

Nutritin I-Mag

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RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FOR TOMORROW'S PRACTITIONER

WINTER 2025

Practitioner guide to **PREGNANCY NUTRITION**

The critical role of nutrition in
pregnancy and the early years

Product praise

What secures your
vote in the *Nutrition
I-Mag* Product Awards?

The role of pre- and probiotics

An in-depth report into
the expanding research



PLUS: PLANT-BASED COOKING WITH A CONSCIENCE ■ IHCAN CONFERENCES – TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO BOOK YOUR PLACE
■ THE LATEST ON NUCLEOTIDES ■ NUTRITIONAL THERAPY STUDENT PROFILE ■ READER GIVEAWAYS

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WELCOME



Nutrition I-Mag is a title that is dedicated to education, to supporting students of nutritional therapy during their studies, and to help recent graduates take their first steps into practice. We do this through the pages of this magazine, which is designed to expand your knowledge, as well as earning you valuable CPD points simply for reading.

But we want to take that further and ensure we are engaging the very people this magazine is targeted at – you the student. And so, in this issue, we are delighted to introduce a new feature, as well as bring back our Mentoring Scheme, allowing a current student the opportunity to begin their writing career.

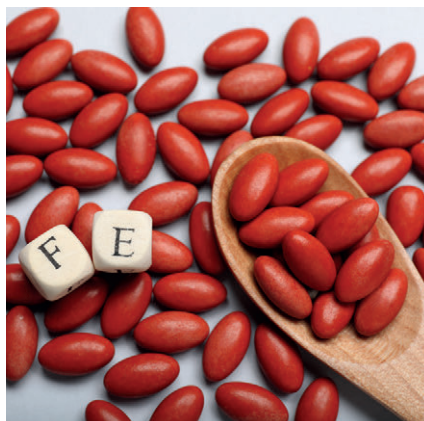
Starting with our new feature, Student Life, each issue, we will be catching up with an existing student about their studies, the challenges they face and their goals for the future – we hope by offering stories from fellow students, it will bring you together as a community and help to support and encourage you in your learning. You can read the feature by clicking [here](#), and if you want to be involved in a future issue, please do email me at rachel.symonds@targetpublishing.com

And then onto our Mentoring Scheme, something we at *Nutrition I-Mag* are really proud of. Each time we run the scheme, it gives a student or recent graduate the opportunity to try their hand at nutrition writing, with the support and encouragement of our team. In this issue, we are delighted to welcome Maryam Tamaddon, a recent graduate at CNELM, writing on the theme of prebiotics and probiotics. You can read her article by clicking [here](#).

All that remains is to remind you of our last IHCAN Summit of the year, taking place on November 15 – not only does it offer you an incredible day of learning from leading experts, but you also get the chance to network with fellow practitioners, as well as meeting with brands from across the nutrition world. Tickets can be booked at www.ihcansummit.co.uk

Rachel

RACHEL SYMONDS, EDITOR



MEET THE TEAM

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A practitioner guide to nutritional support during these critical life stages



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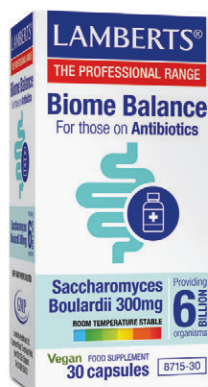
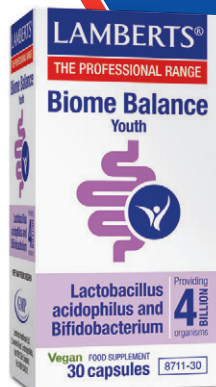
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OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Each issue, *Nutrition I-Mag* enjoys contributions from many leading authorities in the nutrition world. This issue, our writers include:



ALICE BRADSHAW

Alice Bradshaw is a qualified Nutritional Therapist with a passion for health writing. She has worked in the natural health industry for 25 years and is Head of Education and Nutrition Information at Terranova Nutrition.



MATTHEW HUDSON

Matthew Hudson MSc, BSc (Hons), Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr), is Technical Advisor at ADM Protexin, manufacturers of Bio-Kult and Lepicol. Matthew has a master's degree in Sport Nutrition and a background in biology. Matthew has focused on the gut microbiome, as well as performance nutrition, and has led practical, nutrition-based workshops where he has shared his knowledge and understanding.



LEYLA EL MOUDDEN

Leyla El Moudden, BA, Dip Herb, Dip Nat is Head of Education for Enzyme Science UK, and a practicing Naturopath and Metabolic Balance Coach.



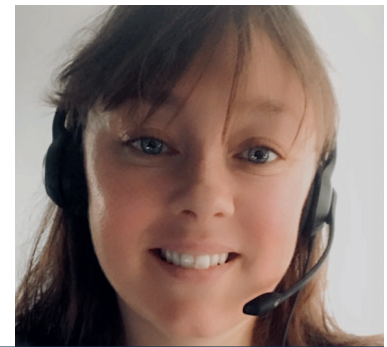
DOMINIKA JACKSON

Dominika Jackson is a Clinical Nutritionist at BioCare. Dominika joined BioCare after completing a Bachelor's in Human Nutrition and a Master's in Nutritional Therapy. After years in the fitness industry and working as a personal trainer, she decided to study nutrition to get a better understanding of how diet and lifestyle can affect different health conditions. Throughout education and her own experience, she's developed a particular interest in longevity and gut health.



MARYAM TAMADDON

Maryam Tamaddon is a Registered Nutritional Therapy Practitioner (BANT, CNHC) with an MSc in Personalised Nutrition and a DPhil from Oxford. With over a decade in healthcare innovation and NHS collaborations, she brings a science-informed, client-focused approach to care. Through her practice, NutriLounge, she focuses on digestive health alongside hormonal and brain health.



KERI BRIGGS

Keri Briggs is Senior Nutrition and Technical Advice Specialist at Lamberts Healthcare. She graduated in 1999 with a BSc in Human Nutrition and has worked for Lamberts since 2000, where she has been involved with training, clinical trials and writing PR and trade articles, as well as advising trade customers and consumers.

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Men's Health Summit

WEBINAR

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Cain Leathem & Alessandro Ferretti**

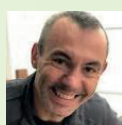
**Thursday, 20th November
9.30-12.30 GMT**

The social understanding of what it means to be a man carries a lot of weight. The pressure to lead, provide and protect are primal responsibilities, passed down through generations and once provided an evolutionary benefit. Now however, as the world changes and humans adapt, the social stigmas remain and are affecting men's mental and physical health.

This 3-hour summit covers a plethora of research, investigating the hormonal imbalances driving issues such as low testosterone, high oestrogen, and the lifestyle factors impacting this. It will explore the latest, cutting-edge research on prostate health, including how to help prevent prostate issues such as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), and support those with it.

With suicide being the leading killer of men under 50, the summit dives into men's mental health, what may be driving this epidemic crisis, and the nuances of working with male clients in helping them achieve their best results. All this will be accompanied by practical nutrition and lifestyle changes men can make to better their mental health and improve health outcomes for some of the most common male pathologies.

3 hours applied CPD (BANT, ANP, NNA, NTOI).



Alessandro Ferretti
Dip ION, MBANT, ANP



Cain Leathem
Exercise & Nutrition Consultant,
GB Fitness Founder



Maxime Maunand
BA dipCNM
Clinical Nutritionist at BioCare

HOW TO BOOK Visit biocare.co.uk/events 0121 433 8774 education@biocare.co.uk

NEWS BITES

A round-up of the news from the natural health industry.

Landmark report finds shifting food systems could prevent 15m deaths a year

A landmark new report warning food systems breach planetary limits has found that changing global diets could prevent around 15 million premature deaths a year.

The *2025 EAT-Lancet Commission Report on Healthy, Sustainable, and Just Food Systems* also found that at the same time, concerted global efforts to transform food systems could bring us back within planetary boundaries and cut annual greenhouse gas emissions from food systems by more than half compared with a business-as-usual scenario.

The analysis was carried out by international experts in nutrition, climate, economics, health, social sciences and agriculture, including Professor Nitya Rao from the University of East Anglia. Building on its influential 2019 report, the new Commission stresses that just food systems will be essential to improving health and social development outcomes. Fewer than one per cent of the world's population is currently in the 'safe and just space', where people's rights and food needs are met within planetary boundaries.

According to the report, almost a third (32 per cent) of food system workers earn below a living wage. Meanwhile, the wealthiest 30 per cent of people drive more than 70 per cent of food-related environmental impacts, and despite global calorie sufficiency, more than one billion people remain undernourished. The analysis warns that even with a global transition away from fossil fuels, food systems could still push temperatures beyond 1.5°C.

Analysis shows that reshaping systems could deliver returns of \$5 trillion a year through better

health, restored ecosystems, and climate resilience – more than 10 times the \$200-500bn investment needed to drive food systems change.

Johan Rockström, Commission Co-Chair and Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, commented: "The report sets out the clearest guidance yet for feeding a growing population without breaching the safe operating space on Earth set by the planetary boundaries. It also exposes the stark winners and losers in today's food systems, where entrenched power dynamics drive deep inequities. By uniting the latest science on health and climate, it shows that what we put on our plates can save millions of lives, cut billions of tonnes of emissions, halt the loss of biodiversity, and create a fairer food system.

"We now have robust global guardrails for food systems, and a reference point that policymakers, businesses, and citizens can act on together. The evidence is undeniable: transforming food systems is not only possible, it's essential to securing a safe, just, and sustainable future for all."

Based on the report's findings, the Commission outlines eight potential solutions to advance health, environmental, and justice goals, including: protect and promote traditional healthy diets; implement sustainable production practices; reduce food loss and waste; and secure decent working conditions across the food system.



Responding to the report, Vegan Society Senior Dietitian, Emily Angus, commented: "Nothing is more important for the health of our planet and its population than good food. With the UK government deep into developing its food strategy, the principles established by the EAT-Lancet Commission must be at the heart of their thinking, for the good of humans, animals and our shared environment."

Meanwhile, Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming, has also welcomed the report.

Ruth Westcott, Climate Lead at Sustain, commented: "The government needs to make eating healthy food the easy choice that fits in to people's lives. We know people want to eat well but the people who actually grow our food are barely covering their costs while the big supermarkets rack up huge profits. The good news is that we can make better diets the easy choice, starting with the food in schools and hospitals. We've seen it work in other countries, it's time now for the UK to step up."

Sports nutrition certification programme launches

A new clean sport supplements programme has been announced.

Eurofins Supplement Testing and Eurofins Assurance has launched Clean Sport Certified, a product certification programme developed to safeguard the quality of sports supplements,

ingredients, and foods. The programme will be carried out in partnership with TruShield Certified, the certification scheme for athletes, teams, leagues, consumers, coaches, and dietitians seeking clean, rigorously tested finished products.

Through this programme, Eurofins Supplement Testing expands its banned substances screening to include over 400 compounds prohibited in sport, aligning with the requirements of athletic organisations and retailer verification programmes.

One in four households struggle to afford food, new report reveals

Worrying data has revealed that one in seven households with children struggle to afford food.

A new report from the Food Foundation has prompted the national charity to call on government to commit to halving UK food insecurity in Child Poverty Strategy.

The data reveals that over one in 10 (11 per cent) of people in the UK are experiencing food insecurity, which rises to almost one in seven for households with children (15 per cent). Of all food insecure households, 64 per cent report cutting back on fruit (versus 14 per cent of food-secure households) and 50 per cent cutting back on vegetables (versus eight per cent of food-secure households) because they were worried about money. And 78 per cent agree that if healthy food was more affordable, it would enable their household to eat more of it.

As struggling households with children are pushed to buy cheap, calorie-rich, nutrient poor foods, children from the most deprived fifth of the population are nearly twice as likely to be living with obesity as those in the least deprived fifth by their first year of school. Similarly, children in their last year of primary school in the most deprived areas are more than twice as likely to have experienced tooth decay in their adult teeth compared to those in the least deprived areas.

The foundation says the situation is even more concerning as recent ONS data shows that food prices are steeply on the rise again, including the cost of healthy staples such as vegetables, eggs and fish.

The Food Foundation is calling on the government to commit to reduce child food insecurity levels in its upcoming Child Poverty Strategy. This includes setting a target to halve levels of food insecurity, removing the two-child limit, and strengthening nutritional safety net schemes that support low-income families.

Shona Goudie, Policy and Advocacy Manager at The Food Foundation, commented: "Food insecurity in the UK is a political choice, not an inevitability. The government must demonstrate its commitment to tackling this issue by setting clear targets to protect people from food insecurity and building national resilience.

"Over the last five years, overall levels of food insecurity have remained persistently high but have fluctuated considerably, demonstrating how rapidly conditions can change – either for the better or worse. These fluctuations reflect external events, but also policy measures taken by the government. The government must use its forthcoming Child Poverty Strategy to commit to halve the number of children experiencing food insecurity."

Supplement use falls slightly since pandemic but rises among younger generation



There has been a slight decrease in supplement use since the pandemic, although younger people are bucking the trend, according to a new report.

The Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA) has published the results of its Health of the Nation Survey, conducted every few years to gain insight into how the UK adult population sees its level of health and nutritional awareness. The previous survey was carried out in 2021 as a snapshot of supplement use during the pandemic and showed that 71 per cent of adults were regularly taking a supplement. The latest research has revealed 64 per cent of adults take a supplement daily. The HFMA says this is closer to previous surveys and shows the pandemic and health concerns fuelled supplement use.

It was found that a third of Brits (37 per cent) report to be taking at least one type of food supplement every day, with multivitamins and minerals the most widely used supplement, with one in three (33 per cent) reporting use. The top three motivators are general health and wellbeing (49 per cent), normal immune function (35 per cent), and dietary gaps (such as not getting sufficient amounts of a specific nutrient (19 per cent) or covering occasional lapses (19 per cent). Some 28 per cent of users were prompted to take supplements following advice from an expert, for example, a doctor, highlighting the critical role that doctors and other medical experts play in boosting uptake and guiding better nutritional decisions.

In the report foreword, Martin Last, HFMA Director General, commented: "In short: the UK is not as healthy as it thinks it is. But the solutions – and the public appetite for them – are there. This report provides a blueprint for action."

The latest survey, conducted by Censuswide among a sample of 2,000 UK respondents and collected in April, also demonstrates supplement use in younger age brackets has increased; while 44 per cent of over-55s don't take any supplements, for 25-34s, that drops to just 13 per cent.

Martin advised: "The Health of the Nation Survey provides a valuable insight into how the public perceive their level of health and gives a picture of their supplement use. This can help us and our members plan for future activity and messaging. It is encouraging to see that younger generations are increasing their use and awareness of supplements and that it is not the domain of the 'older' sections of the population, and it demonstrates that there are opportunities for the trade to look at using social media as a way of conveying their message."

Ingredient supplier launches new vision for the future

Gnosis by Lesaffre has announced a renewed focus on scientific excellence rooted in nature as it announces a brand relaunch.

The supplier says it is stepping into a bold new chapter that honours the strength of its past while unlocking fresh new possibilities for growth, innovation, and impact.

Ulrich Irgens, Gnosis General Manager, explained: "This launch unites Gnosis product brands under a stronger, more elevated master brand, making it easier for customers, partners, and consumers to understand, navigate, and engage with our products and solutions. It's about bringing our scientific rigor, quality excellence, and customer-first approach to the forefront while carving out room for innovation to solve critical unmet health issues. All of this is to build a solid foundation that will carry our vision into the future and support our mission to raise the standard of human health."

One of the initiatives of Gnosis's evolution is the elevated identity and repositioning of Emotion, the next-generation premium glutathione in a unique patented crystalline form.

IN RESEARCH

Nutrition I-Mag rounds up the latest research studies in the nutrition world.

Call for iron screening as research reveals scale of anaemia

Researchers have called for iron screening after they revealed a high prevalence of anaemia.

Writing in the journal, *Frontiers in Nutrition*, the researchers explained how anaemia and iron deficiency are a global healthcare burden affecting almost 25 per cent of the population. Many anaemia cases are caused by depletion of iron stores, which can be treated by oral iron supplementation. However, anaemia may also result from functional iron deficiency, where chronic inflammation prevents utilisation of stored iron. Anaemia and iron deficiency are rarely profiled in general populations; however, they can have significant healthcare implications.

And so researchers took data from 33,029 serum samples, which were retrospectively analysed from individuals undertaking private health checks within Randox Health (UK). Samples were measured to detect anaemia, iron and vitamin deficiencies, based on established guidelines. The overall prevalence of anaemia in the study was six per cent, and the prevalence of anaemia was higher in females, with almost one in 10 (9.9 per cent) classified as anaemic; anaemia prevalence was highest in females aged 18-50. Similarly, absolute iron deficiency was also higher in females, with almost one in three (31.6 per cent) impacted. Functional iron deficiency was high in the study individuals across all age groups and sexes.

