



natural solutions

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



Should I take ... elderflower?

Why would I need it? The dried flowers of the elder tree (*Sambucus nigra*) help reduce fever, calm inflammation and eliminate mucous congestion. Elderflower is sometimes combined with other herbs, such as horseradish, garlic and echinacea, to help improve the respiratory system and boost immune function. Use it daily if you have chronic sinus congestion, or congestion lingering after a cold or flu.

How much? Take 2-6g dried flower in an infusion or in tablet or capsule form, three times a day. Alternatively, take 1-2ml liquid extract three times a day.

Anything I should know? Elderflower is safe to take during breastfeeding.



quick cure

Break the wind cycle

Flatulence is a very common symptom

of many conditions, including irritable bowel syndrome, food sensitivities, leaky gut syndrome, poor digestion and constipation. Here are some simple cures to try. If there's not enough relief, see your naturopath to investigate the underlying cause.

- 1 **Eat** slowly and chew well – this can help ease poor digestion.
- 2 **Sip** fennel seed, peppermint or chamomile tea between meals.
- 3 **Relax** before you eat as stress can upset digestion.
- 4 **Drink** before or after eating – don't consume any liquids with meals.
- 5 **Press** the stomach acupressure point just below the ball of your foot repeatedly for 10 seconds twice daily.

Not happy? Ask Jan

Q What's the best naturopathic way to treat a gastrointestinal bug?
B. X., via email

A Gastroenteritis may be triggered by a virus, bacteria or parasites. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhoea, cramps, fever and loss of appetite.

Take a probiotic supplement, such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, about four times a day to help restore "order" to a sick digestive system. Antimicrobial herbs, such as Chinese wormwood, can also help rid bacterial infection, while slippery elm powder may absorb toxins and help slow diarrhoea.

Dehydration is a major concern, especially for children and the elderly. If the diarrhoea or vomiting persists for more than a couple of hours, take them to the doctor. Plenty of fluids in the form of electrolyte replacement drinks will help prevent dehydration.

Food should be kept simple – boiled rice, grated fresh apple and rice crackers. Avoid protein foods, all dairy, fatty foods and other grains until the symptoms have eased.

The joy of soy

Are you over 40? Then you may want to include tofu and soy milk in your diet. According to a study of more than 68,000 women aged 40 to 70, just 30g of tofu a day reduces your risk of colorectal cancer. All women can reduce the risk by eating soy products, but it's more beneficial if you're post-menopausal.

Source: *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, February 2009



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