

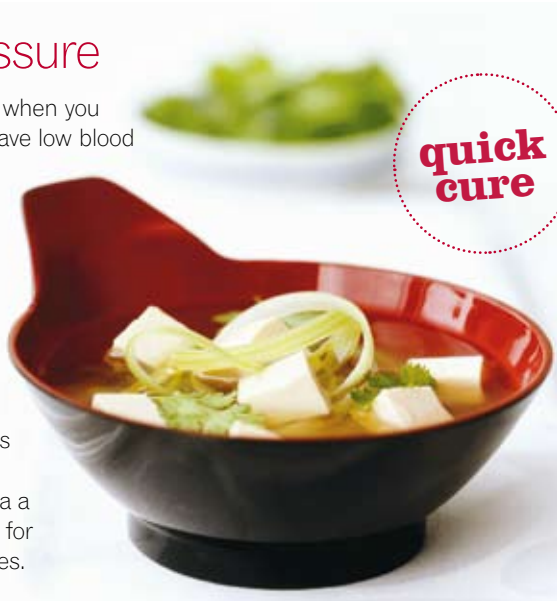
# Natural health



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

## Low blood pressure

Ever feel dizzy or light-headed when you stand up quickly? You could have low blood pressure. See your doctor for a diagnosis. If you do have it, try making these small dietary changes. Eat foods such as miso soup, and stir-fries and marinades made with tamari sauce. These foods are rich in sodium and other minerals that help balance your blood pressure. If stress is also part of the problem, drink two to three cups of licorice tea a day – this herb is a great tonic for your body during stressful times.



## Protein power

Sufferers of diabetes and hypoglycaemia take note: a recent Australian study has found that a diet rich in protein may play an important role in managing both these conditions. The study found that when glucose was combined with protein the post-meal blood glucose levels were much lower. This could be because protein slows the emptying rate of the stomach, influencing how quickly the glucose is absorbed and slowing the rise in blood glucose. Avoid processed foods, only eat low-GI carbohydrates (such as wholegrains, legumes or pasta) and try to include a protein food (such as meat, chicken, fish, eggs or nuts) at each meal and snack.

Source: *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, November 2007

## Should I take ... andrographis?

**Why would I need it?** The herb *Andrographis paniculata* has been used in traditional Chinese and Indian medicine to improve digestion and to treat fever, jaundice and respiratory infections for centuries. It enhances immunity, helps protect the liver, and is a potent anti-oxidant. It may also help if you feel a cold coming on as studies have shown that andrographis reduces the severity of symptoms such as sore throat, tiredness and mucus production. It may also shorten the duration of the common cold.

**How much?** At the first sign of cold symptoms take 750mg to 3g of dried herb in tablet or capsules twice a day. Alternatively, take 1.5ml to 3ml of liquid extract twice a day.

**Anything I should know?** Don't take andrographis if you're pregnant. People on anti-platelet or blood thinning medication should also check with their practitioner before taking it.

## Not happy?

Ask Jan

**Q** My dentist has told me I have gum disease. Are there natural ways to fix this? T. Evans, via email.

**A** The condition where the gums around your teeth become tender and bleed when brushed is called gingivitis. If ignored, the gums may shrink away from the teeth, which could eventually fall out. The causes include neglecting to brush and floss your teeth daily, a build up of plaque on the teeth, vitamin C deficiency, a sensitivity to sodium lauryl sulphate (found in some toothpastes), and eating sugary or processed foods.

Ideally, you should floss and brush after each meal. While brushing, gently use the toothbrush to massage your gums. These tips may also help.

- Eat crunchy foods (such as raw vegies) to stimulate circulation in the gums.
- If brushing immediately after eating isn't possible, chew on sugar-free gum. This helps your mouth produce saliva, which neutralises plaque.
- Eat plenty of foods rich in vitamin C, such as oranges, red capsicum, kiwifruit, pawpaw, strawberries and broccoli.
- Change your toothbrush regularly as bacteria can lurk in the brushes.
- Use this natural antibacterial mouthwash each night: add three drops of 100 per cent tea tree oil to a small glass of water and mix, then rinse your mouth and gums well with the mixture.
- Visit the dentist every six months.

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