In conclusion, the researchers wrote: "Anaemia and iron deficiency are among the most preventable and treatable health conditions – yet routine health checks remain uncommon. This study revealed a high prevalence of both conditions within a health-conscious UK population undergoing private health assessments. Despite their proactive approach to health, one in 10 females in this cohort were anaemic, and one



in three had absolute iron deficiency. These findings are particularly troubling given that this group is unlikely to face the socioeconomic barriers that typically exacerbate nutritional deficiencies.

"Moreover, the study uncovered a widespread presence of functional iron deficiency across all sexes and age groups, highlighting an overlooked issue that requires further investigation into its underlying causes and clinical consequences. Considering the well-documented risks of untreated iron deficiency, including fatigue, cognitive impairment, and reduced quality of life, it is concerning that systematic testing, especially for females, is not standard practice. This study raises the question for population-based screening of anaemia and iron deficiency in high-risk groups."

Essential fats studied for benefits in heart and metabolic health

A pilot study has suggested potential benefits of essential fats and astaxanthin for metabolic and heart health among women.

The new study from Leibniz University Hannover, published in *Metabolites*, shows improved heart relaxation and metabolic balance in women with obesity and prediabetes.

Conducted by researchers at the Institute of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Leibniz University Hannover, the 12-week trial followed 20 middle-aged women with obesity (BMI $\geq$ 28) and with occasional blood sugar irregularities, conditions known to increase the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes. This is also an important at-risk group that is less frequently

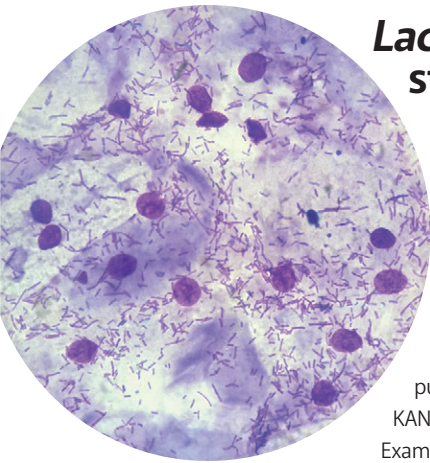
studied in clinical research. Participants received 4g/day of Zooca Calanus Oil, which contains omega 3 fatty acids (EPA and DHA) in a unique slow-release wax ester form, along with natural policosanols and the antioxidant, astaxanthin.

The main outcome of the study was a significant improvement in cardiac diastolic function, assessed by the E/A ratio, a key measure of how efficiently the heart relaxes and fills with blood between beats. Improved diastolic function is considered an important marker of cardiovascular health. Researchers also found a reduction in the Metabolic Syndrome Severity Score, indicating better overall metabolic balance.

An improvement in the TyG-WHtR index (a

composite measure of triglycerides, glucose, waist and height), suggested enhanced insulin sensitivity and lower metabolic stress. Lower resting heart rate and central diastolic blood pressure, further supported positive cardiovascular effects.

"These results are encouraging because they point to combined benefits in both cardiac function and metabolic regulation," commented Marianne Mæhlum, Chief Marketing and Innovation Officer at Zooca. "For women with obesity and prediabetes – a group at elevated cardiometabolic risk – finding safe and natural strategies to support long-term health is of great importance."



***Lactobacillus gasseri* studied for support of vaginal microbiota**

The probiotic, *Lactobacillus gasseri*, has been found to colonise the vaginal microbiota of healthy women after oral administration.

Probiotic strain, *Lactobacillus gasseri* KABP 064 is detected in the vaginal tract of healthy women after oral consumption, indicating the potential to promote vaginal health, in a newly published clinical study from AB-BIOTICS and KANEKA PROBIOTICS.

Examining healthy women aged 18-45 over 18 days, the randomised, double-blind and placebo-controlled clinical trial reported that *L. gasseri* KABP 064 was detected in the vaginal tract of 55.9 per cent of participants receiving the probiotic strain. Together with in vitro investigations showing broad-spectrum inhibitory activity against a range of urogenital microorganisms, including certain bacteria and yeast, these findings suggest *L. gasseri* KABP 064 could be effective in promoting vaginal health.

Marta Pérez, R&D Manager at AB-BIOTICS and lead author of the study, commented: "The administration of probiotics via vaginal tablets or creams has demonstrated efficacy in reducing infection recurrence, however, oral probiotics for vaginal health remains relatively understudied, despite its many advantages, including patient experience and compliance. Probiotic strains for oral consumption must withstand the harsh and diverse environments of the oral-gut-vaginal route. This study aimed to identify strains of vaginal *lactobacilli* that can resist gastrointestinal conditions and colonise the vaginal tract to support a balanced microbiota."

Liposomal delivery benefits for coenzyme Q10

A new study has suggested that liposomal delivery has a beneficial impact on coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) absorption.

Researchers explained how CoQ10 plays a vital role in cellular energy production and protection against oxidative stress. However, its absorption from orally administered forms is limited due to its poor water solubility and relatively large molecular weight. While co-ingesting CoQ10 with a fatty meal can enhance absorption, this approach is not always practical.

And so, the aim of this study, published in the *Frontiers in Nutrition* journal, was to evaluate whether a liposomal formulation of CoQ10 could improve its absorption compared with standard CoQ10 without the need for the concurrent consumption of fatty foods.

In the randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, crossover study

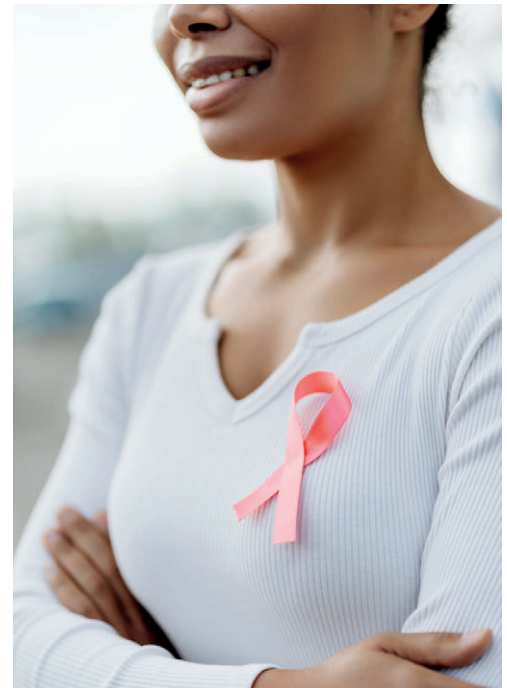
design, seven men and 11 women ingested a single dose of placebo (PLA), 100mg of unformulated CoQ10, or 100mg of liposomal CoQ10 (Lipo CoQ-10). Blood samples were collected and analysed for plasma CoQ10 concentrations.

It was found that CoQ10 and Lipo CoQ10 demonstrated significantly greater Cmax and AUC0-24 compared with placebo. Additionally, Lipo CoQ-10 had significantly higher Cmax values as compared with CoQ10.

"Liposomal delivery significantly enhances CoQ10 absorption," the researchers concluded.



Diet and lifestyle examined in role to improve breast cancer treatment



A new study funded by World Cancer Research Fund will examine how exercise, diet and body composition may improve breast cancer treatment.

The funding allows one of the world's leading teams in this field, based at the University of Southampton, to combine scientific and clinical expertise for the crucial next stage of their research. They aim to explore how this promising approach can help cancer treatments become more personalised, effective and kinder for patients in future.

Currently, simple measurements of weight and height help guide medical treatment doses, for example, of chemotherapy. The research team will go a step further and explore how a detailed electronic scan of body fat and muscle, combined with information about a woman's diet and exercise, could be used in the future to more accurately determine the type and level of cancer treatment a patient will benefit the most from.

The programme, called CAND0, is a Southampton Breast Cancer Research Collaboration with the university's partners at University Hospital Southampton. Professor of Breast Surgery at the University of Southampton, joint lead researcher on CAND0 and honorary surgeon at University Hospital Southampton, Professor Ramsey Cutress, commented: "We are delighted to receive this funding from WCRF, which will now enable us to explore in much more detail how body composition, exercise, and nutrition can impact breast cancer patient outcomes. We will take this further to better understand how to personalise a wide range of treatments to individual patients including surgery, radiotherapy and drug treatments."

NEW TO MARKET

Nutrition I-Mag brings you the latest product developments in the nutrition world.

Mullein throat spray launches for winter season



Nature's Answer has announced the winter launch of a throat spray based on mullein.

Mullein-X Throat Spray On-the-Go is launching into the UK as part of an expansion of the existing Mullein-X collection. This innovative, multi-system support formula offers a natural, drug-free solution for soothing irritated throats and supporting upper respiratory health.

It has been formulated to help clear mucus and provide on-the-go relief, and, unlike typical throat sprays that simply numb the throat, this product is designed to be gargled, swished, and swallowed.

The non-drowsy formula contains a unique blend of key herbal ingredients, including Mullein-X, licorice root, slippery elm bark, and sage leaf to help soothe an irritated throat. It also contains grapefruit seed, olive leaf, and ginger root to support immune and upper respiratory health. It is alcohol-free, gluten-free, and contains Nature's Answer's exclusive Quik-Sorb blend, designed to aid the body's natural absorption.

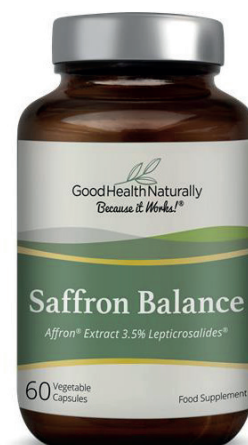
Good Health Naturally adds saffron to range

Saffron Balance is the latest innovation to be launched by Good Health Naturally.

The new supplement features Affron, a premium, standardised saffron extract that has been clinically studied for mood, stress and sleep support.

Known as the world's most precious spice, saffron's unique compounds help promote emotional wellbeing, hormonal balance and healthy vision.

Each Saffron Balance vegetarian capsule delivers 30mg of Affron for consistent results.



Ahiflower brand launches liquid variety

A new liquid ahiflower product has been launched by Regenerative Omegas.

Liquid Omega is made with pure ahiflower oil, with each 150ml bottle providing a 60-day supply of omega 3. It is an extension of the range, which also has a capsule product in the portfolio.

Ahiflower provides a plant-based omega solution and is grown traceably and exclusively by UK farmers using regenerative agriculture. Every bottle of Liquid Omega provides as much oil as 600 anchovies. Regenerative Omegas, which is distributed in the UK by Bio-nature, helps the planet and supports optimal wellness, with no fishy burps.



Range of tinctures added to Botanicals For Life

The product range at Botanicals For Life has grown with the addition of a number of new liquid tinctures.

The brand, which is owned by Living Planet Distribution, has grown a number of its bestselling ranges with the new practitioner-formulated tinctures, which are in a glycerine-based format for faster absorption, are alcohol-free, organic, wild-crafted, or agroecologically sourced, and possess single-herb simplicity with traceable origins. New additions within the six ranges, include:

● **Mind & Mood:** Avena Sativa, Skullcap, Gotu Kola, Holy Basil, and Ginkgo.



- **Immunity:** Mullein Leaf, Pau d'Arco, Andrographis, Berberis, and Uva Ursi.
- **Digest & Detox:** Licorice and Triphala.
- **Energy & Vitality:** Green Tea and Siberian Ginseng.
- **Female & Male Support:** Shatavari, Saw Palmetto, and Tribulus.
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A Microbiome Masterclass

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Hear from



Jo Gamble

Nutritionist, Functional
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Dr Sally Moorcroft

Medical Doctor, Functional
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Talk: **Microbial Transitions -
Understanding the Vaginal
Microbiome Through Midlife
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Fertility Nutritionist, MA,
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Talk: **Microbiome Matters -
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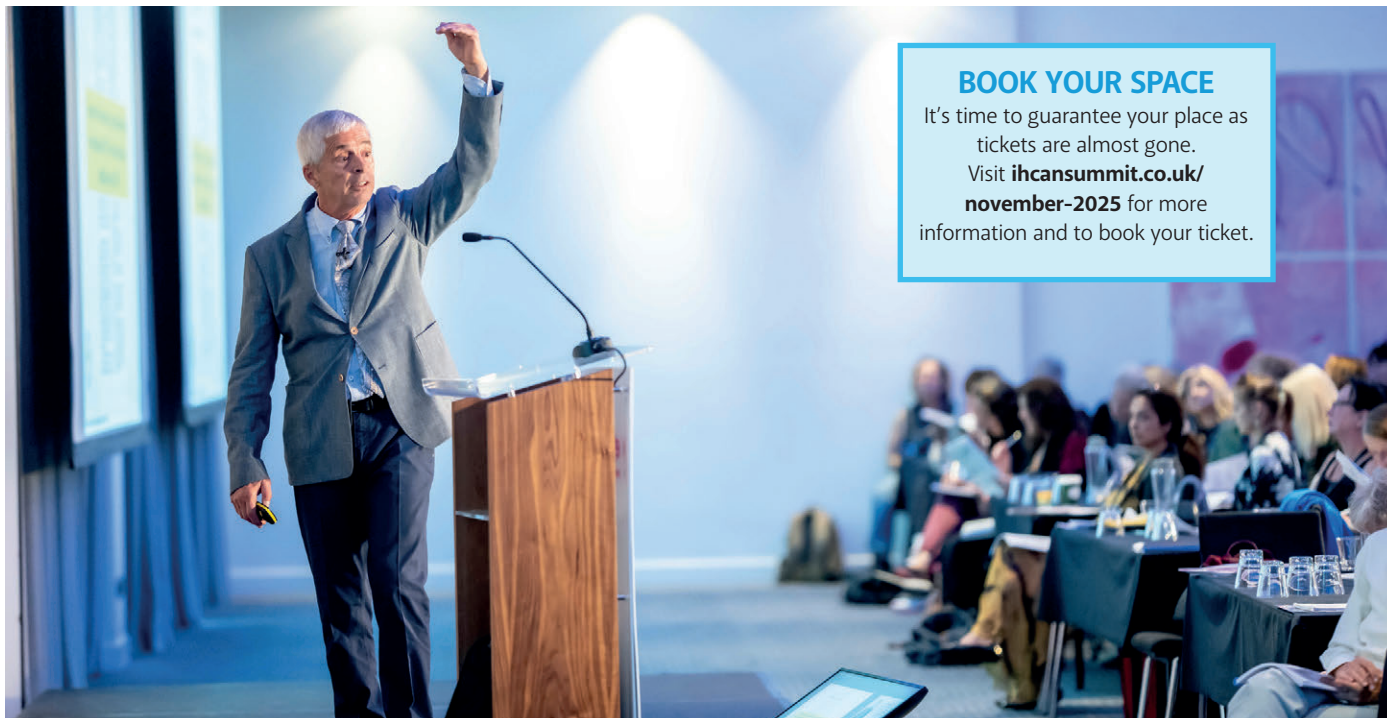
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- Dr Victoria Soraya Sampson BDS MFDS RCS Ed Pg Dip – speaking on 'The Oral Microbiome – Why We Need to Factor It Into Full-Body Health and How We Can Test It'.
- Elena Panzeri MSc – 'Microbiome and

Personalised Nutrition: How Accurate Testing Can Transform Clinical Practice'.

- Lucinda Miller MH MRNI MGNI – 'Immune Dysregulation, Neurodivergence and Mental Health'.

- Alex Wilber MSc (Personalised Nutrition), PhD (University of Oxford) – 'ChatGPT in Clinic? What AI Means for Practitioners'.

The event will be hosted by Kirsten Chick, nutritional therapist, author, and host of the *IH CAN* magazine Podcast, who will guide the day's proceedings and lead the audience Q&A sessions.

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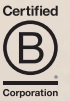
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Nutritional planning for pregnancy and birth

Pregnancy and birth are two of the most nutritionally demanding phases of a woman's life, not only for her but for her offspring. With many women known to have insufficient levels of key nutrients, nutritional planning is key, as our experts explain.

When you consider that good nutrition in the first 1,000 days of life – which starts at the point of conception – is considered to be critical for lifelong health, it's easy to see why this needs to be at the forefront when it comes to pregnancy. But more than considering baby, good nutrition, with adequate intakes of key nutrients, is also crucial for the health of the mother-to-be, physically and mentally. It helps ensure good maternal health and to allow for recovery after such a hugely demanding time.

However, it seems women are struggling to meet their nutritional needs, for a range of reasons. And this is having a huge impact on their health.

