

The naturopathic advisor



Naturally Good Health has teamed up with experts from the College of Naturopathic Medicine to answer some of your burning health questions. This issue, you asked:



Q How can I improve my health by improving my shopping trolley?

More often than not we are drawn in by special offers and may even visit a few supermarkets in one week to avail of discount pricing. Keeping a few simple things in mind while doing the weekly

trolley dash can not only lead to healthier meals at home, but also boost nutrient and energy levels too.

● **The foundation to a healthy meal:** When it comes to choosing your food, the first thing to note is that there are various food groups which form the basis of your daily meals, which are carbohydrates, proteins and fats. From a nutritional point of view, research shows that it is better for the body and for your weight to eat little and often, for example, three medium sized meals, plus two snacks. Unfortunately, with busy lives, work, managing the house, children etc, it can be difficult to have a structured day food wise, often resulting in people relying on convenience foods to get them

through the day.

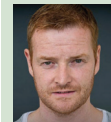
By taking into consideration the below tips, you can improve your shopping basket, your health and surprisingly even your pocket as eating healthily doesn't mean more expensive.

● **Go for wholegrains:** When choosing carbohydrates, go for wholegrain bread products usually located at the entrance of the supermarket, which take longer to be broken down by the body, keeping you feeling fuller for longer.

● **Choose lean:** The protein you eat forms the building blocks of your body, your body uses it for the formation of your skin, hair, nails, bones, and muscles. When choosing protein think lean, as this will help you to avoid excess

saturated fat, clean (organic) and grass-fed.

● **Think colour:** Dark leafy greens, for example, spinach and kale, are rich sources of vitamin A and K. Sweet potato, carrots, butternut squash (orange coloured) all contain carotene, which is a precursor to vitamin A for healthy skin and immune system. Strawberries, raspberries, plums and blueberries, in a red to dark wine colour, are all rich in antioxidants and various vitamins.



Your question has been answered by Nutritional Therapist and College of Naturopathic Medicine graduate, Marc Murphy, who specialises in weight management. For information on CNM training in a range of natural health therapies available in Ireland and beyond, visit www.naturopathy.ie

Muscle aches and pains

Soothe your muscles with the help of some wonderful herbs.

Hunched, bent at the middle and slightly to one side, does this sound familiar?

We have become a nation of 'slumpers', with many of us spending hours hunched in front of computers, both for work and in our leisure time, as well as slouched on the couch, in front of the TV or while driving, so it is no wonder our poor shoulders and necks have started to complain.

The combination of this slouchy behaviour, with factors such as sleeping awkwardly, muscle strain, stress, age and overexertion puts added pressure on our necks and shoulders.

Here are some easy ways to sort out our postures, help relieve neck and shoulder pain, speed up recovery time and even stop aches and stiffness reoccurring.

● **Sit square at your desk or steering wheel** – bottom into the back of the chair. Make sure your screen is at eye level and keyboard or steering wheel close. A rolled up towel behind the small of your back can help you

to sit more upright.

● **Stretch your neck and shoulders** – tilt your head to one side and at the same time drop the opposite shoulder. Hold it for 30 seconds, not straining to make the stretch hurt but just using the weight of your head. Repeat on the other side. Next, look squarely over one shoulder, then the other, 30 seconds on each side again.

● **Change your diet** – plant foods are full of magnesium that helps relax tense muscles. There are many foods which can help relieve pain, as well as increase it, so knowing which foods to eat fewer of and which foods to choose instead can really help towards managing your pain.

Apply some arnica gel for quick, localised pain relief. If you're already taking any pain medicines, it won't clash with them but could prevent having to step up to stronger ones with all their side effects. A great quick fix while you're following all the other tips!

Arnica gel can also be used if the pain you're experiencing is caused by a sprain or strain.



Fresh arnica extracts in a gel form are ideal to be applied topically to the area of pain and can be used several times a day, and, of course, as an added bonus, it will also help reduce any bruising that may have occurred with the injury. If an arnica gel is applied as soon as the pain is experienced, it can help cease the inflammatory process of the injury.

If you experience joint pain (not brought on by a particular incident), rheumatic pain, or backache, you could try taking devil's claw internally as the root of this herb is often used in herbal remedies for the treatment of such ailments. Arnica gel can still also be applied externally whilst taking devil's claw.