far there have been few suggestions as to how to avoid these conditions. Running, or any vigorous cardiovascular exercise, may be one excellent preventive measure and certainly worth investigating by anyone with a family history of eye disease.

The trial was conducted with both men and women runners they found that men who ran more than 5.7 miles per day had a 35 percent lower risk of developing cataracts than men who ran less than 1.4 miles per day. The study also analyzed men's 10-kilometer race performances, which is a good indicator of overall fitness. The fittest men had half the risk of developing cataracts compared to the least-fit men.

In the case of macular degeneration the results were even more remarkable. Runners who averaged between 1.2 and 2.4 miles per day had a 19 percent lower risk for the disease, and people who ran more than 2.4 miles per day had an impressive 42 percent and 54 percent lower risk.

If you aren't keen on running, then the scientists involved in the study believe that it is quite likely that the studies'

results might apply to a lesser extent to smaller doses of more moderate exercise such as walking.

## TWO NEW BREAST CANCER NATURAL PREVENTIVES

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As I always believe prevention is better than cure, I am happy to report two new pieces of information this week on easy, natural and enjoyable ways to reduce breast cancer risk.

Breakthrough 1 gives you even more reasons to enjoy a nice cup of tea. If you are a regular black or green tea drinker then you are already helping to reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke and endometrial cancer. Regular tea drinking has two important functions: it inhibits uncontrolled cell growth, known as cell proliferation, and encourages the death of cancer cells, known as apoptosis. A recent study found that smokers who drank four cups of decaffeinated green tea per day showed a 31 percent decrease in oxidative DNA damage in white blood cells as compared to those who drank four cups of water. Oxidative DNA damage is implicated in the promotion of many forms of cancer.

Now a new study has also linked tea to a substantial decrease in breast cancer risk. Particularly for women under 50, the risk is reduced by 37%, and as this is the group in whom the cancer can be particularly virulent and fast acting this is very worthwhile news. In fact, let's raise a cup together, preferably green or white tea as these are the least processed. The darker the tea, the more processing as a rule, but these two have even more health benefits, and up that to three cups a day to boost your immune system and lower your cancer risk.

Breakthrough 2 concerns another favourite staple, and that is olive oil. Australian researchers have reported that that olive oil has a host of positive health effects, and now researchers from the Catalonian Institute of Oncology (ICO) in Girona have discovered specifically that extra virgin olive oil appears to be a powerful weapon against breast cancer.

The key ingredient is the polyphenols that are present in extra virgin olive oil. These are powerful natural antioxidants found in abundance in olive oil and are highly active against both HER2-positive and HER2-negative breast cancers cells. Polyphenols in the oil not only inhibit the activity of cancer-promoting HER2 activity but also promotes the protein's degradation.

As Jamie Oliver would say, give it a good glug and not only will your food taste better, but your cells will thank you.

## HEALTH BITES:

### 1 ASTROLOGICAL HEALTH PROFILES - Leo 24 July - 23 August

Unfairly known as the 'show-off's' of the zodiac as Leo tends to love the spotlight, but there is a lot more to you than that. Leo's blend creativity and authority with courage and like to take on a great deal of responsibility - which can be a direct cause of some of their health problems, particularly as you don't like admitting to any weakness. Watch out for:

- \* Stress - it is your number one enemy and you can be too proud to ask for help
- \* You can be rather self-indulgent in your eating habits.
- \* High blood pressure and high cholesterol are your particular dangers.
- \* Mental and physical rigidity is common in your sign, so beware a lack of flexibility in joints and muscles.

You love life, and all it offers, but that tendency to indulge yourself can backfire unless you balance it with a really good self care regime. You can eat anything you want, in moderation, which is not really how Leo's like to function. Stress - particularly if unacknowledged and allowed to flourish - will damage your health so a sensible eating and exercise regime is a must to tackle those potential heart problems. Yoga or tai chi would be excellent to help those stiff joints, and has the double benefit of helping alleviate stress.