Keri Briggs, Senior Brand Specialist at Lamberts, commented: "Pre-conception and pregnancy are hugely important life stages as this is a time when the nutrition of one person can have lifelong impacts on the foetus that is also developing. Nutrient shortfalls and deficiencies, which may only create minor, short-term symptoms in the mother, may have lasting effects on many aspects of health for the unborn child, potentially lasting into adulthood. Evidence from several studies have led to both UNICEF and the WHO to state that nutrition in the first 1,000 days of life,

from the point of conception, can affect lifelong health, influence the development of disease, and may be associated with the development of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

"National Diet and Nutrition Surveys in the UK already indicate that many women have an insufficient intake of some vitamins and minerals from their diets and these include folate, iron, choline, and zinc. Given that the requirements for some of these nutrients increases during pregnancy, it is clear that some women are not starting pregnancy well-prepared, nutritionally."

Eleanor Faulkner, Nutrition Advisor at Viridian Nutrition, continued: "Nurturing new life places extra nutritional demands on the mother's body. Not only are nutrients needed for development of the baby itself, like the brain and the skeletal system, but the nutritional requirements for the mother's body changes as well. The heart works harder to pump blood to the uterus, whilst volume of blood itself increases by almost 50 per cent, creating demand for nutrients involved in formation of red blood cells like B12 and iron, as well as fluid intake. Kidneys also work harder to filter the increased volume of blood, whilst breathing rate deepens and quickens as blood supply to the lungs is increased." ►



Dietary and lifestyle focus

While every woman's nutrient needs are different, there are some general guidelines in terms of dietary planning.

Anna Wulff, Registered Nutritional Therapist and Certified Fertility Nutritionist at Fertility Nutrition Centre UK, advised: "Our nutritional needs change not only once we are pregnant, but during the three months preceding conception. This is when the egg and sperm, which eventually make up the foetus, mature – it takes 12 months to make a baby! Generally, for prenatal and pregnancy nutrition, it's important to focus on foods which nurture your baby: nutrient dense, good quality, fresh foods. The Mediterranean diet fares well in fertility and pregnancy research, because it focuses on an abundance of in-season, locally grown, whole food vegetables and fruits, healthy fats as well as organic, full fat dairy products, fish, poultry and quality red meat. Blood sugar balancing is key during pregnancy, to support mum and baby's metabolic health, to avoid gestational diabetes and preeclampsia, to support hormonal health, immune health and good energy levels. To achieve this, three balanced meals per day, all including carbohydrate, protein and healthy fats, plus a good variety of colourful vegetables, are recommended. This is advised throughout all three trimesters, but macronutrient and micronutrient requirements do change over the course of the pregnancy."

Looking in greater detail at blood sugar balance, Wulff went on: "In the first trimester, glucose metabolism accelerates: cells divide quickly to make the foetus and placenta. The subsequent insulin increase can cause blood sugar drops for mum, potentially causing hypoglycaemia and symptoms including low energy, low mood, sugar cravings and potentially nausea. The accelerated glucose metabolism is the reason why pregnant women crave carbohydrates, particularly in the first and early second trimester.

"Thiamin can support glucose metabolism and cravings can be supported with blood sugar balancing. Choosing complex, fibre-rich, slow releasing, low glycaemic carbs and making sure these are consumed alongside protein and healthy fats, can support these cravings. Quality carbs include legumes, pulses, seeds, low starch veg like sweet potatoes, whole grains, all colourful vegetables and berries. Organic dairy like fully fat yoghurt or milk are also good sources of carbs (as well as protein and fat). At around 16-18 weeks, once the placenta has bound to the maternal blood vessels, the bloodstream becomes the primary source of nutrients for the growing baby. By

"Recent evidence shows that the Mediterranean diet can be useful for pregnancy, with studies showing that following it closely during pregnancy can reduce the risk of pre-eclampsia by 20 per cent and improve the neurodevelopment of the child, when measured at two-years-old."

the third trimester, most of the glucose in mum's bloodstream is being delivered to baby for rapid growth for delivery. Mum's insulin cell receptors are actually blocked to prevent glucose uptake into her cells to favour baby – that's why during this time, the mother's cells heavily rely on fatty acids for her own cellular energy.

"Proteins are the building blocks for all molecules in the body and they are involved in nearly every metabolic function. As so many new cells are produced during pregnancy, protein is fundamental to support the growing baby. Protein-rich foods can help to balance blood sugar levels and are naturally filling. They can also help to manage pregnancy related nausea, low energy, food cravings, nausea and headaches. Complete protein foods, containing a mixture of all amino acids, should be prioritised during pregnancy. Animal foods (meat, fish, eggs and dairy) are complete protein foods. Plant-based complete protein sources include quinoa, buckwheat, amaranth and hemp seeds.

"Glycine is involved in building foetal DNA, internal organs, connective tissue, bones, blood vessels, skin and joints. It further nourishes the growing uterus, placenta and stretching skin. Gelatin and collagen found in bone broth or slow cooked meat are the main dietary sources

of glycine. Glycine can also be supplemented with collagen powder or gelatine powder. As pregnancy progresses, the body's demand for protein increases. Optimal protein intake in early pregnancy is 1.22g/kg bodyweight and 1.52g/kg bodyweight in late pregnancy.

"The requirement of green leafy vegetables increases during pregnancy, because they contain good levels of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. For example, kale alone includes 45 different antioxidants. Additionally, green leafy veg includes betacarotene, vitamin C, vitamin K, many B vitamins, magnesium, potassium and trace minerals."

Briggs continued: "Recent evidence shows that the Mediterranean diet can be useful for pregnancy, with studies showing that following it closely during pregnancy can reduce the risk of pre-eclampsia by 20 per cent and improve the neurodevelopment of the child, when measured at two-years-old."

And Faulkner recommended: "The best way to ensure a good intake of nutrients is to eat a nutrient dense diet. Including plenty of vegetables, wholegrains (switch to wholemeal versions), good quality protein including lean meat, poultry, eggs, fish and lentils, beans, nuts and seeds. Calories only need to increase by around 200 per day so be mindful of over-eating to help prevent weight gain. Ideally, oily fish is good to include or if vegetarian or vegan, omega 3-rich seeds like flax, pumpkin and chia, but supplementing a good organic trout oil or algae derived vegan EPA and DHA can





top up those who don't include these in their diet. Cured meats, soft cheese, uncooked eggs and raw fish should be avoided for the duration of the pregnancy.

"Including plenty of fruits and vegetables high in vitamin C is recommended to help with the absorption of iron, especially for plant sources of iron. Vitamin C also helps with collagen production, which is essential for the baby's development, especially for the skin, cartilage, tendons and bones. Collagen is also important to support the mother's skin and tissues as they stretch and change.

"Iron requirements during pregnancy increase dramatically as the mother's blood volume expands and the foetus grows and develops. The foetus' brain is sensitive to iron deficiency, and babies with iron deficiency have compromised memory and slower speed of processing. It's important to get as much iron as possible through the diet from foods like leafy greens, and red meat."

We should also consider the impact of lifestyle, and how this should shift during pregnancy.

Briggs commented: "Exercise is an important lifestyle consideration which can have a significant effect on health during pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes and should be of no risk to a normal, single pregnancy. Exercising regularly is associated with up to a 90 per cent reduction in the risk of developing gestational diabetes, reduction in urinary incontinence, reduced risk of C-section and increased chance of a normal delivery, lower risk of hypertension and pre-eclampsia, reduction of back and pelvic pain, fewer feelings of anxiety and decrease in pre-natal depression, and shorter labour

"Several studies also indicate an association between exercise in pregnancy and cognitive development, including increased IQ scores, language development, academic and sports performance and improved neuromotor skills, which can last well into childhood and adolescence."

The role of folic acid

There is generally good understanding of folic acid and why it is needed during pregnancy but the story doesn't end there.

Faulkner explained: "Folate is needed to help the healthy development of the baby's spinal cord, so it's important to include lots of green leafy vegetables in the diet and supplement with folic acid, which has been shown to reduce the chance of the baby developing neural tube defects. For those who have been on contraception for a long period of time before becoming pregnant, it is even more important to supplement with folic acid, as the contraceptive pill depletes this important B vitamin."

Briggs added: "One of the best-known vitamins linked to pregnancy is folate or folic acid. This nutrient is part of the B vitamin group and is also referred to as vitamin B9. There are several forms of this nutrient, with folate being the most common form found in foods and folic acid commonly used in supplements. Both forms require conversion to a biologically active compound called 5-methyltetrahydrofolate or 5MTHF before it can be used by the body. The process of this conversion is called methylation, and this is also the term used for the processes for which 5MTHF is needed for. Methylation is essential for many, biologically essential processes in the body including gene expression, hormone, neurotransmitter and amino acid expression, detoxification and growth and development.

"During pregnancy, cells divide rapidly, and those of the neural tube require a large number of nucleotides, to aid DNA replication and folate is involved in the synthesis of these molecules. Numerous studies have found that higher blood levels of folate, and therefore folic acid and folate supplementation, decreases the risk of neural tube defects developing during early pregnancy, with an optimal level being than 906nmol/L. Troublingly, NDNS indicate that 90 per cent of women of childbearing age have folate levels low enough to increase the risk of NTDs."

However, it has become more complicated in recent years as science has shed light on the variances with folic acid supplementation.

"Concerning for those planning a pregnancy or who are already pregnant, is the data which suggests that one in three women cannot metabolise folic acid or folate from foods sufficiently, due to mutations in the gene, which codes the enzyme methyltetrahydrofolate reductase (MTHFR). This is essential for the conversion of folate to the body ready 5MTHF form and any issues in this conversion can prevent proper methylation and increase the risk of low folate status and NTDs," Briggs explained.

"Poor folate status and issues with methylation can also lead to higher levels of a compound called homocysteine in the blood. This compound is associated with a variety of pregnancy complications including early pregnancy loss, growth restriction, pre-eclampsia, pre-term delivery and placental abruption, due to effects on the formation of blood clots, increases on oxidants and issues with vascular function. High homocysteine is also associated with gestational diabetes. Given the importance of adequate folate in the red blood cells, following the government's advice of taking 400µg of folate a day, prior to and during pregnancy. Using the methylated form of this nutrient is advisable, as it raises folate levels 46 per cent more than folic acid in a 12-week period."



Critical mineral support

During pregnancy and after birth, there are some important nutrients a woman needs.

Wulff advised: "Zinc may be the most important nutrient for conception and pregnancy. When the sperm penetrates the egg during conception, a zinc dependent, enzyme-catalysed reaction takes place, which ignites embryonic development. Zinc is important for foetal development, baby's brain, nervous system and cognitive function. It's key for mum and baby's immune system and can support progesterone production. It is also involved in thyroid function and insulin sensitivity. Zinc is optimally absorbed from animal foods and but also from plant protein foods, like pumpkin seeds, nuts, seeds and legumes. Iron requirements increase by 1.5 during pregnancy, because red blood cell production accelerates. Additionally, iron is required for baby's growth and that of the placenta. Adequate iron levels are key for mum and baby's oxygen delivery and foetal development. Gestational anaemia can be driven by multiple nutritional deficiencies, including folate, B12 and zinc. It can also be driven by inflammation and oxidative stress. It's associated with preeclampsia, low birth weight, compromised placental function and thyroid issues.

"At 24 weeks, iron absorption is ramped up again. Mum is doubling her blood volume and increasing ferritin stores during the second trimester. This is in preparation for the third trimester and baby's increased demand for iron. During the third trimester, iron transport is favoured by the placenta over mum's requirements. Adequate iron for mum in the third trimester is another reason why iron store optimisation in preconception is key. Heme iron is absorbed two to four times better than non-heme (plant sourced) iron due to presence of anti-nutrients like phytates or oxalates."

Briggs added: "Iron deficiency is one of the most common nutritional deficiencies in pregnancy, which is unsurprising as, according to NDNS, 90 per cent of menstrual age women do not meet the daily requirement for this mineral from diets. More iron is required during pregnancy to allow for a greater maternal blood volume to support the placenta and foetus. Adequate iron intake during pregnancy is also important to counteract the losses which occur during and immediately after delivery and minimise the risk of any complications. Low iron after birth can also lead to symptoms such as poor cognition and depression in the mother. Adequate iron is required for adequate growth as well as cognitive and motor development in the foetus. Iron status and intake in early pregnancy has also been shown to be inversely correlated with capillary surface area in the placenta, which may have a role in gas

exchange between mother and foetus.

"Magnesium is a mineral of concern for women, as over 70 per cent do not meet the daily requirement. Magnesium contributes to over 300 processes in the body, including normal muscle function, normal energy production and normal bones and teeth. Magnesium levels decrease during pregnancy and magnesium insufficiency has been linked to leg cramps, pre-term labour and pre-eclampsia. There is also evidence to suggest low intakes and blood levels during pregnancy may affect health of the child later in life. Lower magnesium in pregnancy has been correlated to SIDS and the development of abnormal fat metabolism and insulin resistance."

Faulkner continued: "Pregnant women are at risk of being calcium deficient, especially if there is not enough from foods eaten in the diet. During pregnancy, the body prioritises transferring calcium to the baby to build their bones and other functions of calcium. If calcium intake is insufficient, it is taken from the mother which increases her risk of decreased bone density and osteoporosis. Evidence shows that maternal bone density diminishes in the first trimester of pregnancy to provide an internal reservoir of calcium for foetal development. Pregnant women need approximately 1000mg of calcium per day and absorption from the diet is increased during pregnancy. Calcium helps to support bone health as well as muscle function, particularly the heart function. Deficiency in pregnancy can lead to low birth weight, pre-

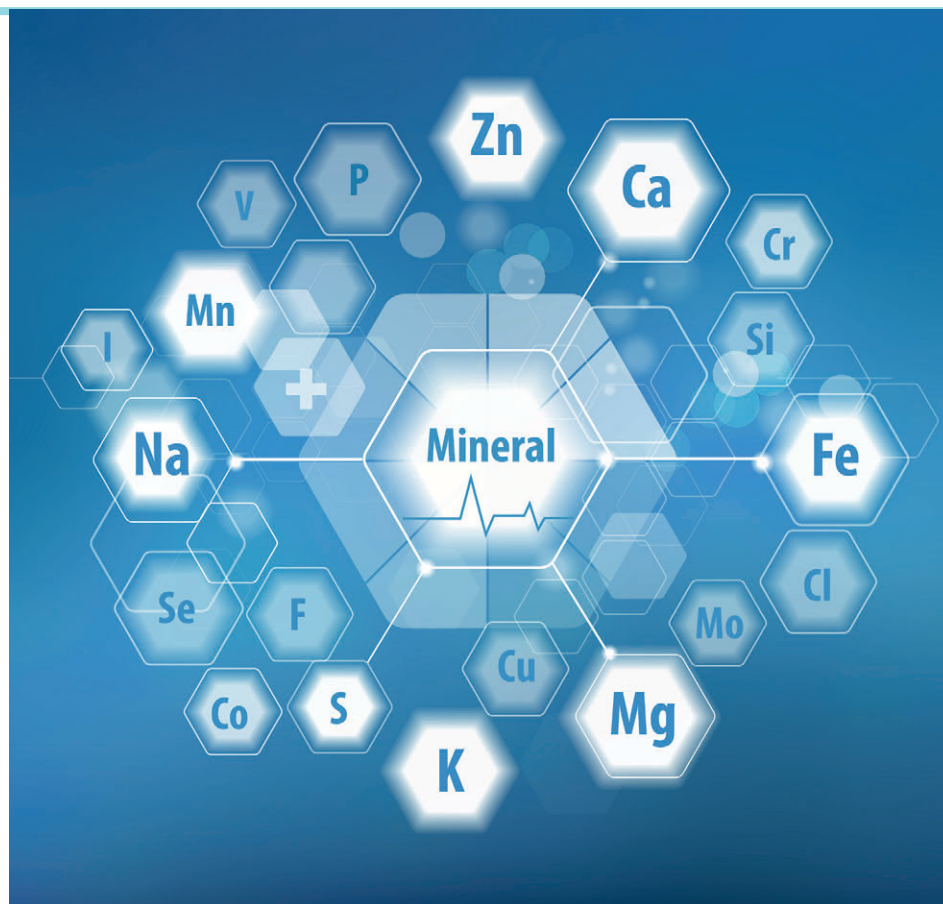
eclampsia, and bone deformities."

Briggs also highlighted choline.

"Another nutrient closely related to NTDs is choline, an essential nutrient most closely related to the B vitamins. Like folate, it plays a key role in the methylation cycle, allowing the body to convert any excess homocysteine to methionine," she advised.

