

The naturopathic advisor

Experts from the College of Naturopathic Medicine answer your health questions. This issue, you asked:



Q Is there natural help to control rosacea?

There are natural things that you can try for yourself immediately; keep away from alcohol (especially red wine), hot drinks, spicy food, and refined sugar. Instead, adopt a nutrient-rich anti-inflammatory diet, containing leafy green vegetables, good sources of omega 3, such as wild salmon and chia seeds, and detoxifying foods, such as garlic, ginger, lemon and turmeric. Eat organically wherever possible. Keeping a food and lifestyle diary can be helpful to identify potential triggers. Take a good daily source of probiotics (such as organic kefir, kombucha and

sauerkraut) and a high quality anti-inflammatory omega 3 supplement.

Learn to manage stress levels, particularly at meal times, as stress can disturb the gut. Adopt a good skincare routine, keeping your skin clean, hydrated, protected from sunlight, and from extreme temperatures. Always avoid skincare products containing steroids and alcohol and use ones free of synthetic ingredients. Look for a cream which you can apply topically, containing naturally occurring azelaic acid, or niacinamide.

Getting detailed personalised advice is always best. A practitioner with naturopathic training would aim to address this uncomfortable and distressing skin condition from both the inside and outside, through food, herbal remedies and supplements.

As a naturopathically-trained herbalist, my key priority would be to re-establish my client's healthy gut function, as low stomach hydrochloric acid (HCl), low pancreatic lipase (a digestive enzyme that digests fat), deficiency in complex-B vitamins (particularly vitamin

B3), overgrowth of Demodex (a skin mite) and infection with the bacteria *H. pylori*, have all been implicated in the development of rosacea. If a test for *H. pylori* proves positive, herbs such as licorice, ginger, turmeric, green tea and garlic may be appropriate. They can be taken as food and tinctures, as well as oregano oil, to reduce levels of *H. pylori* and to decrease inflammation.

Herbal extracts of pine bark and bilberry provide extra antioxidants and strengthen blood vessels. I would also prepare a bespoke cream containing herbs with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, such as chrysanthellum, aloe vera, green tea, licorice, oatmeal and bilberry. Complex-B vitamins and pancreatic lipase may also be considered.



Your expert

Your question has been answered by Naturopath and Herbalist, Vera Martins, for CNM. CNM trains students for successful careers in Naturopathic Nutrition, Herbal Medicine, Acupuncture, Homeopathy, Naturopathy, and Natural Chef. Find out more at www.naturopathy.ie or call 01 6725036.

HOW TO STAY SHARP



Health Stores Ireland President, Gerald Colfer, explains the importance of a healthy lifestyle to keep the brain functioning.

Most of us in middle age or older experience 'senior moments', when the name that should 'trip off the tongue' just won't come to mind. Of course, when this happens occasionally, it can be the result of nothing more than tiredness or stress. However, given that 44m people globally are estimated to suffer from the degenerative diseases of Alzheimer's and dementia, it could be a sign of something more serious.

Fortunately, there are many steps we can take to minimise our risk, and it's all about prevention. Diet is primary. Reduce simple carbohydrates, such as white bread and sugary foods. These lead to imbalanced blood sugars and inflammation, which is thought to directly affect the brain. Instead, make your goal to follow the Mediterranean diet, with its emphasis on lots of fresh fruit and vegetables to provide the vitamins, minerals and antioxidants needed to stay healthy. Oily fish are a source of long chain omega 3 fatty acids. These include EPA to

fight inflammation and DHA, which is needed for brain structure. Vegetarians and vegans can get the same benefits from a plentiful supply of nuts and seeds like walnuts and flax. Coconut oil provides us with MCTs (medium chain triglycerides), which directly fuel the brain.

Elevated levels of homocysteine, an amino acid in the blood, are thought to be linked with an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease. They can be lowered naturally by ensuring adequate B vitamin intake, in particular, B6, folic acid and B12. Make sure of this through supplementation or by ensuring adequate intake of unprocessed wholegrain foods.

Low levels of vitamin D are also associated with dementia. As our ability to produce vitamin D decreases with age and food sources like eggs and sardines aren't too plentiful, this is a case where supplementation is highly recommended. Encouragingly, getting enough vitamin D is also thought to benefit our bone and heart health, our mood and our immune systems. Supplements



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like CoQ10, alpha lipid acid and acetyl-L-carnitine can directly support the mitochondria, which 'power' individual cells all over the body, including the brain.

Don't forget to look at other lifestyle factors like poor sleep and high stress levels. Support both of these by taking adequate exercise and, if necessary, supplementing with B vitamins, magnesium and herbs like rhodiola and passionflower. Engage in the things that naturally keep the brain active like reading, crosswords and puzzles and learning new skills.

Like our joints, our brains can only remain healthy when properly nourished and used. They're meant to, and can, last a lifetime!

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