### 2 NEW VITAMIN D TREATMENT FOR PSORIASIS

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Psoriasis is a skin condition that can bring not just physical, but emotional and social challenges for sufferers. News is just in of new topical treatments that are about to become available in the USA for psoriasis. Of the new options, one is a calcitriol ointment and one is a Hydrogel Patch, but this has only limited availability. What is really exciting is the calcitriol option that was presented by the vice chairman of dermatology at the University of

California at a recent Skin Disease Education Foundation Dermatology Seminar in Hawaii.

Calcitriol is a vitamin D ointment that was approved by the FDA earlier this month and will be on general sale in pharmacies within two months. It has been shown to be successful in treating moderate to severe psoriasis of the scalp, when applied twice daily over a period of eight weeks. When extended to use twice daily for a year, there was a good improvement in 64% of patients.

3 HOMOEOPATHY - A PRESIDENTIAL PEDIGREE?

We tend to think of homoeopathy as a European invention, which in fact it was, but historically there has been a great interest in it in the USA. Abraham Lincoln, before he was elected president, was a lawyer and he was given the job of preparing a state legislative proposal to charter a homeopathic medical college in Chicago, against the concerted wishes of the American Medical Association, which had its headquarters there. In fact he was successful and when in office he was known to be a regular user of homoeopathic medicines and many of his advisers were powerful advocates for homoeopathy, Major General George Brinton McClellan who commanded the Union army during the Civil War. In fact the Confederates were also users of homoeopathic medicines, including General Robert E. Lee himself.

I hope you have found this information useful, but do remember I am not a doctor and cannot give you medical advice, so please always take appropriate action by consulting your own medical advisor if you have concerns about any aspect of your health. Please feel free to pass on any of this information to your friends, or suggest they sign up for the newsletter themselves at my website.

Best wishes for a healthy week - AnnA

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Your Healthy Newsletter from Anna
Your Weekly Health Prescription - 11 February, 2009

One of the thing I speak about most often is the attitude that makes the difference to your health. Being positive and optimistic in your outlook truly can extend your life, and I was very heartened to see a programme on ageing this week on television that blew away many of the myths about getting older. You don't have to slow down, or lose cognitive function - but you are much more likely to if you think you are going to. I watched a wonderful 70 year old woman leading a pop - exercise class that had younger woman on their knees and she not only bounced along, but sang along to the music at the same time - truly inspirational. The message is 'use it or lose it' and that applies to your body, mind and spirit. So start some new form of exercise, or increase the one you do, and spend time working on puzzles, crosswords, sudoko or whatever stretches you and continue to eat healthily and love life. That way it will be a longer, and happier one. Wishing you the best of good health from Anna

In this issue:

- 'NATURAL' DIET PILLS WARNING
- 6 TIMES HIGHER HEALTH RISK WITH PRE-ECLAMPSIA
- HOW LIFE CAN ADD YEARS TO YOUR FACE
- 80% INCREASED PROSTATE CANCER RISK WITH ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

HEALTH BITES:

- Astrological health profiles - Cancer 22 June - 23 July
- New black tea for refreshment
- What is Meniere's Disease?

'NATURAL' DIET PILLS WARNING'

Just because something says 'natural' on the packaging is no guarantee that it actually is - particularly if it is imported from a country with less stringent health regulations than our own. The easy availability of

products on the Internet has made it even more important that you check the source of what you are buying.

Latest news from the USA has shown that popular weight loss products promoted heavily by sports people and TV personalities are seriously flawed and freely available without prescription from health stores or online. You would think if they are on sale in a health shop they would be ok, but the Food and Drug Administration says weight-loss capsules, called StarCaps, which are promoted as natural dietary supplements and contain papaya, could be hazardous to your health. That's because they also contain a potent pharmaceutical drug called bumetanide, a strong diuretic. Using too much of this drug can lead to serious water and mineral loss because it decreases the amount of water retained in the body by increasing urination. This is a prescription drug which requires you to be monitored by your doctor for side effects which include severe thirst, dry mouth, mental confusion and muscle cramps/weakness. It can also mask steroid use, which is why it is on the list of substances banned by the National Football League, and why several players who had taken it failed a drug test when they tested positive for bumetanide. Why football players need diet pills is a bit of a mystery, as it's hard to tell what size they are under all that padding, but presumably they had their reasons and several are now suing the health store chain that sold the supplement to them.