"Evidence suggests that even prior to pregnancy, choline intakes in women are below what is optimal and when asked, only 21 per cent were aware of the importance of choline during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Choline requirements increase by 20 per cent in pregnancy and 30 per cent during breastfeeding and intakes fall 130-200mg short of this requirement. Increasing choline intake has been shown to decrease the risk of NTDs by as much as 50 per cent. Choline is also a key nutrient in brain development and normal liver function in the foetus as well as in exclusively breast-fed babies, with evidence showing that memory, processing speeds and recognition are better in infants whose mothers have a higher intake of choline.

"Iodine is of high importance as requirements increase to meet higher maternal needs and foetal requirements. It is essential to produce thyroid hormones, which then regulates brain and neural development. Iodine excretion also increases via the kidneys at this time. Low iodine status was associated with a lower IQ at the age of eight and lower reading accuracy and comprehension at age nine."



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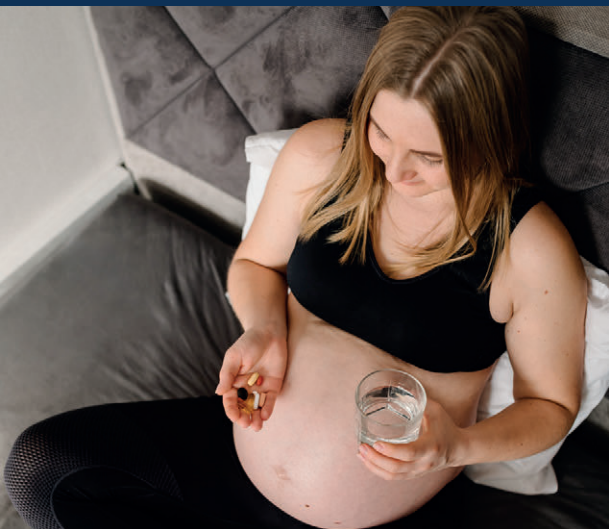


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Vital vitamins

During pregnancy, greater nutritional demands are placed on a woman, meaning she needs to ensure optimal amounts. But bearing in mind some vitamins can be hard to obtain from the diet, supplements could be considered.

Faulkner recommended: "During pregnancy, women are typically advised to take a quality pregnancy multivitamin to meet the increased demands for essential nutrients that support maternal health and foetal development. Studies have shown vitamin C has the capacity to influence glucose tolerance during pregnancy, thus women who consumed less than 70mg vitamin C daily experienced an 80 per cent increased risk of gestational diabetes compared with women who consumed higher amounts. This versatile vitamin contributes to iron absorption, thus contributing to the prevention of maternal anaemia. B vitamins help prevent tiredness and fatigue during pregnancy but also help to support growth and development of the baby. Both B12 and folic acid are needed for DNA synthesis. Some evidence suggests that supplemental B6 may reduce morning sickness."

Briggs flagged vitamin D, explaining: "Vitamin D is vital for normal pregnancy and beyond, as it can affect most cells of the body due to the almost ubiquitous presence of vitamin D receptors. Whilst bone health in mother and foetus is probably best understood, there is evidence linking low vitamin D status to an increased risk of hypertension, pre-eclampsia and gestational diabetes during pregnancy, as well as preterm and low birth weight. One study from 2023 showed that the link between low vitamin D status as a predictor for pre-term birth is particularly significant for black women, due to their lower ability to make vitamin D from sunlight. There are associations between low maternal vitamin D and increased risks of conditions such as asthma, eczema and allergies in childhood."

And Wulff recommended: "Vitamin A supports foetal growth in the development of the heart, eyes, limbs and immune system. It also regulates gene expression. Vitamin A comes in multiple forms including carotenoids (beta-carotene) found in plant foods and preformed vitamin A, retinol. Retinol can be sourced from animal foods. Carotenoids found in yellow and orange plant foods are potent antioxidants which support toxin neutralisation and reduce oxidative stress. Carotenoids have to be converted to retinol in order to function. A risk between excess vitamin A during pregnancy and serious birth defects has been found. Many prenatal supplements only include beta carotene for this reason. However, some can have issues with conversion from betacarotene to retinol due to genetic SNPs. If a vegan mum has a conversion issue, she might not get any preformed vitamin A. Supplementing with retinol has to be done under precaution and taking into account how much retinol mum gets from food."

Fat support

Essential fats are critical for mum and baby, and intake needs to be considered.

Briggs commented: "As the NHS advises that frequent intake of oily fish is avoided due to concerns regarding environmental contaminants and as NDNS data shows that the intake of oily fish is low, a fish oil supplement should be considered. Higher intakes of omega 3 fatty acids have been associated with a lower risk of pre-term and premature delivery and low-birth weight infants. Choosing a fish oil supplement which is screened for toxins and undergoes an extensive purification process will ensure adequate intake of the important omega 3 fatty acids."

Faulkner added: "Omega 3s, specifically DHA, should be supplemented as it contributes to healthy development of the brain and eyes in the foetus. Omega 3 deficiency, or inadequate intake, is common among adults in the UK, especially if fish isn't part of the diet, so it's recommended to supplement with an omega fish oil or EPA/DHA algal oil."

Wulff explored fats further, advising: "Pregnant women may have been told to limit their fat and cholesterol intake. Research indicates the body's need for fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, K), choline and omega 3 increases during pregnancy. Evidence further indicates the quality of fat is key, i.e. consuming fats including coconut oil, olive oil, walnut oil and fish oil (a combination of medium-chain saturated, monounsaturated and omega 3 fats) improved blood sugar, insulin and liver function and helped maintain a healthy weight. Many of the studies with unfavourable outcomes used inflammatory omega 6 fatty acid sources, which should be avoided.

"Fats are important for cholesterol production. Adequate cholesterol is key for mum to produce steroid hormones, including vitamin D, as well as for baby's development, particularly brain, which is made from 60 per cent of fat. Normally, increased triglycerides are associated with overeating sugars, fats or binge eating. In pregnancy, the increase in triglycerides



in the first trimester is triggered by rising hormones. Mothers need these body fat stores for the third trimester, as well as post-partum for breastfeeding. The reserves also support growth of baby. During the third trimester, triglycerides stored in the first and second trimester are broken down for energy production. This process requires good levels of B vitamins and acetyl-L-carnitine.

"For fertility and pregnancy, the focus should be on omega 3 fatty acids and MUFAs. Saturated fats should be consumed in moderation. Pasture-fed red meat can be important to support mum with iron and vitamin B12 and grass-fed butter (saturated fatty acid) is high in butyrates and fat-soluble vitamins. MUFAs can be found in olives, organic extra virgin olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds. Good sources for omega 3 fatty acids include eggs, walnuts, hempseeds and fatty fish including anchovies, sardines, mackerel and wild caught salmon."

Postnatal care

While some recommendations already highlighted extend into postnatal care, are there any specific considerations at this time?

"Pregnancy takes its toll on the body, and postnatal nutrient depletion is common as many women are keen to bounce back and lose the baby weight, and it's common to cut down on certain food groups. However, this is the most crucial time to keep nourished to help keep the energy and mood levels high to take care of the newborn," Faulkner commented. "Post partum depletion affects around 50 per cent of women. Common nutrients depleted are

"Post partum depletion affects around 50 per cent of women. Common nutrients that are depleted are iron, vitamin B12, zinc, calcium, and folate. Choline and omega 3 fatty acids are also vital postnatally."

iron, vitamin B12, zinc, calcium, and folate. Choline and omega 3 fatty acids are also vital postnatally. Choline supports memory, cognitive function, and may reduce the risk of postpartum depression. DHA helps with both maternal brain health and infant neural development.

"A nutrient-dense diet plays a key role in recovery by supporting tissue repair, replenishing lost nutrients, and sustaining energy levels. Foods rich in protein, iron, vitamin C, omega 3 fatty acids, and zinc are particularly beneficial during this time. Iron helps restore blood lost during delivery, while vitamin C and zinc aid in wound healing and immune function. Continuing with pregnancy multivitamin supplements helps maintain essential nutrient levels, including vitamin D, calcium, and B vitamins, which are often still needed in the weeks and months following birth.

"Increasing fibre is recommended to support recovery. Pregnancy and childbirth can cause gastrointestinal discomfort and constipation. Fibre can help support regular bowel movements, which can make you more comfortable as the pelvic tissue repairs. Additionally, fibre may support blood glucose levels. Emotional wellbeing is just as important during the postnatal period. Hormonal changes and sleep deprivation can affect mood, increasing the risk of postpartum depression. A combination supplement containing magnesium and B6 can help to balance hormones and reduce these symptoms. Rest and recovery are essential. While sleep may be disrupted, short naps and accepting

help from others can ease exhaustion. Gentle movement, such as walking can aid physical recovery and boost mental health."

Wulff went on: "The foods enhancing post-partum recovery and supporting breastfeeding are much the same as the ones to support pregnancy. Plenty of protein, especially glycine-rich foods, which the body uses to make collagen. Electrolytes and fluids to replenish potential fluid loss from birth and to prepare for breastfeeding. Warming foods are encouraged; bone broth (in soups, stews, curries) for its collagen-rich amino acids, micronutrients and electrolytes."

And do the recommendations differ if a woman is breastfeeding?

Faulkner added: "Surprisingly, breastfeeding is more demanding than pregnancy in terms of calorie intake. It requires 500 calories above non-pregnancy to fulfil both energy requirements for the new mum and ensure good quality milk supply. Continuing to take EPA/DHA and vitamin D3 during breastfeeding is important, as some nutrients pass through the breastmilk to the baby.

"Drinking plenty of fluids and water is recommended to produce enough milk. Dehydration can cause the milk supply to decrease as it is about 90 per cent water. Aim for two litres daily and include lots of fruits and vegetable to natural fluid through the diet. If that sounds like a lot of water, it might be easier to keep a water bottle with you throughout your day. Another tip is to drink a glass of water before and after each feeding."



STUDENT LIFE



In a new series of features, we hear from students as they progress through their Nutritional Therapy training. Here, we hear from Emma Steele, who is in the last year of her studies with The Institute for Optimum Nutrition (ION).

Q CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR CURRENT STUDIES?

I am studying the BSc Nutritional Therapy degree with The Institute for Optimum Nutrition (ION). Prior to this, I completed the Science Access course at ION, which was for nine months, to obtain three science A Levels for the degree. The course is 4.5 years, and I have just started year four.

Q WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO STUDY NUTRITION?

When I left college, I did a fashion and textile degree, worked in a few jobs in London, and styled London Fashion Week, but it was not all that glamorous, I had zero life outside of work and decided to go into a career in magazine media sales. During the Covid-19 pandemic, I was in a job that was extremely toxic, slowly turning me into a person I did not want to be and I was extremely burnt out. I felt completely lost and had no idea who I was, or what I was going to do with my life.

When I was younger, I feared food, I struggled for years with eating disorders and hating myself and my body and felt stuck thinking this would be my life forever. During the pandemic, I overhauled my life in terms of health, nutrition and exercise and started to educate myself properly – I began to fall in love with the girl I was becoming. I started early morning walks and came across Rhiannon Lambert's podcast (*Food for Thought*), listened to them all and she was the one who inspired me to pursue a career as a Nutritional Therapist.

Q HOW DID YOU DECIDE ON THE COLLEGE TO STUDY WITH?

I have always been fascinated by 'why' things happen, I like to find root causes and explanations of things. ION provides the scientific, evidence-based approach to nutrition and applies the functional medicine approach, which to me is the foundation of

health. There is always a reason to the 'why' and I believe it is important to understand why this is happening in our bodies to enable us to find the correct, individual solutions, instead of just putting plasters on top.

ION is also accredited by BANT, and to me that is extremely important. There is so much confusing, dangerous and misleading information out there, so I believe it is important to have this accreditation, so clients know they are getting evidence-based, personalised information.

Q WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED ABOUT THE COURSE SO FAR?

Learning how the body really is interconnected and how different systems can affect each other, learning areas I never knew about and how important each system is in its own way. Each assignment is a fantastic way to deep dive into a specific area and research. I have also learnt how to differentiate between a good piece of quality research and how to read between the lines.

Q AND WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND CHALLENGING?

The most challenging part has been putting in the amount of money and time needed to complete each module and feeling like I am missing out on weekends and other areas of life. However, people constantly tell me this is a stepping stone into my future career and sacrifices are worth it long-term, and after the end of each semester, that's exactly how I feel – one step closer.

Q IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WISH YOU'D KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED STUDYING THAT YOU COULD ADVISE OTHER STUDENTS ON?

How rewarding but at the same time relentless the studying process can be. When you submit an assignment, it is the best feeling in the world, the weight has been lifted, but the

journey to get there can be draining, confusing and full of self-doubt. My friend describes the process as giving birth to a really big poo!

Q WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS WHEN YOU FINISH YOUR STUDIES?

Ultimately, to empower the people that feel stuck – which is exactly how I was!

I would like to do my level 3 personal training course, so I can include fitness plans into my programmes. Then my goal when I finish is to work part time for a nutrition brand whose ethos I resonate with, whilst setting up my own brand. In year four, I will be doing business and career planning, setting up a personal brand/logo/website, locking in on my values and putting myself out there more on Instagram – working towards being a self-employed Nutritional Therapist. I would love my own little clinic one day, either an outhouse at my home or within a shared space. I have visions to collaborate with other people in the health and wellness space to deliver workshops/mini events for people to come along and enjoy.

Q DO YOU HAVE AN AREA YOU WOULD LIKE TO SPECIALISE IN?

Initially, I would like to specialise in everyday people struggling with energy and stress levels, specifically blood sugar balance as this is one solution I believe that can make people feel so much better and it teaches a way to live forever. I come from a preventative mindset, so would rather help people prior to them becoming ill. After some time, I would like to do a course in eating disorders/disordered eating to support people; this is a delicate area that I want to go into confidently.

■ You can find Emma at @emmasteelnutrition on Instagram. If you are a student and would like to share your story, we would love to hear from you. Email rachel.symonds@targetpublishing.com to be featured in a future issue.



Nutritional EXCELLENCE

As we reveal the products in the running for a *Nutrition I-Mag* Product Award, we want to hear from you about what is deserving.

The nutritional therapy community helps so many people to lead better, healthier and stronger lives, and as part of that, we need reputable brands developing science-backed, quality products that help people to achieve their goals.

Whether it's a specific nutritional supplement or a test that has helped to identify a health issue, there are so many excellent products in our industry that go the extra mile when it comes to quality and innovation.

And here at *Nutrition I-Mag*, we believe this should be celebrated and we do that through our annual Product

Awards. These awards are designed to shine a spotlight on all the wonderful brands making products that help you as Nutritional Therapists better support your clients, but we need you to help us decide on the winners. Over the following pages, you can read all about what products are in the running for one of our accolades, across a number of categories. And then we need you to cast your vote – your reasons can be varied but we want to hear from you.

To vote, all you need to do is click on the link [here](#) – and look out for spring 2026 issue of *Nutrition I-Mag*, where we will be revealing our winners.



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Galangal is a culinary herb used in Southeast Asia, also known as Thai ginger. Lamberts Cogni-Focus uses a unique extract, which has been shown to provide non-addictive energy that is fast-acting and that lasts up to 5 hours. A natural, caffeine free option, without the energy drop or jitters often associated with coffee. Perfect for students (18+) and older adults looking to improve focus and mental agility, with no known interference with sleep.

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BOTANICALS FOR LIFE – BLACK WALNUT & WORMWOOD

A true standout in modern herbal innovation, Botanicals For Life's Organic Black Walnut & Wormwood unites two renowned botanicals with cleansing and hepato-protective qualities. Working in synergy, they offer broad-spectrum support for digestive harmony and microbial balance. Expertly extracted from organically grown herbs and suspended in natural glycerine, this vegan, alcohol-free formula is exceptionally pure, potent, and fast absorbing. Delivering 1,000 mg of active plant material per serving, this dual extract reflects Botanicals For Life's commitment to scientific precision and plant-based purity. Herbal support. Powered by nature. Botanicals For Life.

