

Natural health



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



Walk the dog

It's official – walking your dog provides great health benefits. In fact, it's long been known that having a pet remarkably improves your health and wellbeing. A recent Japanese study monitored heart rate variability in elderly people when they walked a dog, as opposed to walking on their own. When walking with a dog, the participants had an improvement in parasympathetic neural activity – in other words, their heart rate improved and they felt more relaxed. Not only that, but each time they took the dog out for a walk, the effects were more pronounced. So next time Fido is trying to convince you it's time for walkies, grab that leash and enjoy the rewards.

Not happy?

Ask Jan

Q I have a very weak immune system. What are lactoferrin supplements and how can they help?

Liz Holt, via email

A Lactoferrin is one of three protein components found in colostrum (the first milk after giving birth). It's also present in tears, mucus, bile, pancreatic fluid and saliva, and is produced in the body when the immune system is activated by infection.

Studies have shown that it has anti-bacterial and anti-oxidant qualities that can boost immune function. It also binds with iron in the gut, removing the growth support that bad bacteria thrive on. One study showed that after taking lactoferrin, participants didn't succumb to *E. coli* infection after exposure, whereas nine of the 10 participants who didn't take the supplement did. Research has also found that lactoferrin has anti-inflammatory properties which can help with leaky gut syndrome and inflammatory bowel disease.

You can purchase supplements of lactoferrin extracted from cows milk alone, and also in combination with concentrated cows colostrum and other immune-boosting nutrients. See a naturopath to investigate the cause and seek treatment for your problem.

Should I take ... Gymnema?

Why would I need it? A traditional Indian medicine, *Gymnema sylvestre* can help lower blood glucose levels, high blood triglycerides and high blood cholesterol. It may benefit people with insulin resistance or metabolic syndrome, women with polycystic ovarian syndrome, and those who get sugar cravings as they have diabetes.

How much? A typical daily dose is 2-5ml twice of liquid extract, or 2-4g two to three times a day in tablet form.

Anything I should know?

Gymnema may lower blood glucose quite effectively, so check with your naturopath first if you take blood glucose lowering medication. It may also exacerbate reflux in sensitive people.



quick
cure

Minor burns

The correct first aid procedure for a minor burn is to hold the affected area under cold running water for 10 minutes to help take the heat out. Repeat, if necessary.

For further relief, soak a clean face-cloth in cold water, wring it out and sprinkle with a few drops of pure lavender essential oil. Gently place, oil-side down, over the burn and leave for 10 minutes. Finally, gently apply some soothing aloe vera gel, a natural skin salve that everyone should keep in their first aid cabinet for situations such as this.



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