The FDA has found other similar 'natural' weight loss products - most of which are imported from China and Peru - and named Sliminate, Superslim and Slim Up among 69 tainted weight-loss supplements they have found so far. The problem is that many of these drugs do not fully declare their ingredients, which makes them illegal in the USA, but still available on the Internet. An additional complication can be if you are already taking prescription medication and some of these ingredients can interact with your drugs, and reported symptoms include high blood pressure, chest pains, palpitations or seizures. Because you don't know exactly what they contain, they could have toxic interactions with your own medication and could make it difficult for your doctor to diagnose to diagnose patients.

As I have mentioned before, just because something is natural doesn't mean you won't be affected in an adverse way by it. The simplest things, like garlic for instance, can bring some

people out in allergic reactions including sweating, increased blood pressure and faintness - and millions of people experience effect at all. Garlic is in fact extremely good for the immune system, but there is no guarantee on how it will affect you personally. Losing weight is a good goal, but remember that natural weight loss usually involves eating less and exercising more, a cheaper - and safer - alternative to supplements all round.

6 TIMES HIGHER HEALTH RISK WITH PRE-ECLAMPSIA

New research is pointing up future problems for women who have pre-eclampsia - a condition where elevated high blood pressure is brought on by their pregnancy. It can occur in 5% to 7% of all pregnancies and now it seems these women run an increased risk of both heart problems and diabetes in the future.

The study was done at the University of Copenhagen, and reported at the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine in the USA. It found that women who had severe pre-eclampsia were more than six times more likely to develop chronic hypertension compared with women with uncomplicated pregnancies and also at higher risk for type 2 diabetes. It seems the risk is increased for women with pre-eclampsia who had premature or smaller babies, as well as in those who had pre-clampsia in two pregnancies.

The study of over 78,000 women who were previously free of any heart condition or diabetes, is intended to be an early warning system for women and their doctors to assess their risk. A woman who has had pre-eclampsia can use this information to monitor her health and be alert to take effective early action if any symptoms of high blood pressure or diabetes occur. It is also helpful to be aware of these risks if future medication will include hormonal treatments of any kind such as the contraceptive pill.

LIFE CAN ADD YEARS TO YOUR FACE

This definitely comes into the 'Oh Really?' category, as I don't imagine any of my readers think anything else. However, I am always impressed by people's willingness to dress up the obvious in scientific 'facts' and a new study of identical twins claims that despite genetic make-up, certain environmental factors can add years to a person's perceived age.

AS this study comes from the official medical journal of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), I do feel there

is a vested interest at work here, but apparently factors like divorce or the use of antidepressants are the real culprits when it comes to your face looking like the hide of an elderly elephant.

Back to attitude is what I say, because of course being unhappy does add years to your face, and how anyone can doubt that is a bit beyond me, but I guess if your business is facelifts then you can't afford to understate the obvious. Anyone who can cry without wrinkling up their face is obviously not in need of their services, but they kindly suggest that you avoid anything that can age you faster - that would be life I guess. The author of this study is Bahaman Guyuron, MD, professor and chairman, department of plastic surgery, University Hospitals Case Medical Center who wants us all to cheat our biological clock by avoiding things like being divorced because if you do you are going to look nearly 2 years older than your happily married twin - or others of your age who are married, single or even widowed.

This also applies if you are taking antidepressants, or are overweight - you will appear significantly older. To quote the good doctor, "the presence of stress could be one of the common denominators in those twins who appeared older. Researchers suspect that continued relaxation of the facial muscles due to antidepressant use, could account for sagging".