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BioMedica's practitioner-only formula combines palmitoylethanolamide (PEA) with key herbs traditionally used in Western herbal medicine to relieve mild nerve pain, pain, and inflammation. PEA is included in a reduced particle size to support absorption while AprèsFlex®, a sustainably sourced *Boswellia serrata* extract standardised to 20–24% 3-O-acetyl-11-keto-β-boswellic acid (AKBA), provides anti-inflammatory activity. It also contains white willow (*Salix alba*) extract, standardised to its key active constituent salicin, which offers additional anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving benefits. PEA-gesic Forte is a low-exciptent, non-GMO, and vegan-friendly formula, upholding BioMedica's commitment to sustainable and practitioner-focused products. Click [here](#) for more details



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*As shown in a series of scientific studies on Metabolaid®, not the finished product. Find here: wild nutrition/science.com



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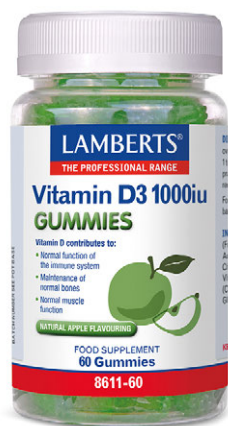
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Click [here](#) for more details





Probiotics and prebiotics:

a practitioner's guide to gut health optimisation

The *Nutrition I-Mag* Mentoring Scheme is designed to support students and recent graduates into a career in nutrition writing. Here, Maryam Tamaddon, a recent graduate at CNELM, examines the ever-expanding evidence base on probiotics and prebiotics.

Digestive health problems have reached epidemic proportions in the UK, with one in six hospital admissions for a primary diagnosis of gastrointestinal disease¹ and up to one third of the UK population experiencing IBS symptoms². These statistics represent millions of people struggling with conditions that significantly impact their quality of life, work productivity, and daily activities.

Against this backdrop, prebiotics and probiotics have emerged as powerful therapeutic tools offering evidence-based solutions for gut health optimisation. Understanding their distinct roles and applications is essential for practitioners seeking to provide targeted, effective interventions that address not only digestive concerns but also the broader health implications extending through immune function, mental wellbeing, and metabolic health.

While prebiotics serve as selective substrates that nourish beneficial microorganisms, probiotics deliver live beneficial bacteria directly to the gut ecosystem. Both approaches offer unique mechanisms of action and clinical benefits, but their effectiveness depends critically on proper strain selection, dosing, and matching specific interventions to individual patient needs.

Q

PREBIOTICS – WHAT ARE THEY?

The International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP) defines prebiotics as ‘substrates that are

*selectively utilised by host microorganisms, conferring a health benefit*³. This definition encompasses more than simple dietary fibre, requiring both selective microbial utilisation and demonstrable health outcomes. While many prebiotics are dietary fibres, not all fibres qualify as prebiotics, and interestingly, not all prebiotics are fibres. The distinction is crucial: fibre broadly refers to indigestible carbohydrates with physiological benefits such as bulking or viscosity, but prebiotics must demonstrate selective microbial utilisation and measurable health outcomes.

The prebiotic category has expanded significantly beyond traditional non-digestible oligosaccharides such as inulin, fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS), and galacto-oligosaccharides (GOS). Modern research has identified resistant starches, human milk oligosaccharides (HMOs), and certain non-carbohydrate compounds, including polyphenols, beta-glucan, and arabinoxylan, as having prebiotic-like effects.



TYPES AND SOURCES

Prebiotics occur naturally in a wide range of foods, reaching the colon intact where they undergo fermentation by beneficial bacteria. This fermentation process produces short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) such as acetate, propionate, and butyrate, metabolites that exert diverse systemic effects throughout the body.

■ **Fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS)** are abundant in onion, chicory, garlic, asparagus, banana, and artichoke⁴. These compounds demonstrate a particularly strong bifidogenic effect, especially with supplementation exceeding four weeks and daily doses of above 5g⁵. Clinical studies consistently show that FOS supports bowel function, improving bowel frequency, stool consistency, and overall stool softening⁶.

■ **Galacto-oligosaccharides (GOS)** are naturally found in chickpeas, lentils, borlotti beans, and soy flour. Beyond their ability to promote *Bifidobacterium* growth⁷, GOS shows remarkable potential for immune modulation⁸ and gut-brain axis support. Studies demonstrate that GOS supplementation can reduce waking cortisol levels and improve emotional processing⁹, while also providing symptomatic relief for individuals with irritable bowel syndrome¹⁰.

■ **Inulin** sources include Jerusalem artichoke, chicory, onion, garlic, barley, and dahlia¹¹. Clinical research demonstrates that inulin improves multiple aspects of bowel function¹²⁻¹⁴, including stool frequency regulation. Additionally, inulin enhances glycaemic control specifically in overweight adults¹⁵, making it particularly valuable for metabolic health



applications.

■ **Arabinoxylan** is present in wholegrain rye, wheat and rice bran, and popcorn. This prebiotic may increase SCFA production, particularly butyrate and propionate^{16,17}, while modulating immune function and potentially improving glycaemic parameters¹⁸.

■ **Resistant starch (RS)** occurs naturally in green banana, banana flour, barley, lentils, and cooked-and-cooled potatoes and rice. This unique prebiotic specifically feeds *Ruminococcus bromii*¹⁹ and various butyrate-producing species²⁰, with clinical studies demonstrating improvements in insulin sensitivity^{21,22}.

■ **Beta-glucan** is found in oats, barley, wheat bran, and sorghum. As a viscous fibre with prebiotic activity, beta-glucan consistently lowers LDL cholesterol²³ and modulates both glycaemic and insulinemic responses^{24,25}.

Mechanisms of action

Prebiotics exert their beneficial effects through several interconnected mechanisms. They selectively stimulate beneficial microorganisms, particularly *Bifidobacterium* and butyrate-producing species, while simultaneously suppressing potentially harmful pathobionts²⁶. The production of SCFAs represents one of the most important mechanistic pathways, as these metabolites fuel colonocytes (particularly butyrate), reduce colonic pH, and signal through G-protein-coupled receptors to regulate both immune function and metabolism^{26,27}. SCFAs also promote regulatory T-cell development and enhance mucosal barrier function, creating a more resilient intestinal environment.

CLINICAL BENEFITS AND WHEN THEY'RE MOST USEFUL

GASTROINTESTINAL HEALTH

For practitioners addressing constipation, inulin and FOS demonstrate consistent efficacy in improving stool frequency and consistency, with particularly pronounced benefits in older adults and individuals with functional constipation^{6,12}. Regarding microbiota diversity, multiple prebiotic substrates, including GOS, inulin, resistant starch, and beta-glucan increase both bifidogenic and butyrogenic bacterial populations, supporting overall gut homeostasis^{28,29}.



METABOLIC HEALTH

The metabolic benefits of prebiotics extend beyond the gut. Inulin supplementation may reduce postprandial glucose responses and lower homocysteine levels in overweight and obese adults¹⁵, making it particularly valuable for individuals with metabolic syndrome or pre-diabetes. Resistant starch demonstrates consistent improvements in insulin sensitivity across clinical studies^{21,22}, while beta-glucan stands out for cardiovascular benefits, with doses of 3g daily or higher from oats or barley consistently lowering LDL cholesterol³⁰.

BRAIN AND MOOD

The gut-brain axis benefits of prebiotics are increasingly recognised. GOS demonstrates remarkable effects on stress physiology, reducing waking cortisol levels and positively shifting emotional bias in healthy adults^{9,10}. These findings suggest that prebiotics may be valuable tools for individuals experiencing stress-related symptoms.



IMMUNE FUNCTION

Arabinoxylan and beta-glucan both stimulate SCFA production and enhance innate immune activity^{8,18}. For practitioners working with individuals who experience frequent infections or seeking to support overall immune resilience, these prebiotics offer evidence-based support for immune function optimisation.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUPPLEMENTATION

Successful prebiotic intervention requires matching specific substrates to clinical objectives. For bowel regularity and glycaemic support, inulin and FOS provide the strongest evidence base. When addressing stress-related symptoms or immune modulation, GOS offers unique benefits. For metabolic health and insulin sensitivity, resistant starch demonstrates superior outcomes, while beta-glucan

remains the gold standard for cholesterol reduction. Arabinoxylan provides targeted support for immune function and barrier integrity.

Effective prebiotic doses typically range from 3-10g daily, with bifidogenic effects often observable from 3g daily upwards. However, tolerability considerations become important above 10g daily³. The key is starting with lower doses and gradually titrating upward, particularly in individuals with IBS who may be prone to bloating and other digestive symptoms.

Q

PROBIOTICS – WHAT ARE THEY?

Probiotics are defined as 'live microorganisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host'³¹. This encompasses predominantly *Lactobacillus*

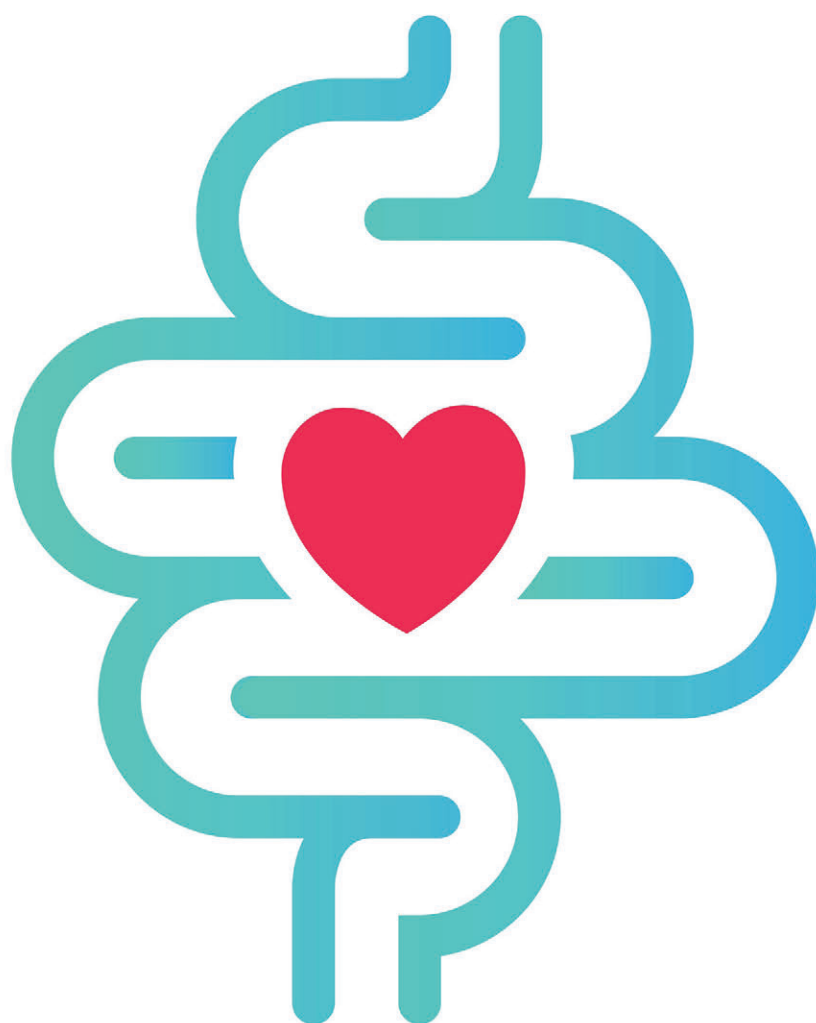
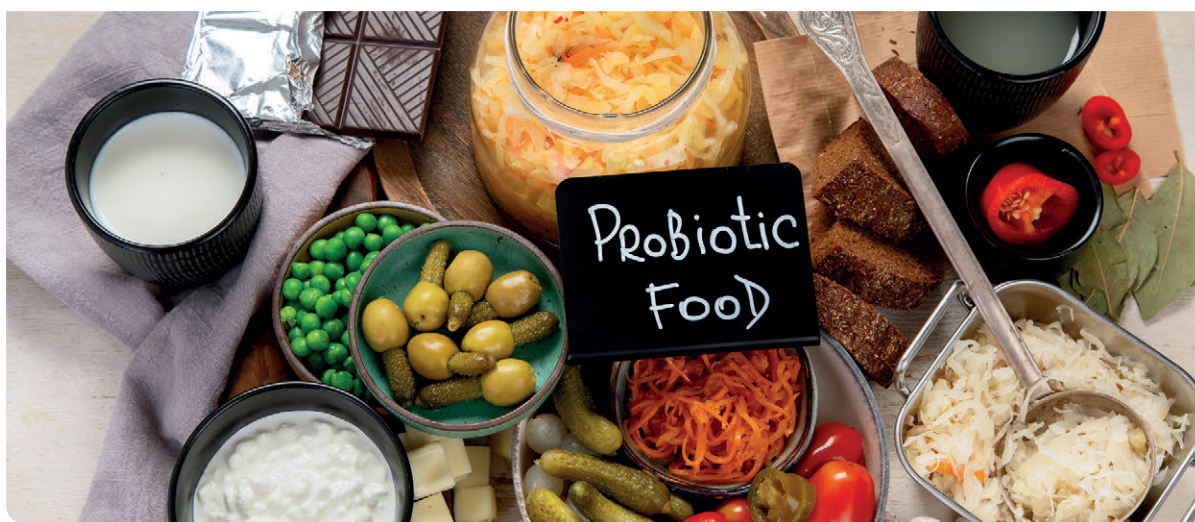
and *Bifidobacterium* genera, though beneficial yeasts such as *Saccharomyces boulardii* and specific *Streptococcus* strains also demonstrate clinical utility.

The principle of strain specificity cannot be overstated in clinical practice. Each probiotic strain possesses unique characteristics that determine its clinical effects. For example, *Lactisacibacillus rhamnosus* GG demonstrates entirely different

functional properties compared to *L. rhamnosus* GR-1, despite their taxonomic similarity. This specificity means that clinical outcomes demonstrated for one strain cannot be extrapolated to other strains, even within the same species.

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

Probiotics occur naturally in fermented foods, including yoghurt, kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut, miso, and tempeh. However, in clinical practice, probiotics are most commonly delivered through standardised capsule, sachet, or liquid formulations where specific strains are isolated, cultured, and standardised for both efficacy and safety.



MECHANISMS OF ACTION

Probiotics act through multiple molecular pathways. Adhesion and colonisation resistance occur via surface proteins such as pili, S-layer proteins, and mucus-binding proteins, enabling epithelial attachment and exclusion of pathogens. Another key mechanism is the production of bioactive molecules: specific strains synthesise bacteriocins (antimicrobial peptides) and neuromodulators like GABA and serotonin precursors, directly affecting gut–brain communication.

Barrier function is enhanced through exopolysaccharides and lectins that strengthen mucosal integrity, while immune modulation involves CpG-rich DNA motifs and histamine metabolites that activate regulatory T-cells or downregulate pro-allergic responses.

Probiotics usually achieve transient colonisation; most strains disappear from faeces within one to two weeks after discontinuation. However, during passage, they interact with epithelial and immune cells and resident microbes, inducing lasting functional changes. Notably, they rarely alter overall faecal microbiota composition in healthy adults; benefits are mainly mediated via metabolite production and immune signalling rather than broad community shifts³¹.



BENEFITS OF PROBIOTICS: WHEN ARE THEY MOST USEFUL?

Probiotics have been extensively studied across multiple health domains, including gastrointestinal disorders, infection prevention, immune support, infant health, and mental wellbeing. The evidence consistently demonstrates that therapeutic effects are both strain-specific and dose-dependent, making precise selection crucial for clinical success.

GUT HEALTH – ANTIBIOTIC-ASSOCIATED DIARRHOEA AND *CLOSTRIDIODES DIFFICILE* INFECTION

Antibiotic therapy inevitably disrupts normal gut microbial communities, frequently leading to antibiotic-associated diarrhoea (AAD). Co-administration of specific probiotic strains can reduce AAD incidence by approximately 37 per cent in adults³². The evidence demonstrates that higher doses, typically around 10 billion CFU daily in adults and five billion CFU daily in children, provide superior protection^{32–34}. Timing proves critical, with probiotic initiation within the first 48 hours of antibiotic therapy producing optimal outcomes³².

For adults, effective strains include *L. rhamnosus* GG, *Saccharomyces boulardii*, and specific combination products³¹. In paediatric populations, *L. rhamnosus* GG and *S. boulardii* at doses exceeding five billion CFU, along with *L. reuteri* DSM 17938 at two billion CFU, demonstrate consistent efficacy^{34–36}.

HELICOBACTER PYLORI ERADICATION

As adjuncts to standard eradication therapy, probiotics can significantly improve eradication rates and treatment tolerability. Multiple meta-analyses demonstrate that adding probiotics from the beginning of treatment for at least two weeks reduces side effects and modestly increases eradication rates^{31,37–40}. Multi-strain preparations, particularly combinations including *Lactobacillus*, *Bifidobacterium*, and *S. boulardii* species, demonstrate superior efficacy compared to single-strain products⁴¹.

Specific combinations showing clinical efficacy include *Lactobacillus acidophilus* LA-5, *Lactiplantibacillus plantarum*, *Bifidobacterium lactis* BB-12, and *Saccharomyces boulardii*³⁸. Alternative effective protocols utilise combinations of *Lactobacillus Rosell-52*, *Lactobacillus Rosell-11*, *Bifidobacterium Rosell-1755* and *Saccharomyces boulardii*³⁹, while single-strain approaches have demonstrated success with *Lactobacillus reuteri* DSM17648⁴⁰.

INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE

The evidence for probiotics in inflammatory bowel disease demonstrates clear disease-specific effects. In ulcerative colitis, multi-strain probiotics, particularly the De Simone formulation containing eight bacterial species, prove effective for both inducing and maintaining remission, with efficacy comparable to mesalazine in some clinical trials^{31,42}. Conversely, probiotics demonstrate limited effectiveness in Crohn's disease⁴².



IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

Probiotics can provide meaningful relief for global IBS symptoms, bloating, and abdominal pain^{31,43}. The evidence supports specific benefits for *Escherichia* strains, *Bifidobacterium* species, *Lactiplantibacillus plantarum* 299V, *B. coagulans*, and various mixed formulations^{44–46}. Effective doses typically exceed 10bn⁹ CFU daily, with clinical benefits generally observable after approximately four weeks of consistent supplementation⁴⁶.

INFANT COLIC

Probiotics demonstrate effectiveness in reducing infant colic, particularly in decreasing crying time in breastfed infants^{31,47}. *Lactobacillus reuteri* DSM 17938 represents one of the most extensively studied strains for this indication^{47–49}.

BRAIN AND MOOD

The gut-brain axis represents an increasingly important area of probiotic research with significant clinical implications. Multiple studies demonstrate that specific probiotic strains can reduce depressive symptoms and anxiety in clinical populations, subclinical populations, and even healthy individuals^{50–56}. Probiotics also influence stress responses and cognitive function, with clinical studies showing that specific strains can reduce subjective stress levels and may improve cognitive reactivity and memory function^{57–59}. Candidate strains showing promise as 'psychobiotics' include *L. plantarum* HEAL9, *B. breve* CCFM1025, and multi-strain formulations containing *Levilactobacillus brevis* P30021 and *Lactiplantibacillus plantarum* P30025.

RESPIRATORY AND IMMUNE HEALTH

Probiotics may reduce both the incidence and duration of upper respiratory tract infections in both children and adults^{31,60}. Typical strains for URTIs include *L. plantarum* HEAL9 and *L. paracasei* 8700:2 at doses exceeding 10bn⁹ CFU daily. Additional research demonstrates that probiotics may shorten cold duration and reduce pro-inflammatory cytokines^{61,62}. Specific strains studied for cold symptoms include *L. helveticus* GCL1815 and multi-strain formulations containing *L. plantarum* PBS067, *L. acidophilus* PBS066, and *B. lactis* BL050.

SKIN HEALTH

Probiotics show promise for atopic dermatitis prevention, with maternal and infant supplementation reducing eczema risk in high-risk infants according to World Allergy Organization recommendations^{31,63–66}. Mixed *Lactobacillus-Bifidobacterium* strains demonstrate particular efficacy for this preventive approach⁶⁷. However, evidence for treating established eczema remains inconclusive⁶⁸.

UROGENITAL HEALTH

In bacterial vaginosis, probiotics either orally or vaginally improve cure rates and reduce recurrence, particularly when combined with antibiotic therapy^{69,70}. Most studied probiotics for BV include at least one species of *Lactobacillus*⁷¹. For vulvovaginal candidiasis, probiotics as adjuvant therapy can improve short-term clinical and mycological cure rates, though long-term effects are less certain^{31,72}.



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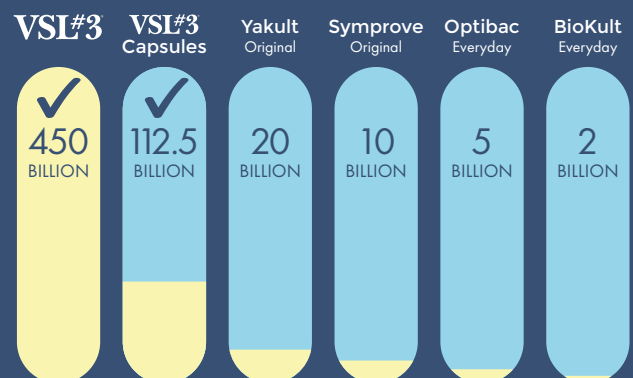


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1. DoxaPharma Research. Data on File, March 2022.

2. VSL#3 Clinical Summary, March 2023.

3. Vecchione A, et al. *Front Med.* 2018;5(59).

4. Based on companies websites accessed July 2024.

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CHOOSING A PROBIOTIC SUPPLEMENT

Selecting the appropriate probiotic supplement requires careful consideration of multiple factors that can significantly impact therapeutic outcomes. This goes far beyond simply choosing a product with high CFU counts or recognisable strain names.

■ **Strain specificity and clinical evidence:** The most critical factor in probiotic selection involves choosing the exact strain tested in relevant clinical trials. Each strain possesses unique characteristics that determine its clinical effects.

■ **Population-specific evidence:** Clinical evidence must be matched to relevant populations. Paediatric trials cannot be directly extrapolated to adult populations, and healthy population studies may not apply to diseased populations. When recommending probiotics for elderly patients, pregnant women, children, or individuals with specific health conditions, ensure the supporting research was conducted in similar populations.

■ **Age, health status, concurrent medications, and other demographic factors** all influence probiotic selection and expected outcomes. For instance, the gut microbiome of elderly individuals differs significantly from that of younger adults, potentially affecting both probiotic survival and therapeutic efficacy.

Dosing and viability considerations

Most clinical evidence supports doses of at least 10^{10} CFU daily, though effective doses vary significantly by strain and clinical indication. Some conditions require higher doses, while others respond to lower amounts. The viability of organisms at the time of consumption represents another crucial factor, requiring attention to storage conditions, expiration dates, and formulation quality.

Timing and duration protocols

Different clinical applications require different timing strategies. For antibiotic-associated diarrhoea prevention, initiating probiotics within 48 hours of antibiotic therapy significantly improves outcomes. Other conditions may require different timing strategies, and duration of supplementation varies considerably across indications.

Some benefits appear within days (such as acute diarrhoea reduction), while others require weeks to months of consistent supplementation (such as mood improvements or IBS symptom relief).

Formulation and delivery systems

Encapsulation technology and delivery methods significantly influence

survival through gastric acid and bile exposure. Advanced formulations using enteric coating, microencapsulation, or other protective technologies may enhance efficacy, particularly for acid-sensitive strains.

Consider the practical aspects of different formulations. Powders may offer higher doses and better mixability but may be less convenient for travel or consistent dosing. Capsules provide convenience and precise dosing but may be challenging for individuals who have difficulty swallowing. Liquid formulations may offer advantages for children or elderly patients but often require refrigeration and have shorter shelf lives.

Multi-strain vs single-strain considerations

The question of whether to use single-strain or multi-strain formulations depends on the specific clinical application and available evidence. Some conditions have strong evidence for specific single strains, while others may benefit from multi-strain approaches.

Quality and regulatory considerations

The probiotic supplement market includes significant variation in quality and labelling accuracy. Third-party testing and transparent manufacturing practices should be priorities when evaluating products. Look for manufacturers who provide certificates of analysis, conduct stability testing, and follow Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).

Contraindications and safety considerations

While probiotics are generally considered safe for healthy individuals, certain populations require special consideration. Immunocompromised patients, those with severe underlying illness, or individuals with central venous catheters may be at increased risk for probiotic-related infections, though such cases remain rare.

Synbiotic approaches

Combining probiotics with their preferred prebiotic substrates represents an emerging strategy that may enhance efficacy compared to either intervention alone. While evidence for synbiotic approaches continues to develop, the theoretical foundation suggests potential advantages for comprehensive gut health optimisation.

When considering synbiotic products or protocols, ensure that both the probiotic strains and prebiotic substrates have supporting evidence for the intended application. Simply combining any probiotic with any prebiotic does not automatically create an effective synbiotic.

Conclusion

Probiotics and prebiotics offer evidence-based solutions for digestive health and broader systemic benefits, including immune support, metabolic regulation, and mental wellbeing. Success depends on understanding that effects are highly specific – prebiotic substrates must be matched to clinical objectives, while probiotic selection requires precise strain identification and appropriate dosing.

For practitioners, mastering these complexities means moving beyond generic recommendations toward personalised protocols based on individual patient needs and robust clinical evidence. As research continues to evolve, these interventions are establishing themselves as essential tools for natural healthcare approaches that extend far beyond digestive health alone.



ABOUT THE EXPERT

Maryam Tamaddon is a Registered Nutritional Therapy Practitioner (BANT, CNHC) with an MSc in Personalised Nutrition and a DPhil from Oxford. With over a decade in healthcare innovation

and NHS collaborations, she brings a science-informed, client-focused approach to care. Through her practice, NutriLounge, she focuses on digestive health alongside hormonal and brain health.

PRODUCT SHOWCASES

Nutrition I-Mag's top picks

SUPPORT YOUR GUT DURING AND AFTER A COURSE OF ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics work by destroying or limiting the growth of harmful microorganisms. However, they are also known to have a negative effect on our microbial diversity. So in fighting an infection, they can reduce the number of beneficial bacteria in the gut which may lead to unpleasant side effects. Disruption of the gut flora is implicated in digestive discomfort, an increased risk of intestinal infection and even fatigue. Therefore, consider supporting your gut during and after a course of antibiotics with a multi-strain live bacteria supplement designed to promote microbial diversity like Bio-Kult For those Taking Antibiotics.

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EXPERT ADVICE

Our panel of nutritional experts offer readers advice on dealing with a variety of issues.

Q When dealing with a client with hormonal imbalances, why is it important to look at the gut, and what protocol can I suggest to help balance the vaginal microbiome?

MATTHEW HUDSON EXPLAINED: When working with clients experiencing hormonal imbalances, it is important to consider gut health alongside reproductive hormones. One key reason is the role of the oestrobolome – the subset of gut microbes whose genes encode enzymes involved in oestrogen metabolism¹. These microbes influence whether oestrogens are excreted or recycled, helping to determine overall systemic oestrogen exposure².

After circulating oestrogens are metabolised by the liver, they are conjugated (bound to glucuronic acid or sulphate groups), which makes them inactive and ready for excretion via bile or urine². Some gut bacteria – including *Escherichia*, *Clostridium* and *Bacteroides* species – produce the enzyme β -glucuronidase, which can deconjugate oestrogens³. This reactivates them and allows reabsorption into the circulation.³

Dietary factors and gut microbial diversity can modulate β -glucuronidase activity^{2,4}. A balanced microbiota supports healthy oestrogen metabolism^{3,5}, whereas dysbiosis can shift this activity in either direction^{2,4,5}, directly affecting the balance between excretion and reabsorption of oestrogens^{3,4}. Elevated β -glucuronidase activity can increase systemic oestrogen reactivation, which may contribute to hyper-oestrogenic pathologies²⁻⁵. Conversely, low microbial diversity or suppressed β -glucuronidase activity may limit oestrogen recycling and contribute to hypo-oestrogenic

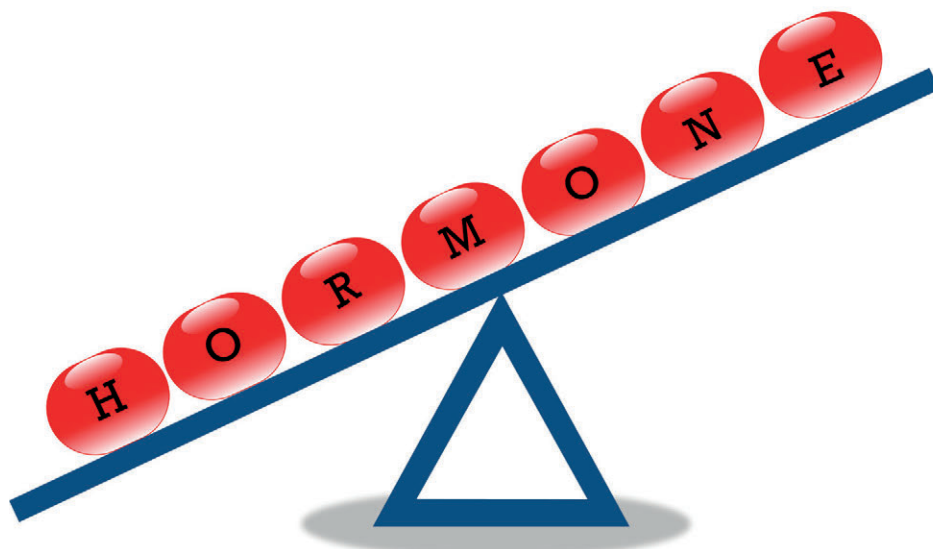
pathologies³⁻⁵.

This matters for vaginal health because oestrogen regulates the vaginal microbiome, particularly the dominance of *Lactobacillus* species, which produce lactic acid to maintain a protective acidic pH⁶. When oestrogen declines – whether through menopause or gut-driven dysregulation – the vaginal microbiome can shift away from *Lactobacillus* dominance, increasing risk of infection, inflammation, and discomfort⁶.

Supporting gut health can indirectly reinforce both systemic oestrogen balance³⁻⁵ and vaginal microbial resilience^{6,7}. Key approaches include:

- **Dietary diversity:** Eating a broad range of plant foods provides polyphenols, which have been suggested to foster microbial diversity.⁸
- **High-soluble fibre foods:** Foods like onions, garlic, asparagus, Jerusalem artichokes and slightly underripe bananas supply fermentable fibres that selectively nourish beneficial bacteria such as *Bifidobacteria* and *Lactobacilli*.⁹
- **Phytoestrogens:** Soy, flaxseed, sesame, and chickpeas provide isoflavones and lignans that interact with oestrogen receptors, potentially supporting hormonal balance¹⁰.
- **Traditionally fermented foods:** Kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi, and miso bring in live microbes – including *Lactobacillus* – that can help to nurture both gut and vaginal health.¹¹
- **Live bacterial supplements:** Clinical research

suggests a role for live bacterial supplements in maintaining a healthy vaginal microbiome, lowering infection risk and supporting urogenital health¹². Products formulated with strains naturally found in the vaginal microbiome, plus vitamins B6, D and E for hormonal and immune support, may provide a practical way to support the gut-vaginal axis.



ABOUT THE EXPERT

Matthew Hudson
MSc, BSc (Hons),

Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr), is Technical Advisor at ADM Protexin, manufacturers of Bio-Kult and Lepicol. Matthew studied a master's degree in Sport Nutrition at Manchester Metropolitan University. He also has a background in biology, studying his undergraduate degree at the University of Manchester. Matthew has focused on the gut microbiome, as well as performance nutrition, and has led practical, nutrition-based workshops where he has shared his knowledge and understanding.



Q

Can you suggest nutrition and lifestyle interventions to help preserve muscle as we age?

ALICE BRADSHAW RECOMMENDED: From mid-life onwards, gradual declines in skeletal muscle mass and strength are part of normal ageing. For some, this remains modest; for others, it progresses into sarcopenia, a pathological acceleration of loss that meets clinical thresholds for reduced muscle mass, strength and function. Sarcopenia increases the risk of frailty, falls and loss of independence, yet evidence shows it is not inevitable. Integrating targeted exercise, nutrition and supplementation can attenuate or even reverse this trajectory.

Exercise remains the primary intervention. Progressive resistance training robustly stimulates muscle protein synthesis and enhances both mass and function, even in advanced age. Meta-analyses confirm consistent strength gains across older cohorts. When combined with balance and mobility work, resistance exercise also reduces fall risk and improves daily functional capacity.

Nutrition forms the second pillar. Even distribution of protein across meals appears to optimise muscle protein synthesis more effectively than a single bolus intake. Both animal and plant sources are valuable – meat, fish and dairy alongside soy, pea, lentil and bean proteins. Leucine plays a pivotal role as a key anabolic trigger, while sufficient total energy intake remains critical. Adequate protein intake can maintain muscle during short-term energy restriction, but chronic undernutrition – particularly when combined with inactivity – impairs anabolic signalling and accelerates loss of lean tissue.

Supplementation can further support outcomes. Omega 3 fatty acids (particularly EPA and DHA) have been associated with improved muscle quality and anabolic sensitivity. Vitamin D3 underpins both muscle and bone function, with deficiency correction enhancing performance metrics. Among emerging supports, β -hydroxy β -methylbutyrate (HMB) – a leucine metabolite – reduces proteolysis and preserves lean mass in frail or immobilised individuals. Creatine monohydrate, long established in athletic settings, similarly augments strength and functional gains from resistance training in older adults. Protein powders – dairy- or plant-based – offer practical means of achieving protein targets when appetite or digestion limit whole-food intake.

