

Bodyfit
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Alternatively, try GastroMel (£25, 120g), a functional honey, made by bees given a unique blend of specially selected herbs – including angelica, sage and bayleaf – with stomach-healing properties.



Health tips **gut HEALTH**

6 THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT YOUR GUT

A healthy digestive system is essential to your overall health and wellbeing, says **Alex Gazzola**

It's an obvious point and an ancient saying – and it seems many active people prefer to hear to think about their gut. That's because it does, with our chronic acid reflux, heart palpitations, and other ailments. According to a study you'll never hear about, when the gut's digestive system isn't working properly, it can lead to a host of other health problems, including heart disease, diabetes, and even cancer.

1 YOUR GUT NEEDS WATER
It's a common misconception that you should drink more water to keep your gut healthy. In fact, drinking too much water can dilute stomach acid and impair digestion. Instead, aim for a steady intake of water throughout the day. The best way to do this is to drink a glass of water every hour or so, and to avoid sugary drinks and alcohol.

2 Your gut could be leaky
"Rumbles in your stomach are likely to be stomach contractions, sloshing digestive juices into the intestines."
According to Dr David Perlmutter, medical director and special medical advisor for Precision Protein's probiotics, all but a third of those suffering from IBS may have underlying leaky gut syndrome. This is a condition where the lining of the gut is allowing molecules, toxins, and bacteria to pass through it, leading to inflammation and other health problems. Symptoms include bloating, gas, and abdominal pain. To help with this, Dr Perlmutter recommends a diet rich in fiber and probiotics, and avoiding processed foods and alcohol.

3 Your gut may be nucleotide deficient
Nucleotides are the building blocks of DNA and RNA, and they play a crucial role in gut health. A deficiency in nucleotides can lead to gut inflammation and other health problems. This is often caused by a diet low in fiber and other nutrients. To help with this, Dr Perlmutter recommends a diet rich in fiber and other nutrients, and avoiding processed foods and alcohol.

4 YOUR GUT MAY NEED SOME HERBAL HELPERS
Familiar to many people are the benefits which herbs such as lemon balm can offer to the gut, but other herbs – especially other ones – are also available.
Herbs like ginger, chamomile, and peppermint are known for their soothing effects on the digestive system. Ginger can help with nausea and indigestion, while chamomile and peppermint can help with stomach pain and bloating. Other herbs like licorice root and slippery elm can also be beneficial for gut health.

5 YOUR GUT MAY NEED SOME HONEY
Popularly considered as a sweet treat with little nutrition, you may be surprised to learn honey can be a gastric aid. However, not all honey are made the same. Manuka honey has been shown in studies to have beneficial effects, including antibacterial properties against bacteria which cause inflammation, and the ability to heal the growth of ulcers, which has been linked to stomach pain, indigestion and ulcers.
Look for the "UMF" factor on your manuka honey products from Holland & Sherrin or Manuka Direct. The New Zealand Honey Group (www.nzhoneysociety.co.nz) offers a good selection too.
Functional honey, made by bees given a unique blend of specially selected herbs – including angelica, sage and bayleaf – with stomach-healing properties.
And the added bonus for those over 18 is that honey can give you a natural high-magnesium super boost, which is much healthier than a pill and offers more sugar too.

6 Your gut may be suffering due to low stomach acid
Add to your stomach is something you may only think of when experiencing heartburn – especially if you only get it when eating – but low levels could be a problem. The acid in your stomach helps to break down food and kill off bad bacteria. If you have low stomach acid, you may experience bloating, gas, and indigestion. To help with this, Dr Perlmutter recommends a diet rich in fiber and other nutrients, and avoiding processed foods and alcohol.

ASK THE EXPERT
I've heard about the importance of having good bacteria in your gut, but I'm not sure what this actually means. Can you explain?
Dr David Perlmutter explains that good bacteria, also known as probiotics, are essential for gut health. They help with digestion, boost the immune system, and protect against harmful bacteria. You can find probiotics in fermented foods like yogurt, kefir, and sauerkraut, or in probiotic supplements.

DIGESTIVE HELPERS

- Digestive Blend** £1.99, **Qi-Hua** £1.99
Using the ancient wisdom of Chinese medicine, Qi-Hua is a natural gut health supplement that helps with digestion and relieves bloating and gas.
- New Nordic Dicks** £1.79 for 30 tablets
This is a natural gut health supplement that helps with digestion and relieves bloating and gas.
- CoriBac Probiotics for Traveling** £10.50 for 30 capsules
This is a natural gut health supplement that helps with digestion and relieves bloating and gas.
- CoriBac Probiotics** £10.50 for 30 capsules
This is a natural gut health supplement that helps with digestion and relieves bloating and gas.