He's not a modest man either, as he claims that he has discovered a number of new factors that contribute to aging - which aren't new to me, or to you - and secondly that his findings put science behind the idea that volume replacement rejuvenates the face. There you have the real reason for the research, as according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons statistics, there were more than 1.5 million filler injection procedures - such as Botox - performed in 2007 and I imagine they are looking to do more smoothing out of our worried brows, lips, cheeks and necks.

So avoid getting divorced, being depressed or eating too much and you will look younger is his message, though presumably if you don't do those things he can fix it for you in the flash of a scalpel.

80% INCREASED PROSTATE CANCER RISK WITH ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

In the west, we take for granted that we can have light all day

and night - and in our cities we are never away from artificial light. Now, a new study at the University of Haifa, reported on 4 February, 2009, has discovered that countries with the highest levels of artificial light at night also have the highest rates of prostate cancer. This is found worldwide, and confirms previous studies at Haifa that found a connection between exposure to artificial light at night and the incidence of breast cancer.

They studied a database on cancer incidence in men in 164 countries and even at the early stage of the study it was apparent that there is a marked link between the incidence of prostate cancer and levels of artificial illumination at night. Countries with low exposure to such light showed an incidence of prostate cancer of 66.77 patients to 100,000 inhabitants. An increase of 30% was found in those countries with medium exposure, and those countries with the highest level of exposure to artificial light at night showed a huge leap of 80%: with 157 patients per 100,000 inhabitants.

There could be many reasons for this increase; with high levels of light melatonin production is reduced and this affects our immune system and our own internal biological body clock gets affected as it cannot distinguish between night and day.

It's not just health that is affected by artificial lighting either. The World Health Organization regards it as a serious source of environmental pollution, so our city planners may need to take this into account in future. On a personal level, turn the lights out at night, and don't have electronic devices in the bedroom which use lighting such as clocks, televisions and video games. .

HEALTH BITES:

1 ASTROLOGICAL HEALTH PROFILES

Cancer 22 June - 23 July

Not sure I should be sharing this information, as it is my own sign and you will learn far too much about me! Claimed to be one of the most introverted and emotionally vulnerable signs of the zodiac, Cancerians are prone to great change and fluctuation in mood - and my friends will vouch for that, certainly around the full moon! Watch out for:

* Stress-related illnesses are common, often brought on by those frequent and powerful mood shifts, and Cancerian's emotional sensitivity to themselves and others.

* Cancer is the sign of nurturing and vulnerabilities come from those areas such as the breast and stomach. Indigestion from being upset, and gastric ulcers from prolonged stress can be a problem.

* In women, PMS, water retention and swollen and sore breasts are common.

* Worry and anxiety can upset sleep patterns and this sign needs regular, balanced night time rest to maintain good health.

Tackling any stress is the best place to start dealing with swings of emotion and then making sure that nothing adds to the health strains on the body. If indigestion is a problem, try something like peppermint tea after a meal, or look at The Hay Diet which is about food combining. The less strain you put on your digestive system the better, so treat it kindly with alkaline foods and light, frequent meals. To ease yourself into sleep, don't eat late at night and allow at least 2-3 hours after a meal before going to bed. If your worries are keeping you awake, try Bach Remedy for sleep or a herbal supplement containing hops or valerian.

2 NEW BLACK TEA FOR REFRESHMENT

I am a great advocate of the health benefits of green tea, but the truth is it's flavour is not to everyone's taste. If you are addicted to your 'real' tea, and usually drink it black with a squeeze of lemon, then a healthy option is a new blend of organic black tea with lemon verbena. From Hambleton Herbs, this blends leaves from , Africa, Ceylon and Southern India to produce a smooth, well rounded tea you can drink at any time and no need to keep slicing up a lemon.