Finally, whole-food dietary patterns remain indispensable. Micronutrients such as magnesium, calcium, zinc, B vitamins and antioxidant compounds support muscle metabolism, contractile function and recovery. Diets abundant in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts and seeds provide these cofactors while contributing to anti-inflammatory and antioxidant resilience.

Age-related muscle loss may be physiologically normative, but sarcopenia represents its pathological extreme, and it is modifiable. Through resistance exercise, strategic nutrition and evidence-based supplementation, practitioners can help their clients to maintain strength, mobility and independence well into later life.



ABOUT THE EXPERT

Alice Bradshaw is

a qualified Nutritional Therapist with a passion for health writing. She has worked in the natural health industry for 25 years and is Head of Education and Nutrition Information at Terranova Nutrition.



Q

What factors can affect the health of the gallbladder and what role can a nutritional protocol play?

LEYLA EL MOUDDEN ADVISED: Signs of gallbladder problems typically include pain in the upper right side or central abdomen, especially after eating fatty meals, sometimes spreading to the back or right shoulder. The pain can be sharp, lasting from minutes to hours, and may be accompanied by nausea, vomiting, bloating, or indigestion. Some people also experience pale or greasy stools, dark urine, or tenderness under the right ribs. These symptoms can come and go in 'attacks' and often feel worse after rich or heavy foods.

The best way to support gallbladder health is by keeping bile moving, cholesterol balanced, and digestion efficient.

The gallbladder may be small, but it plays a crucial role in digestion and metabolic balance. Its main job is to store and concentrate bile, the fluid produced by the liver that helps

digest fats, absorb fat soluble nutrients and to remove fat-soluble toxins. When bile composition or flow becomes disrupted, issues like sluggish digestion, gallstones, or inflammation can develop.

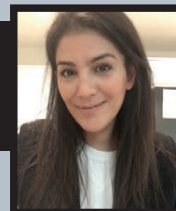
Gallstones can form when bile becomes thick, stagnant, or overloaded with cholesterol. They are more common in women, particularly during pregnancy or with oral contraceptive or HRT use, because oestrogen raises cholesterol levels in bile. Other risk factors include obesity, insulin resistance, rapid weight loss, thyroid dysfunction (which slows bile flow), and liver problems.

Chronic stress, poor sleep, low melatonin, and gut dysbiosis can further disturb gallbladder motility, while certain medications (including some GLP-1 receptor agonists), oxidative stress, low-fibre diets, very low-fat diets, or rapid weight loss can thicken bile and slow its movement, making gallstones more likely to form.

Consuming moderate, regular amounts of healthy fats is key. Fats encourage the gallbladder to empty properly, preventing bile from becoming thick or stagnant. Adequate fibre intake, particularly from vegetables, fruit, and whole grains, supports regular bowel

movements and helps reduce cholesterol saturation in bile, keeping it free-flowing.

Garlic and onions contain compounds that help lower biliary cholesterol and promote a healthier bile composition, while artichoke, turmeric, and TUDCA can help stimulate bile flow. Phosphatidylcholine and choline-rich foods such as eggs and lecithin support bile thinning and may help prevent gallstone formation. Supplementing taurine and glycine provide the building blocks for bile acids, helping keep cholesterol dissolved and preventing bile from becoming thick or sludgy. For those without a gallbladder, ox bile and lipase enzyme supplements can help support fat digestion effectively.



ABOUT THE EXPERT

Leyla El Moudden,
BA, Dip Herb, Dip Nat

is Head of Education for Enzyme Science UK, and a practicing Naturopath and Metabolic Balance Coach.

I-MAG GIVEAWAYS

We showcase a selection of giveaways on offer to readers this issue.

SMART STRAINS for your immune system

Support your immune system the smart way – SMART STRAINS for your immune system is specially formulated with live bacteria



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I:Win: We have five packs to give away.

Wild Nutrition Food-Grown Immune Support

Wild Nutrition's Food-Grown Immune Support is an expertly formulated blend of zinc, selenium and vitamin D. And thanks to premium elderberry extract, it's abundant in antioxidants and vitamin C, ideal for post-workout recovery. Your seasonal stamina

starts here. Zinc contributes to the normal function of the immune system and vitamin C contributes to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue.

I:Win: We have five packs to give away.



Metagenics MetaRelax Night and PhytoMulti



MetaRelax Night combines passionflower and magnesium for relaxation, saffron and zinc for high-quality slow-wave sleep, and B vitamins for daytime cognitive support, helping you to let go of tension, sleep more deeply, and wake feeling refreshed, not groggy the next day. Feel the difference after just seven nights. PhytoMulti is a clinically validated, next-generation

multivitamin combining 22 essential nutrients and 15 potent phytonutrients for whole-body health and healthy ageing. Going beyond standard multivitamins, this formula targets seven key areas of health and includes antioxidant-rich plant extracts to support cognitive function, liver support, skin health, cellular vitality and energy levels.

I:Win: We have five bundles comprising one of each formula to give away.

Bio.Me Prebio PHGG

Support your gut microbiome with Invivo's Bio.Me Prebio PHGG, a low-FODMAP, water-soluble prebiotic fibre derived from guar beans. This gentle, flavourless powder helps balance digestion, supports microbial diversity, and is well tolerated by those with IBS or SIBO. The refillable tin includes a 30-day supply. Simply stir into any drink or meal – hot or cold – for easy, consistent gut support as part of your daily routine.

I:Win: We have five to give away.



Haskapa Haskap Berry Powder

Haskapa is an award-winning company producing 100 per cent natural freeze-dried haskap berry powder and organic pure juice shots. Packed with flavour, the powder blends easily into smoothies, yoghurt, porridge and more. Haskap berries have purple-blue skins and crimson flesh, delivering higher key nutrients – with three times the antioxidants

and four times the anthocyanins of blueberries. Freeze-drying locks in their tangy-sweet taste and naturally high anthocyanin content, making it easy to enjoy their unique health benefits year-round.

I:Win: We have three to give away.

The power of NUCLEOTIDES

What are nucleotides and how can you apply them in practice?
Clinical Nutritionist, Dominika Jackson, offers her insights.

Although nucleotides are fundamental to life and scientists have recognised their importance for decades, they have not been such a hot topic compared to other nutrients. This was largely because it was once assumed that the body could make enough on its own, and that diet played only a minor role.

However, with advancing research, we now understand that under stress, illness, and the high demands of modern life, dietary nucleotides play a much more significant role, particularly for immune function, gut health, and tissue repair.

Nucleotides are organic molecules made up of a nitrogenous base, a five-carbon sugar (ribose or deoxyribose), and one or more phosphate groups. They form building blocks of DNA and RNA comprising the bases, adenine, guanine, cytosine, thymine (DNA only), and uracil (RNA only) and are essential for cell division.¹ Beyond genetics, nucleotides are central to metabolism, energy (for example, ATP, GTP), acting as cellular signalling molecules (cAMP, cGMP), and forming cofactors essential to countless processes, including immune cells support.

Our bodies constantly renew cells, from immune cells to hormones, enzymes, and neurotransmitters. While the body synthesizes them *de novo*, this process is metabolically expensive. Under certain conditions, such as rapid growth, trauma, illness, injuries, damage to the intestinal tract or stress, dietary sources of nucleotides become conditionally essential to support optimal function in those high-demand environments when internal production of nucleotides is not always enough.¹

How do we make nucleotides?

Since nucleotides are so vital for life, our bodies have multiple ways to ensure adequate supply. The body can produce them from scratch, reuse them from cells that have broken down, or

obtain them directly from the food we eat.

Certain tissues that regenerate rapidly, such as the intestinal epithelium and immune cells in the lymphoid system, lack significant capacity to make nucleotides themselves and therefore rely heavily on dietary sources.² This means that when the immune system is challenged, or the gut lining is under stress, additional intake is crucial. Similarly, pregnant women, children, and individuals with high physical demands (such as athletes or very active individuals) all require higher levels to sustain tissue repair and immune resilience. Arguably, our busy and stressful lifestyles predispose most of us to a certain degree of inflammation or tissue damage, making it essential to consider nucleotides as conditionally essential nutrients.

Dietary sources of nucleotides

The content of nucleotides in foods varies, with the richest sources being seafood, meat products, and especially organ meats like offal. Yet, few people consume offal regularly, and increasing numbers are choosing vegetarian or vegan diets. Since fruits and vegetables contain negligible amounts, legumes such as beans and lentils, are important for those on plant-based diets. For individuals who avoid pulses, supplementation may be worth considering to meet the body's needs.

Nucleotides and immunity

When the body is exposed to pathogens like bacteria or viruses, it rapidly increases the production of immune cells to fight off the infection. This process depends heavily on the creation of new DNA, and so on nucleotides. Studies have shown that dietary nucleotides support the maturation, activation, and proliferation of lymphocytes, helping to strengthen overall immune function. They

also enhance the ability of macrophages to sweep over pathogens (phagocytosis) and improve delayed hypersensitivity responses.³ In early life, nucleotides contribute to the development of a strong immunoglobulin response, which plays a crucial role in protecting against infections.⁴ Additionally, supplementation has been shown to reduce symptoms of the common cold,⁵ such as earache, sinus discomfort, and loss of taste, particularly when taken in the early stages of illness.⁶

The gut-immune axis

The gastrointestinal epithelium is one of the fastest regenerating tissues in the body, renewing itself every five to seven days. Because gut epithelial and lymphoid cells are inefficient at *de novo* nucleotide synthesis, they are particularly dependent on exogenous sources. Adequate nucleotide availability supports mucosal architecture, nutrient absorption, and barrier integrity by influencing villus length, tight junction proteins, and mucin secretion. Nucleotides also shape the gut microbiome, indirectly modulating immune responses,⁴ and have been linked to improvements in IBS symptoms and reduced diarrhoea.⁷

This integration of nucleotide metabolism with gut structure and immune surveillance highlights their central role in systemic immune competence.



Nucleotides, DNA integrity, and longevity

Ageing is closely tied to cumulative DNA damage and telomere shortening, both of which impair immune resilience. Each round of cell division progressively erodes telomeres, ultimately leading to cellular senescence.

Adequate nucleotide supply is essential for maintaining DNA synthesis and repair capacity, thereby preserving genomic stability. Research now suggests nucleotides help to sustain telomere length, improve DNA repair efficiency, and buffer against oxidative stress, all of which contribute to healthier ageing.^{8,9}

By sustaining immune surveillance and protecting DNA integrity, nucleotides may play a pivotal role not only in defence against infections but also in delaying the progression of age-related immune decline.

Essential support under intense exercise

Intense exercise places significant strain on the body, not only by increasing the demand for circulation and energy production but also by challenging the immune system. During strenuous training, we generate large amounts of free radicals, which can damage DNA, proteins,

and cell membranes. If antioxidant defences are insufficient, this oxidative stress contributes to inflammation and tissue injury, which in turn can compromise immune resilience.

Nucleotides play a central role in repairing damaged DNA¹⁰ and in supporting rapidly dividing cells, particularly immune cells such as lymphocytes, which rely heavily on nucleotides for replication during an immune response. By aiding protein synthesis and the production of red blood cells, nucleotides also sustain oxygen delivery to the mitochondria, indirectly supporting both cellular energy and immune function. This makes them especially valuable when combined with protein powders, as they complement recovery by promoting both muscle repair and immune readiness.

High-intensity training is also known to elevate cortisol levels, a stress hormone that, when chronically raised, can suppress immune activity. This may lead to reduced surveillance against pathogens and a greater susceptibility to infections. Supplementation with nucleotides has been shown to help lower cortisol and increase secretory IgA (sIgA), the body's frontline immunoglobulins that coat mucosal surfaces such as the gut and respiratory tract, providing an immediate defence against invading pathogens in individuals undergoing endurance exercise.¹¹

Nucleotides are indispensable molecules for life, but their significance extends well beyond being simple DNA and RNA building blocks. They are critical for the rapid proliferation of immune cells, the repair of DNA, and the protection of mucosal barriers – processes that are constantly tested during periods of stress, illness, intense exercise, and ageing. While our bodies can synthesise nucleotides, these demands often exceed supply, leaving a functional gap that diet or supplementation can help supply. By recognising nucleotides as conditionally essential nutrients, we can better appreciate their dual role in sustaining front-line immune defence and in maintaining long-term cellular resilience.



ABOUT THE EXPERT

Dominika Jackson MSc,

BSc, ANutr, mBANT, CHNC, MTA is a Clinical Nutritionist at BioCare. She has a Master's degree in Nutritional Therapy, a Bachelor's in Human Nutrition, and a Level 3 Personal Training qualification. She has a particular interest in longevity, strength, and sustainable weight management, with a mission to empower others to become healthier and happier versions of themselves by delivering a holistic approach to health.

THE WILD NUTRITION WAY

Wild Nutrition has been championing its food-grown philosophy for more than a decade. And despite significant growth over the years, the brand remains firm on its founding principles.

Wild Nutrition wasn't founded to be just another general nutritional supplement brand. When Henrietta Norton co-founded Wild Nutrition with her husband, Charlie, the brand was designed to do much more than that; first, it was to raise the bar of the sector, while also empowering women with their health through knowledge.

These principles are the same today as they were when the brand was founded, and the educational message runs through all it does.

Henrietta commented: "We're more than a supplement brand; we're a community dedicated to nutritional health, empowering women and their families with the knowledge and nutrients to thrive at every stage of life. We collaborate with scientists, organic farmers and mycologists across the world, and our team of expert nutritional therapists offers free one to one nutritional advice every day."

CEO, Matt Hiscock, added: "We've come a long way since our garden shed in 2012, and despite our significant growth, our core values haven't wavered – they remain the same as the day the business grew its very first roots."

And because of these principles, Wild Nutrition has always been a natural fit with practitioners, especially when you consider that Henrietta's own experience is firmly rooted in the practitioner world.

Lorna Driver-Davies, Head of Practitioners at Wild Nutrition, explained: "We arm healthcare professionals with all the resources to recommend our products with absolute confidence, while strengthening their practice with the latest research and development."

Alongside exclusive benefits, including product discounts, Wild Nutrition provides technical support to a diverse array of specialists from core to clinical, aesthetic to wholesale, as



Henrietta Norton



Lorna Driver-Davies

well as the future generation of students in a wide variety of nutritional and medical fields. Wild Nutrition also hosts regular webinars to keep the practitioner community updated on the latest advancements and regularly contribute to crucial community discussions at leading industry panels and conferences. This year's topics have included fertility, menstrual health, and the layered transition of motherhood. Wild Nutrition will also be at the forthcoming IHCAN Summit on November 15, where Lorna and Senior Practitioner Business Development Manager, Sam Simmons, will be in attendance.

"Our expertise spans a wide range of specialisms from cycle health to children's nutrition, hormonal health to skin health and all the in-between," Lorna added.

The inspiration

Henrietta had spent a decade formulating products for the healthcare industry but, as a nutritional therapist, she felt the supplement market was doing women a disservice. And that's where the idea for creating Wild Nutrition came from.

"Wild Nutrition's founding mission was to raise the bar of the supplement industry with formulations that better reflect real women and real life stages – and this continues to lie at the very heart of the products we offer and the nutritional support we deliver," Henrietta explained.

"I saw there was disparity between the body's requirements for nutrition from food sources versus petrochemical-sourced supplements containing synthetic isolates, fillers and binders. I believe Food-Grown is the most respectful and effective way of supplementing mind and body."

One of the areas that Wild Nutrition



has become especially known for its expertise around women's health; Henrietta was inspired by her own experience of living with endometriosis, her 20+ years in women's clinics, and the belief that women deserve better. There is so much focus on women's health that the brand's pregnancy consultations are award-winning, and its free Endometriosis Awareness Month appointments have reached record-breaking numbers.

Henrietta commented: "Not only do we provide women with tailored, pragmatic, holistic advice, but we also work to separate fact from fiction on topics from menstruation to matrescence and discerning the nuances and needs between perimenopause and menopause so that present day and future generations are robustly informed and better supported.

"We continually dedicate time to the wider health community and help those who ordinarily wouldn't be afforded this support, including hosting lectures for The British Society for Gynaecological Endoscopy (BSGE), holding dedicated lifestage wellbeing events and participating in women's health panels at a wide variety of leading industry conferences and events. Thereby, helping practitioners to more accurately educate patients in the face of misinformation and misunderstanding."

And to today, and where is the brand in terms of NPDP?

"We never stop researching new ingredients, regularly investing in existing and new product innovations and scientific research. Our product range has grown significantly since the brand's inception, with recent record-breaking launches," Henrietta explained.

This includes with its Weight Management Support product, which has been a phenomenal success, with one jar selling every 25 seconds. It combines UK-first botanical blend, Metabolaid, with an abundance of Food-Grown nutrients for scientifically proven weight support.

