

Natural health



Look after your body and wellbeing naturally with **Jan Purser's** essential monthly guide to alternative medicine, health and nutrition.



Should I take ... bacopa?

Why would I need it? Also known as brahmi, *Bacopa monnieri* is a pretty herb that has traditionally been prescribed for anxiety, epilepsy, poor energy and nervous breakdown. It's also used to assist recovery in brain injury and stroke patients. Bacopa is often included in supplements for children to improve memory, concentration and learning ability. A recent trial found elderly people who took bacopa daily for 12 weeks had significantly reduced levels of anxiety and depression, and lowered heart rate. They also had superior word recall compared to the placebo group.

How much? Take 2.5g to 5g of the dried herb in tablet or capsule form, or 2.5ml to 6.5ml of liquid extract, twice a day.

Anything I should know? Long-term use of the herb is safe. Seek professional advice before taking bacopa if you have hyperthyroidism.

Get a new habit

Having trouble quitting smoking? Well, magnesium might help. Recent studies have found that magnesium supplements act on the reward centre of the brain to reduce the intensity of dependency to some drugs, including amphetamines, nicotine, opiates and alcohol. They can also help to reduce withdrawal symptoms. Talk to your naturopath to determine the best dose for your needs.

Source: *Magnesium Research*, March 2008

quick cure

Mouth ulcers

Mouth ulcers can be triggered by many things including food sensitivities, vitamin or mineral deficiencies, digestive problems and trauma (such as when you bite your cheek). They're also more likely to occur when you're under stress. For some natural relief, suck on a zinc lozenge two to three times a day or use a clean cotton bud to apply liquid extract of goldenseal three to four times a day. You can also try rinsing your mouth several times a day with a solution of 1 teaspoon of salt dissolved in a cup of warm water.



Not happy?

Ask Jan

Q I recently broke up with my boyfriend and am having trouble sleeping and eating because I'm so distressed. Is there something I can do to feel better?
S.L., Penrith NSW

A Firstly, buy some Rescue Remedy flower essence and take it whenever you feel anxious or upset. This calming remedy is available as drops, spray or cream. To help with sleep, look for a supplement with valerian and passionflower. Pick some fresh lavender and pop it in a cloth bag inside your pillowcase (or sprinkle drops of pure lavender oil on a tissue). It will help you relax and sleep. Try to spend time with caring family and friends, too, and don't forget to exercise.

If you feel like your stomach is tied in knots, avoid raw vegies and fatty or spicy foods, as these may aggravate it. Instead, choose foods that are easy to digest, such as cooked vegies, rice, fish and tofu. Brown rice, pumpkin and oats are calming foods so include these too. Avoid caffeine and excess alcohol as they'll exacerbate your symptoms.

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