3 WHAT IS MENIERE'S DISEASE?

As a sufferer myself, I do get asked what it is, and one of the things about it is its unpredictability. It is a disease that affects a part of the inner ear known as the labyrinth, a system of tiny fluid-filled channels that send signals of sound and balance to the brain. Meniere's causes the fluid in the labyrinth to build up, disrupting both your balance and hearing and it affects one in 1,000 people, usually between 20 and 60 years of age, though I am over the upper age limit and still get attacks.

It is a progressive condition, which means it will gradually get worse the longer you have it and usually begins with just

one ear affected, but in 30 per cent of cases symptoms will progress to both ears. Unfortunately the length and severity of attacks cannot be predicted and can range from several minutes to 24 hours.

Symptoms may be a combination of vertigo, tinnitus or hearing loss and common signs are spinning or whirling dizziness, nausea or vomiting, sensitivity to noise, ringing or hissing in the ears and sometimes temporary or permanent loss of hearing. I have likened my own attacks to the worst kind of drunkenness, while being on a fairground waltzer, and to date have found relief by always carrying a small tablet that dissolves on the gum and if taken at immediate onset can stave off an attack. Unfortunately I don't like the side effects, so am currently trying a programme of exercises that are claimed to help avoid it altogether. I was previously given some physiotherapy which proved helpful in rebalancing the fluid in the canal, but was not long-lasting. I will keep you posted, and if you have any other things that work for you, please let me know.

I hope you have found this information useful, but do remember I am not a doctor and cannot give you medical advice, so please always take appropriate action by consulting your own medical advisor if you have concerns about any aspect of your health. Please feel free to pass on any of this information to your friends, or suggest they sign up for the newsletter themselves at my website.

Best wishes for a healthy week - Anna

For free health, creativity and personal development newsletters, as well as books and information please visit my website at www.catalystonline.co.uk

Your Healthy Newsletter from Anna
Your Weekly Health Prescription - 4 February, 2009

February can be a tricky month for health - we know spring is on the way hopefully in March, but we can get some of

the most challenging weather that pushes our immune system into overdrive trying to cope with the seasonal flu and cold symptoms. I hope you are avoiding the worst of it, and this week I point you towards the latest natural food trend and some good news for stroke patients. However there is also more worrying news for children, and teenagers that is worth passing on. Wishing you the best of good health from Anna

In this issue:

- BLUE HONEYSUCKLE - THE LATEST CRAZE?
- CHILDRENS' CANCER RISK FROM PROCESSED MEATS
- HOW VITAMINS CAN HELP STROKE PATIENTS
- LAVENDER - THE ONE REALLY ESSENTIAL OIL

HEALTH BITES:

- Astrological health profiles - Gemini
- Plastic surgery is bypassing Doctors
- Teenage diabetics choose surgery

BLUE HONEYSUCKLE - THE LATEST CRAZE?

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The natural health world never stands still; in fact it is always out there searching for the next big craze. This time around it looks to be a Russian plant that was first reported on late last year in the journal Molecules, and in other research papers since. It's remarkable because it produces blue honeysuckle berries that not only taste good but have a host of health benefits too, Gardeners might like to know it's botanical name which is *Lonicera caerulea*, and the fruits tastes like a hybrid of blackberry and blueberry and are very high in vitamin C and bioactive flavonoids.

When analysed the berries were found to have antioxidant, anti-platelet, and wound healing abilities and several valuable flavonoids as well. Particularly important is epicatechin which has a role to play in the prevention of some of the largest causes of death, including cancer, strokes and heart failure. This is closely followed by rutin, which is valued for its ability to fight cancer, help keep skin younger and reduce inflammation.

Free radical damage is what the flavonoid quercetin is

able to reduce and help to prevent damage to our cellular structure. This means it can keep our hearts healthy and help maintain the health of our lungs and respiratory system. Combats cancer, alleviates bruising and varicose veins, enhances cardiovascular health, prevents oxidation of cholesterol, and also can improve both lung health and respiration.

