

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 ... turmeric?

Why would I need it? Used widely in Indian, Indonesian and South-East Asian cuisines, this spice is thought to be a potent natural anti-inflammatory. Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) also helps digestion and liver detoxification, and has antiviral properties. Research has shown it may slow the growth of some cancers, help lower blood cholesterol and be useful for colds, allergies, asthma, autoimmune disease, inflammatory bowel disease, cardiovascular disease and arthritis. It's often prescribed for people with liver conditions and period pain.

How much? Take 500mg to 2000mg of powdered turmeric twice a day. Alternatively, take 2.5ml to 7ml of liquid extract, or the equivalent in tablets or capsules, twice a day.

Anything I should know? It stimulates gall bladder function, so talk to your GP if you have gallstones. People with an allergy to salicylates or women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should also talk to their doctor before taking turmeric.



Total recall

We all know that doing crosswords can keep us mentally sharp, but did you know that a little green herb may also help? Research shows gotu kola (*Centella asiatica*) has positive effects on cognitive abilities. In a recent study, healthy people with an average age of 65 were given either the herb or a placebo. Those who took the herb showed improvements in their moods and in the speed and accuracy of their working memory. You can buy gotu kola as a liquid extract or in capsules from health food stores.

Source: *Journal of Complementary Medicine*, July/August 2008

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 My daughter keeps getting middle ear infections. Is there a naturopathic way to treat this?

P. Corby, via email.

A Naturopathic medicine puts a lot of emphasis on the state of the patient's digestive system because the gut plays a vital role in the body's immune function. Poor digestive health can result in food sensitivities and these, in turn, exacerbate mucus production that may be contributing to the ear infections.

Middle ear infections are the result of fluid accumulating in the middle ear. If this fluid doesn't drain of its own accord, hearing difficulties, inflammation and infection can result. This type of ear infection can also occur due to infection from colds and flu. Your naturopath may suggest probiotics and other nutrients to strengthen your daughter's digestive system. They may also suggest dietary changes depending on the history of her infections and usual diet choices. Immune-boosting herbs and natural medicines, such as zinc, echinacea and vitamin C, may also be recommended.

Sinus problems?

Blocked sinuses can make you feel miserable, so try this remedy to help clear the airways.

quick cure

Add a drop each of eucalyptus, peppermint, lavender and tea tree pure essential oils to a bowl of hot water. Place your face over the bowl, with a towel over your head and the bowl to trap the steam. Breathe the steamy air for 10 minutes. Repeat several times a day. If you're pregnant, check with your aromatherapist which essential oils are safe to use.



PHOTOGRAPHY/PHOTOLIBRARY