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HEALTH & BEAUTY

December 2011

Honey will heal all

It could be time to ditch pharmacy-bought cold medicines and opt for a natural alternative

You're probably already aware of the healing power of honey. It would make sense that bees were doing something useful, what with all that buzzing and busying around. Bees create honey to feed off during hibernation in winter months, and seem happy enough to share some with us, even if inner-city bee populations are on the wane.

Honey is undoubtedly a super-food, containing essential enzymes, vitamins, minerals, and "pinocembrin", an anti-oxidant that is thought to improve brain functioning. All this talent, and yet a bee's own brain is the size of a sesame seed. Honey-making is indeed a complex process, and it is this very complexity which means that its consumption will lead to hydrogen peroxide and gluconic acid being released in the human body, compounds which can be highly beneficial to

our health, owing to their antiseptic and healing qualities. Amazingly, a hive of bees will fly 90,000 miles, the equivalent of three orbits around the earth to collect 1 kg of honey.

In the 1970s, a clever group of researchers realised that there could be extra health benefits to be gleaned in encouraging bees to feed on plants with medicinal qualities, such as clover and calendula. From this research, a range of "functional" honeys was created, which displayed additional healing properties. Because of its benefits to the immune system in particular, one of these honeys (dubbed LifeMel) has been shown to assist chemotherapy patients in overcoming the side-effects of their treatment.

Honey has a long history in folklore. In Hinduism, it is one of the five elixirs of immortality, and it appears in Jewish,



Christian and Buddhist religious works in both a literal and symbolic context. There seems to be a consensus over the last 10,000 years or so that honey is beneficial to your health, if you can avoid being stung when getting hold of the stuff. And whilst it is expensive, it's about the same price for a jar of ordinary honey as it is for a

packet of upmarket cold and flu lozenges. If you want enhanced or "functional" honey, that's going to cost you more, but I imagine it's well worth it.

For a full range of products including LifeMel, GastroMel, EnergyMel, RelaxMel and LadyMel, visit www.nuvitalityproducts.com

Laura Steel



Trial offer!

Until 31 Jan 2012 you can attend your first small group Dynamic Pilates session for only £10 and then you may buy 4 sessions for the price of 2 by quoting promotion KR623.

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Sessions are every hour from 7am to 9pm, including weekends covering a wide range of levels, including cardio and Pre/Post-natal sessions. There are one-to-one or small group sessions (maximum 8 clients and choice of ladies-only or mixed sessions).

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5 YOUR GUT MAY NEED SOME HONEY

Popularly perceived as a sweet treat with little nutrition, you may be surprised to learn honey can be a gastric aid too – although not all honeys are made the same...

Manuka honey has been shown in studies to have beneficial effects, including antibiotic properties against bacteria which cause gastroenteritis, and the ability to halt the growth of *H pylori*, which has been linked to stomach pain, indigestion and ulcers.

Look for the 'UMF' factor on your manuka – try Comvita products from Holland & Barrett or comvita.co.uk. The New Zealand Honey Shop (newzealandhoneyshop.co.uk) offers a good selection too.

Alternatively, try GastroMel (£25, 120g), a functional honey, made by bees given a unique blend of specially selected herbs – including angelica, sage and bayleaf – with stomach-healing properties.

And the added bonus for fitness lovers is that honey can give you a useful high-impact sugar boost, which is much healthier than a pure and refined white-sugar hit!



ASK THE EXPERT

I've heard about the importance of having good bacteria in your gut, but I'm not sure what this actually means. Can you advise?

Hilary French, Suffolk

Professor Glenn Gibson (bimuno.com) says: "The gut contains thousands of harmless bacteria, which are important to our bodies. There are two main types, the 'good bacteria', including groups scientifically called 'bifidobacteria' and the 'bad bacteria'. Ingesting different foods, medicine or even stress can upset the balance of bacteria in the gut, which can affect both your digestive and immune system, making you feel rundown. Maintaining a good composition of bacteria in the gut will help improve your digestive health and for additional support, some prebiotic supplements encourage the growth of good bacteria whilst decreasing the bad bacteria, including those known to cause bloating."

6 Your gut may be suffering due to low stomach acid

Acid in your stomach is something you may only think of when experiencing heartburn – especially if you only get it when exercising – but low levels could be a problem. The acid in your stomach kills bacteria that could harm your gut, and facilitate the breakdown of protein. Low acid can lead to intestinal infection and poor digestion and absorption, leaving us prone to upset tummies, says expert in natural medicine, Philip Weeks (philipweeks.org).

"Food not effectively digested in the stomach puts an added burden on the gut," he explains. "This can lead to dysbiosis – an imbalance of bacterial flora – and the body not receiving an adequate quantity or variety of protein, as well some vitamins and minerals."