These are just some of the flavonoids that have been identified in blue honeysuckle and others have been shown by researchers to fight free radicals, have powerful antioxidant qualities, regularise blood pressure and support the nervous system. There is even more, as a recent study using the dried fruit was shown to be effective against intestinal parasites in conditions like E. Coli, Streptococcus and Candida.

All this, and they apparently taste good too. Sounds like a definite winner to add to your morning muesli or as a healthy snack. They are available in the USA, and the dried form can be bought online but I haven't seen any of the actual fruits in the UK yet. Do let me know if you come across them because planting a bush and harvesting your own fruit will require some patience as it takes around four years.

## CHILDRENS' HUGE CANCER RISK FROM PROCESSED MEATS

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Processed meats - or rather the sodium nitrate it contains - has previously been linked to cancer of the pancreas and colon, and I have reported on it for you. Now, a study carried out at Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, has linked processed meat and a substantially higher risk of leukemia in children. Not a slight chance, but a 74 percent chance of contracting leukemia if the diet regularly includes processed meat like sausages, bacon, salamis, hams and hot dogs. It does not apply to fresh meat.

Sodium nitrate is used to give a more appealing colour to these foods, but it is a chemical which when ingested results in the formation of nitrosamine - a well known carcinogenic. If you buy processed meats for children for their lunchbox or snacks, then check the label to avoid those with sodium nitrate used in the curing or processing and where possible go for organic producers as they are unlikely to use sodium nitrate

in their processing.

## HOW VITAMINS CAN HELP STROKE PATIENTS

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Taking vitamin supplements is an area fraught with controversy. In the red corner are the true believers who think it can cure everything and in the blue corner the sceptics who won't accept they do any good at all. As ever, I like the balanced view and personally have found supplements very helpful for some things and not much use for others though in general I am more in favour than not.

The following report though gives me hope that the sceptics might see a chink of light as it was carried out in a bona fide hospital by properly qualified doctors. In fact it was tested at the Burke Rehabilitation Hospital for stroke victims at Cornell University in the USA. One of the features of hospital stroke patients is that they are often undernourished and have lost weight and the researchers took 100 people who 'qualified' and gave half the standard hospital regime for stroke patients but included a multivitamin and mineral supplement and a drink that which would give them calories, protein and 36 mg of vitamin C which they were given every eight hours. The other half of the group got the same, but with double the quantities, and an increased amount of vitamin C - 90mg.

When the patients were studied, the group that had the higher levels of vitamins and minerals were found to have a much better rate of improvement, so that more of them were able to go home after their hospital stay, rather than being moved to a nursing home for more care. The use of supplements for stroke patients is not new, in fact previous researchers have focused on the role of the B vitamins for reducing the risk of strokes by up to 20 percent in those with a genetic predisposition, or who are deemed to be vulnerable.

If this is you, or someone you know then I would first consult a qualified nutritionist who will be able to advise on the dosages required, though the levels of vitamin C in the trial seem woefully to me. Dr Linus Pauling, the Nobel prize winner who pioneered the use of vitamin C for many conditions advocated a minimum of 500 mg a day for healthy people and much higher doses when dealing with chronic illness. Vitamin C is not stored in the body, and is immediately excreted if not used.

Increasing the levels needs to be done slowly and with full body awareness as we all have a different tolerance level. Signs that your body has had enough, or that you need to go more slowly are either a tingling sensation on the tongue, or a loosening of the bowels. In either case, cut back your dose and only gradually increase again when things have settled down.

## LAVENDER - THE ONE REALLY ESSENTIAL OIL

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There are so many essential oils to choose from, but the one that I would never be without is lavender because it is really almost a medicine chest in a bottle. I thought I would remind you of how versatile it can be and how useful if you are travelling and limited in what you can take with you.

Let's start with sleep; trials at the Radcliffe hospital in Oxford showed that patients who were offered a bath with lavender oil in it, or inhaling the oil before bedtime were able to dispense with sleeping tablets -and their side effects.

