

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 ... ZIZIPHUS?

Why would I need it?

Ziziphus is derived from sour Chinese date seeds of the plant *Ziziphus spinosa*. In Chinese herbal medicine, it's used to treat anxiety, night sweats, irritability, excessive or abnormal sweating, and sleep disorders such as insomnia, restlessness and vivid dreams or nightmares. It may also help regulate blood pressure and be useful for women who suffer from hot flushes. Because of its calming effects, it's often included in blends of herbs to treat anxiety-related symptoms, such as palpitations.

How much?

An average dose is 1000mg of dry seed three times per day, or 3-6ml liquid extract two times per day.

Anything I should know?

Ziziphus is safe to take with other medications, during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. Avoid it if you have severe diarrhoea.



quick cure

Hay fever relief

Anyone who suffers from hay fever will tell you how awful it is, but some homeopathic remedies can help. Take *Allium cepa* for a streaming nose and eyes, and add *sabadilla* to calm sneezing and an itchy nose. *Euphrasia* may relieve burning-eye sensations, and *Wyethia* can settle sinusitis and stop the roof of the mouth itching. *Arsenicum* is good for persistent sneezing or if it feels like your hay fever is turning into a cold. Ask your homeopath to tailor a blend for you, or check the remedies at your health-food store.



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 father has Alzheimer's disease. What are the risk factors? Can I do anything to reduce my chances of developing it?

Andrew L, via email

A One risk factor associated with Alzheimer's disease (AD) and dementia is untreated high blood pressure, especially if teamed with high blood cholesterol, smoking and diabetes. Other factors include obesity, stroke, heart disease, poorly managed diabetes, a history of head injury and high levels of homocysteine, an amino acid that's a normal by-product of many reactions in the body.

Try the following to reduce your risk of developing AD.

- Have regular health checks for blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose and homocysteine levels.
- Give up smoking and excess alcohol.
- Eat a diet of nuts, seeds, fruit, poultry, seafood, legumes, lean meat, vegetables, fish (at least once a week), and dairy or dairy substitutes.
- Consume foods and drinks that have been linked to reducing AD, such as turmeric, blueberries, green and black tea and red wine (in moderation).
- Take a good multivitamin and anti-oxidant supplement each day.
- Ask your naturopath about nutrients you might need in supplement form.
- Keep your mind busy, exercise daily and maintain an active social life.

Visit www.alzheimers.org.au

The whole truth

If you want to live longer, you need to eat more wholegrains. A US study has shown women who regularly ate wholegrain foods had a reduced risk of death due to diseases, such as asthma and diabetes, that have inflammation as a predominant factor. The study found wholegrain foods protect against oxidative stress, which can be the result of inflammation in the body. Oxidative stress, inflammation and infection are risk factors for several major diseases, so the more you do to reduce them, the better. Think oats, tabouli, grainy bread, barley soup, quinoa and wholegrain crispbread.

Source: *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 2007