

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 What should I eat before a workout?

By now, New Year's resolutions should be in full swing and the idea of lifting weights or going to an early morning spin class

is just part of your daily routine. However, did you know that what you eat and drink before your workout has a massive impact on your performance and results?

So, what should you do? Let's look at the two most important things you need for a good, quality workout; energy and hydration.

Think of food as fuel and energy for your workout. If you find yourself dizzy, sluggish and quickly fatigued while working out, this may indicate low blood sugar i.e. your body's way of telling you that it's time to be fed! In order to prevent this and get the most out of your workout, have a small snack consisting of mostly carbohydrates and some protein at least an hour before exercising. Not only do carbs provide your

muscles with instant energy but they also help with the production of serotonin, a mood enhancing, motivation-fuelling hormone. Just what you need before you hit the gym! An ideal breakfast would be porridge with a handful of fresh or frozen berries and a sprinkle of cinnamon or organic omega 3 eggs on rye bread. Pre-workout snacks include an apple with one tablespoon of organic almond butter or organic coconut yoghurt with a palm full of almonds.

Whether you're a fitness fanatic or someone who likes the odd walk on the beach, one thing that is vital for all of us is to ensure we get the right amount of water before, during and after exercising. Fatigue, muscle cramps and dizziness are common signs of dehydration and can be the

reason for cutting a workout short. To prevent this, aim to drink 500ml water two hours prior to exercising. For any exercise that lasts longer than 30 minutes, drink fluid while you're doing it. The more you sweat, the more you'll need to drink! A great homemade sports drink is juice of ½ lemon and ¼ lime, three dates, two cups of water, one tablespoon organic agave nectar and one teaspoon of organic coconut oil mixed in a blender.



Your question has been answered by Nutritional Therapist and CNM graduate, Aisling O'Kelly, who specialises in sports nutrition. For information on CNM training in a range of natural health therapies available in Ireland and beyond, visit www.naturopathy.ie

Spring cleanse

Spring is known as the time to clean your house, so why not do the same for your body?

Our bodies are equipped with many organs and processes that enable us to expel toxins, but sometimes the system can get a little clogged.

The body is exposed to toxins in various ways, such as smoke, alcohol, junk food, caffeine, fizzy drinks, and chemicals, not to mention air pollution.

In order to be able to expel toxins, you need to ensure your 'exits' are clear.

Your body may struggle to expel toxins efficiently if you have days when your bowel doesn't move, you don't drink at least 1.5 litres of still, plain water a day, you don't eat any fresh fruit or vegetables or you don't get out into the fresh air for a little brisk exercise.

Improving the efficiency of your main elimination routes can free you from quite a long list of unpleasant symptoms. So, the first thing to do is to ensure your bowel is working well – at least once, preferably twice daily. Once

this is achieved and you're drinking plenty of still, plain water every day, the effects of cleaning up your diet for a week or two will not be nearly as painful.

A few rules of thumb for a better diet are sack the sugar, cut the caffeine and swap the salt. If you have a sweet tooth, try dried fruits. Instead of salt heavy snacks and ready meals, replace these with nuts, seeds and plenty of vegetables.

There are also natural detox products that can help you along the way. If your bowel is still sluggish, try to wake it up with a dose of a natural constipation remedy containing ingredients such as linseed, which has a long history for this use.

If you're going to cut caffeine, try replacing with some herbal teas. Not only are they caffeine free but also very good for you. Both nettle and



golden rod tea are cleansing and supportive for your system.

Give your immune system a boost with echinacea purpurea and vitamin C remedies made from natural sources, which the body finds easier to digest.

Milk thistle is good for supporting your liver once your bowel is moving well. Toxins expelled from the liver can then leave via the stool.

Ensure you're not blocking up your sweat glands with antiperspirants – choose deodorants made from natural ingredients instead.

Try a little gentle skin brushing too, to encourage painless waste removal.