

Natural health



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



Reduce your stomach cancer risk

Good news for tomato lovers. Recent studies show foods containing lycopene, such as tomatoes, combined with a diet rich in fresh fruit and vegetables, may reduce the risk of stomach cancer. Selenium, found in brazil nuts, couscous and canned tuna, may also help. Salty foods, processed meats and other deli foods that contain the preservative sodium nitrate are likely to increase the risk, as is being overweight. The best news, however, is that alcohol consumption may not be a factor. So celebrate with pasta in tomato and veggie sauce, and a glass of red.

Source: *Nutrition Reviews*, May 2008

Should I take ... spirulina?

Why would I need it? Spirulina is a very small blue-green algae that grows in lakes. After being harvested and dried, it's made into powder, tablets and capsules. Used in China for many centuries, spirulina is rich in chlorophyll, which is thought to improve bad breath, body odour, smelly feet and detoxification in the body. It's also a source of protein and some B vitamins, including folate, which is important in early pregnancy. Results of a recent Mexican study showed that when taken every day for six weeks, spirulina reduced blood cholesterol, LDLs (bad cholesterol), triglycerides and blood pressure.

How much? Take half a tablespoon to two tablespoons of powder per day, or two to four 500mg-1000mg tablets two to three times per day. For bad breath, combine 1 teaspoon of powder in water and swish it in your mouth for a few seconds before swallowing.

Anything I should know? If you're allergic to seaweed, then avoid taking spirulina.

Reflux first aid

Reflux is a burning sensation behind the breastbone and an uncomfortable side effect of digestive problems. It can occur if you've eaten too much, consumed fatty food or drunk alcohol. At the first sign of reflux, act fast – drink a large glass of water to help wash stomach acid back down your oesophagus, then follow it up with some sugar-free chewing gum, which has been shown to reduce the symptoms.

quick cure



Jan Purser Dip.Nutr., DRT, is a naturopathic nutrition consultant, remedial therapist and public speaker. If you have any questions on diet, natural health or nutrition, write to Natural Solutions, PO Box 3, South Fremantle WA 6162, or email ns@foodbodyandhealth.com.au We regret Jan is unable to personally answer letters.

Not happy?

Ask Jan

Q How can I ease the symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome?

K. Ruth, via email.

A Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is a condition of the wrists and hands. It occurs when the passage leading to the hand narrows and presses on the nerve, which causes swelling, inflammation and pain. Often a result of injury from repetitive movements, CTS can also be caused by bony spurs in the wrist, hormonal changes or conditions such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and Raynaud's disease. Symptoms include reduced strength, numbness, tingling and pain that's usually worse at night. Try these natural remedies.

- **Rest hands and wrists** often and wear a splint during the day.
 - **Apply an ice pack** to inflamed wrists for 10 minutes every hour.
 - **Take fish oil** or flaxseed oil – the omega-3s may reduce inflammation.
 - **Rub arnica cream** onto wrists twice a day to reduce swelling and pain.
 - **Take St John's Wort** to assist with repairing nerve damage.
 - **Try a supplement** that includes turmeric, ginger, boswellia or chilli.
 - **Take magnesium orotate** to relax muscles and aid nerve function.
- Check with your naturopath for the correct dose of any supplements.