Possible causes for low stomach acid are stress and alcohol, but one issue affecting younger women is dieting

– strict diets characterised by inconsistent or erratic eating is a major contributor to stomach acid reduction.

Philip has devised a test to analyse your acid levels. "First thing in the morning, on an empty stomach, stir a quarter teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda into 250ml of water and drink it," he says. "Then time how long it takes to begin belching – 1-2 minutes is normal, 2-3 is normal to low, while 3-5 indicates low levels of acid."

To restore healthy levels he recommends the traditional remedy of cider vinegar – one teaspoon taken in water before each meal. Lemon juice is an alternative. Good herbal remedies include black pepper, fresh ginger, meadowsweet and herb teas made with cardamom, ginger, clove, fennel or cinnamon – make a nice caffeine-free herbal tea to wind down with after a tough workout.



- ✿ Alcohol myths busted
- ✿ What's triggering your cravings?
- ✿ Health bulletin



Winter bugs, be gone!

*

Dip into an immunity-boosting bath

"Frankincense oil helps relax the diaphragm where stress – which can weaken your immune system – is often held and has been used for centuries to reduce fevers and as an expectorant to release blocked airways," says Geraldine Howard, founder of Aromatherapy Associates. "Pure lavender oil is also a good immune booster. Add eight drops to a bath with an eggcup-full of milk to help it disperse in the water."

*

Eat to keep colds at bay

"Elderberries improve symptoms of colds and prevent viruses becoming established in the body's cells," advises Susan Curtis, medicines director at Neal's Yard Remedies, who recommends their Organic Elderberry Syrup, £8.50. Or try cold-fighting honey; Life Mel Honey, £37.50, produced by bees fed on the therapeutic herbs echinacea and Siberian ginseng, widely used in Russia to increase resistance.

*

Take zinc for quick recovery

Researchers at Cardiff University's Common Cold Centre found that taking 75 milligrams of zinc acetate daily when symptoms appeared shortened colds by an average 42 per cent. "The instant I feel run-down, I combine zinc with B6 supplements and a high dose of vitamin C (1000-3000 milligrams) for ten days," says nutritionist Vicki Edgson. Seek advice from a GP if you're already taking medication or supplements.

your heroes

GREAT BUYS AT YOUR HEALTH STORE



Great buy! The Aromatherapy Blends Collection from Natural by Nature Oils

Tell me more! Over the past 36 years Natural by Nature has been blending high quality natural and organic products. This new range offers beautiful facial oils and creams using Jasmine, Rose and Neroli to pamper and rejuvenate your skin. The therapeutic range of creams includes Natural by Nature's best selling Extreme Dry Skin Treatment cream, which is excellent for eczema and psoriasis; and their 100% Organic Moroccan Argan Oil completes the range

Available from: Independent Health Food Shops. Visit www.naturalbynature.co.uk or call 01582 840848



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Tell me more! Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) affects around 10% of the UK population, with symptoms such as feeling gloomy, grumpy, lethargic, anxious or depressed. You may feel like you can take on the world during summer, but in winter it is a different story

How can this help? The extra light given by a LitePod in the morning helps alleviate tiredness, reduces cravings for carbohydrates and boosts your energy levels. S.A.D. Lightbox Company offers a 30 day money-back guarantee on all LitePods, so you can try one and feel the difference

How much? The LitePod retails at £115.00

Where from? For more information or to purchase call 01844 353 136 or visit www.sad.uk.com

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OK, where do I buy? From selected Boots stores or online at www.goodnightsnoring.com. Also available through independent health stores via wholesaler Tree of Life



Want a delicious festive treat? Choose Paterson's Shortbread Fingers

Tell me about them! With over 100 years of baking experience, Paterson's shortbread is now a favourite with people of all ages. Cosy up this festive season with Paterson's tasty shortbread, guilt free indulgence you can enjoy anytime, anywhere. Naturally delicious, with less than 3% saturated fat. Available in 380g, 180g and 150g packs

Where can I get them? From Independent health food stores or visit www.paterson-arran.com, email enquiries@paterson-arran.com

Want to sweeten up your winter wellbeing? Try EnergyMel and LifeMel from Nu Vitality

Tell me more! Developed with over 30 years of research, LifeMel is made by honeybees that are fed on a specific botanical diet, including herbs such as Siberian ginseng, Echinacea and Calendula, and is proven in a number of cases to support immunity

Feeling frazzled? Then boost your energy on those busy days with EnergyMel. The botanical ingredients are known for their restorative and energising properties, including Angus Castus and Panax Ginseng

Where do I buy? For more info or to buy, visit www.nuvitalityproducts.com or call 01650 521382