If you have been bitten by an insect, apply it neat onto the bite and it works just as well on spots or boils. You can also mix it with a base oil such as almond or grapeseed and massage it in to relieve aches and pains in your muscles. I am a great one for burning myself on the oven or the iron and you can again apply the oil straight onto the burn and it takes the heat out and prevents a blister forming.

As I work on a computer, I can find myself 'spacing out' and losing focus and so I then rub some lavender oil on the inside of my wrists and inhale to clear my head. It also works if you feeling down as the scent can help lift your mood.

For headaches just put a couple of drops on each index finger and gently rub into the indentation on either side of your forehead, just above your eyebrows but make sure you keep well away from your eyes - no rubbing them after you have put the oil on!

Remember with essential oils, you tend to get what you pay for so the cheaper the oil the less active ingredient is likely to be in there. It really pays to buy organic for something that has so many uses and is so portable.

## HEALTH BITES:

### 1 ASTROLOGICAL HEALTH PROFILES

Gemini 22 May - 21 June. Gemini's are real live wires and need lots of mental stimulation, variety at work and freedom in relationships.

Watch out for:

- \* Feeling restricted or burdened which can lead to nervous exhaustion
- \* Psychosomatic illness, physical tension and psychological problems can develop from prolonged stress
- \* Lung problems including asthma and bronchitis
- \* Depression can develop from unexpressed emotions or mental stagnation

Frustration - and the resolving of it - is the key for Gemini health. A lively mind needs to be taken out and about with new ideas, new things to see and if a Gemini is bored, then watch out! The power of the mind is not an illusion for this sign, they really do need to take care that they don't overdo it and a diet full of Bertie Wooster's favourite fish will help, as long as it has plenty of omega 3's in it. B complex to help with the stress and at times of mental fatigue royal jelly and ginseng are often very helpful.

### 2 PLASTIC SURGERY IS BYPASSING DOCTORS

Britain is now right up there with the USA when it comes to plastic surgery. The most sought after being new breasts and noses and according to a Health Service Survey as many as three quarters of the population want to change some aspect of their bodies. Previously your GP was the first port of call for any medical intervention, but with the rise of the private cosmetic surgery services this is no longer the case. The same survey found that amongst young people between 16-24 years of age, only 20 percent of them would talk to their doctor about it. More worryingly the other 80 percent would seek out services on the Internet and often were searching by price alone.

I would have that this was one area where you would definitely

want a personal recommendation, a face to face meeting and assurance from your doctor as to how professional and qualified the clinic and their staff were.

### 3 TEENAGE DIABETICS CHOOSE SURGERY

Any form of surgery is traumatic to the body, but sometimes it is necessary and unavoidable. My problem is when it's being sought by the young and vulnerable with no real concept of the consequences. Diabetes is a disease that can be controlled, sometimes easily and sometimes not and the regime of regular medication can be very hard for teenagers - discipline not being a natural characteristic at that age. However a new trend in the USA is for teenage diabetics who are overweight to turn to the surgeon's knife to help them .

Even more incredible is that this gastric bypass procedure is being suggested by Doctors, despite the fact that the US statistics show that 5 percent of people who have this surgery only survive a year. On the plus side, a study at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, has shown that in most cases, the teenagers can lose one-third of their weight and come off diabetes medications with remission of their diabetes one year after bypass surgery. It sounds wonderful, but this has not been studied long enough, in my opinion, to suggest it as a viable alternative to diet, medication and lifestyle changes - or is that just me?.

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I hope you have found this information useful, but do remember I am not a doctor and cannot give you medical advice, so please always take appropriate action by consulting your own medical advisor if you have concerns about any aspect of your health Please feel free to pass on any of this information to your friends, or suggest they sign up for the newsletter themselves at my website.

Best wishes for a healthy week - AnnA

For free health, creativity and personal development newsletters, as well as books and information please visit my website at [www.catalystonline.co.uk](http://www.catalystonline.co.uk)