Henrietta added: "We speak with thousands of women every month, and weight loss is a universal concern at every life stage. It was crucial to make a product that honours a woman's unique biology and team it with expert holistic guidance to support a weight transition every step of the way."

Then there is Collagen 500 Plus, a bestseller since its launch, it combines 500 Dalton-weight marine collagen – the optimal weight for absorption in as little as five minutes – with breakthrough ingredient Mesoporesil to support collagen repair and synthesis. With biotin and vitamins C and E, it supports firmer, smoother and more hydrated skin while nourishing hair and nails.

Henrietta went on: "It's already converted tens of thousands of subscribers and was recently awarded Best New Wellness Product at The Industry Beauty 2025 Awards."



The importance of ingredients

Since those early days, the range and reach of the brand has continued to grow, and since 2021, Wild Nutrition has also been B Corp certified. But what remains the same is the company's commitment to sourcing excellence.

Henrietta explained: "We endlessly research, scouring the world for nature's most potent ingredients. Think ashwagandha nurtured on organic farms in rural India, magnesium distilled from purified seawater, and calcium extracted from the seaweed hand-harvested on Iceland's bracing coast."

Looking at formulation in greater detail, the brand created its own Food-Grown method, which goes into all the products. The Food-Grown philosophy is one of reverence for nature. Ingredients are kept as close to their original food form as possible with no added synthetic fillers or binders, just clean ingredients to create formulas that have been rigorously researched for optimal efficacy.

"Simply put, they're better understood, absorbed and retained by the body – with the science to prove it. In fact, five gold-standard scientific absorption studies show just how effectively Food-Grown supplements are absorbed and, crucially, retained, with more studies in the pipeline in the coming year ahead," Henrietta advised.

The formulations are created by some of the UK's leading nutritional therapists, and, Henrietta explained, "it's their extraordinary first-hand insight that's the key ingredient in every Food-Grown formulation".

She added: "Their daily work with customers means they have an in-depth understanding of their ranging and evolving needs. So, each product is rooted in lived experience and the belief that women deserve better."

Plant-based DIVERSITY

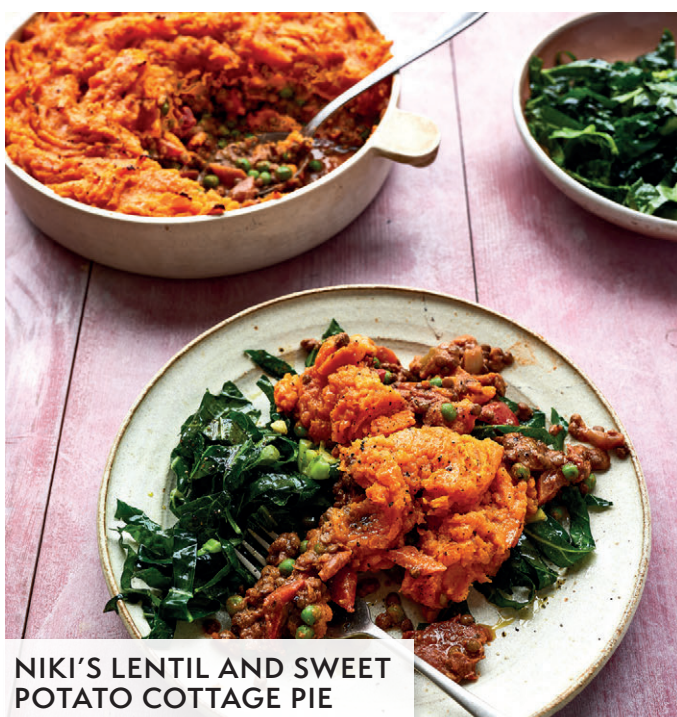
Made in Hackney, the community cookery school, has gathered its most-loved plant-based recipes, stories and expert knowledge into one accessible volume.



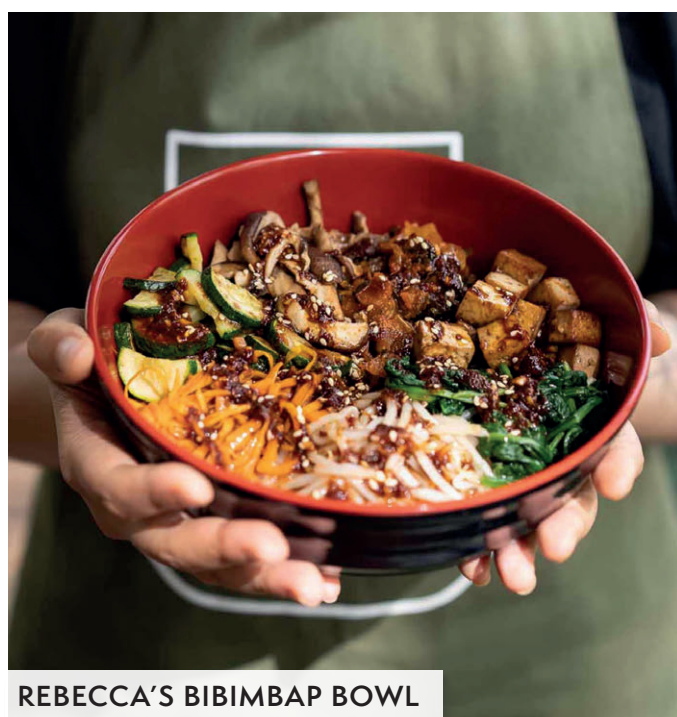
BETTY'S GROUNDNUT, CHICKPEA,
CARROT AND SPINACH STEW



JOEL'S BANANA TARTE
TATIN WITH NICE CREAM



NIKI'S LENTIL AND SWEET
POTATO COTTAGE PIE



REBECCA'S BIBIMBAP BOWL

BETTY'S GROUNDNUT, CHICKPEA, CARROT AND SPINACH STEW – BY BETTY VANDY

Serves 4

This dish is inspired by my Sierra Leonean culinary heritage of granat (groundnut) soup that my beautiful late mother would lovingly cook for me, my sisters and father. It truly speaks comfort for the soul. Even when I became an independent adult, I'd periodically call my mother in the family home in Liverpool and talk about what life in that there big London was throwing at me. If it was getting too much, I'd plan a quick weekend escape to get back home and rest. 'Should I make granat soup?' was all she had to say for me to know I was truly coming home. My meal of return. My comfort.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 onion
- ½ red Scotch bonnet chilli
- 1 red pepper
- 2 carrots
- 2 cloves garlic
- Thumb-size piece root ginger
- 1 x 400g/14oz can chopped tomatoes or 3 fresh tomatoes
- 1tbsp tomato purée/paste
- 200ml/7fl oz/scant 1 cup water (you may need an extra tablespoon)
- 2 vegetable stock cubes
- ½-1tsp ground cinnamon
- 1tsp black pepper
- 3tbsp peanut butter (crunchy or smooth)
- 1½ x 400g/14oz cans chickpeas/garbanzo beans
- 150g/5½ oz baby spinach (2 heaped handfuls)
- Pinch of sea salt

TO SERVE:

- Steamed rice of choice or couscous
- Fresh green salad

METHOD:

- Quarter the onion. Chop the Scotch bonnet



chilli in half, deseed and quarter. Deseed and slice the red pepper. Chop the carrots into 2.5cm/1in chunks.

■ Place the onion, Scotch bonnet, red pepper, garlic, ginger, canned or fresh tomatoes and tomato puree/paste in a blender or food processor and blend to a medium-smooth consistency. If you don't have a blender/food processor, use a large pestle and mortar to achieve a medium-smooth consistency.

■ In a medium pot, combine the 200ml/7fl oz/scant 1 cup of water and the crumbled stock cubes and heat until the cubes have completely dissolved.

■ Slowly pour the tomato mixture into the pot of stock and simmer on a low heat for two to three minutes, then cover and simmer for 10 minutes, or until the stew base is cooked. At this point, the stew should be slightly darker in colour. Stir thoroughly, then add the chopped carrots, cover and cook for 10 minutes.

■ Add the cinnamon, black pepper and peanut butter and stir until combined. Cover and simmer for an additional 10-15 minutes. The oil from the peanut butter will naturally begin to rise to the top and the stew will become thicker. If the sauce is getting too thick, add a tablespoon more water.

■ Drain and rinse the chickpeas/garbanzo beans (don't forget to catch the juice – aquafaba – to use in another recipe), then add them and the spinach to the pot, and cook on a low-medium heat until the chickpeas and carrots are tender – this will take about 10 minutes. Stir occasionally to ensure the dish does not burn or stick. Don't worry if it looks like there is a lot of spinach to start with, the steam from the stew will wilt the spinach reducing it substantially in size. Add pinch of salt, stir and then turn off the heat.

■ Serve with steamed rice or couscous and a fresh green salad to bring a cooling balance.

JOEL'S BANANA TARTE TATIN WITH NICE CREAM – BY JOEL BRAVETTE

Serves 8

Having West African and Caribbean heritage, there are certain flavours I've come to expect as part of my cuisine, even as a Londoner. Bananas, plantain and green bananas are staples that I try to incorporate in either my breakfast, lunch or dinner. One of the truly special examples of a banana dish that reminds me of my childhood, in particular dessert after lunch on special church days, is my late mum's banana tarte tatin, which we grew up calling flan. It's a sweet taste of tropical heaven and a mouth party you won't forget. I'm sure mum would be very happy I've continued her legacy by veganizing her delicious dish.

INGREDIENTS:

FOR THE TARTE TATIN:

- 3 bananas
- 50g/1¾ oz/scant ½ cup hazelnuts
- 1 x 320g/11¼ oz sheet of ready-rolled vegan puff pastry
- 100g/3½ oz/½ cup coconut sugar or soft brown sugar
- 75g/2¾ oz/⅓ cup vegan butter (we love Naturli)

FOR THE NICE CREAM:

- 3 over-ripe or very ripe bananas
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

METHOD:

- Peel and slice the bananas into thick circles (about 1cm thick). Crush the hazelnuts into small pieces with a pestle and mortar.
- For the ice cream, peel the three overripe bananas and put them in a mixing bowl. Use a fork to smush them up until it is like a thick mushy porridge. Add the vanilla extract and continue to smush until infused.
- Decant the banana mixture into a shallow, freezer-proof container with a lid and pop it in the freezer. Leave to freeze for three to five hours until frozen to an ice cream consistency. If you're feeling extra, you can stir it every 30 minutes to reduce the ice crystals, but it's not necessary. When your nice cream is 30 minutes or so away from being ready, you can start making your tarte.
- Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas 4. Select a 23cm/9in round pie dish (or cake pan) that you are going to use for your tarte.
- Roll out your puff pastry on a clean, flat work surface to about 0.5cm thickness and a little larger than the pie dish in size.
- In a heavy pan on a medium heat, add the sugar and vegan butter. Stir it around continuously until melted and let the mixture get darker and thicken. It will burn quickly, but you can smell when it is becoming fragrant and is caramelizing. This takes one to two minutes but watch it carefully and remove from the heat when it's done.
- Pour the caramel mixture into your pie dish and sprinkle the hazelnuts on top. Place the banana slices side-by-side on top of the hazelnuts, covering the entire pie dish in one layer of banana slices.
- Take the pastry round and place it on top of the pie dish. Lift the overhanging edges and gently tuck them in all around the inside of the dish so the pastry will puff up in the oven. Cut a 2-3cm slit on top to allow steam to escape.
- Bake on the middle shelf for 30 minutes until the pastry has risen and turned golden and crispy. Take the tarte out of the oven and let it sit for three to five minutes to cool slightly, but no longer than five minutes, otherwise the caramelized bananas will stick to the pie dish.
- Using oven gloves or a clean dish towel to protect your hands, take a plate that's bigger than the pie dish, place it on top of the dish, then flip it upside down. Tap the bottom of the dish to allow the tarte tatin to fall neatly upside down onto the plate.
- Cut the tarte into eight slices and serve warm with a scoop of the banana nice cream, or serve with whipped coconut cream, vegan vanilla ice cream or vegan pourable cream.





NIKI'S LENTIL AND SWEET POTATO COTTAGE PIE – BY NIKI WEBSTER

Serves 4

This blends hearty lentils with vibrant veggies and a creamy sweet potato topping, perfect for any season. A comforting dish which celebrates plant-based cooking and making nutritious, delicious food accessible to all. Made in Hackney's mission of promoting community cooking and healthy eating resonates deeply with me – so I've always been delighted to support with my recipes. Enjoy this comforting and nourishing dish.

INGREDIENTS:

FOR THE FILLING:

- 1 large red onion
- 2 carrots
- 2 celery stalks
- 1 red pepper
- 4 cloves garlic
- 200g/7oz/scant 1¼ cups dried green or brown lentils
- 2tbsp olive oil
- 3tbsp sundried tomato paste
- 1 x 400g/14oz can chopped tomatoes
- 1 litre/35fl oz/4¼ cups vegetable stock
- 1tsp dried oregano
- 1tsp smoked paprika

- 2tbsp vegan Worcester sauce
- 2tbsp smooth tahini
- 2tbsp dark soy sauce
- 1tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 200g/7oz/1½ cups frozen peas
- Sea salt and black pepper

FOR THE SWEET POTATO TOPPING:

- 750g/1lb 10oz sweet potatoes
- 3tbsp olive oil or vegan butter
- 3tbsp B12-enriched nutritional yeast
- Stir-fried greens or side salad, to serve

METHOD:

- For the filling, let's prepare the ingredients first dice the onion, carrots and celery. Deseed and dice the red pepper, finely slice the garlic, and rinse the lentils in a sieve/fine-mesh strainer under cold water.
- Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan on a medium heat. Add the onion, carrots, celery, red pepper and garlic and sauté for about 10 minutes until the vegetables are softened. Add the lentils, sun-dried tomato paste, chopped tomatoes, vegetable stock, dried oregano and smoked paprika to the pan.
- Stir well to combine, then turn the heat

up to high and bring to the boil. Once boiling, reduce the heat to low-medium, cover with a lid and simmer for about 30-35 minutes, or until the lentils are tender and the mixture has thickened. Stir in the Worcester sauce, tahini, soy sauce, balsamic vinegar and frozen peas. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

■ While the filling is simmering, make the topping. Peel and chop your sweet potatoes into small cubes, about 1.5cm across. Place the chopped sweet potatoes in a large pot and cover with water.

■ Cover the pan and bring to the boil on a high heat, then reduce the heat and simmer for about 15-20 minutes, or until the sweet potatoes are tender. Drain and return to the pot. Add the olive oil or vegan butter and nutritional yeast. Mash until smooth and creamy. Season the mashed sweet potatoes with salt and pepper to taste.

■ Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas 6.

■ Spread the lentil and vegetable filling evenly in a large ovenproof dish. Spoon the mashed sweet potatoes over the top of the filling, spreading out evenly. Bake for about 20-25 minutes, or until the topping is golden brown and the filling is bubbling around the edges. Enjoy with stir-fried greens or a salad on the side.

REBECCA'S BIBIMBAP BOWL – BY REBECCA GHIM

Serves 4

Bibim means to mix, and bap means rice. This dish was born out of laziness to take all the banchan, side dishes, and eat them all at once, to get rid of all the small bowls and plates. When my mum didn't feel like cooking, she'd chuck all the banchan into a big bowl with sesame oil and gochujang and mix it. It was such a nice meal because the family would gather around one big bowl and eat in close proximity, so I always thought it was fun. It's a lot of work to prepare the veg separately – so you can skip all the blanching and sautéing by steaming everything together in a steamer basket. This vegan bibimbap recipe is vibrant and customisable, allowing you to enjoy the rich flavours and textures of the natural vegetables.

INGREDIENTS:

- 400g/14oz/2¼ cups uncooked sushi rice
- 3 carrots
- 4 courgettes/zucchini
- 12 shiitake, oyster or button mushrooms
- 800g/1lb 12oz/2 cups spinach
- 400g/14oz/2 cups bean sprouts
- 500g/1lb 2oz/2 cups medium-firm tofu
- Pinch of sea salt
- 1tbsp neutral oil, such as rapeseed/canola or avocado oil

- 2tbsp dark soy sauce
- Pinch of black pepper

FOR THE SAUCE:

- 2-3 cloves garlic
- 5tbsp vegan gochujang
- 4tsp rice or apple cider vinegar
- 6tbsp sesame oil
- 150-200ml/5-7fl oz/⅔ cup/scant 1 cup water

METHOD:

- Put the rice on to cook.
- Cut the carrots and courgettes/zucchini into matchsticks, finely slice the mushrooms, shred the spinach (if using whole/large leaves), finely dice the garlic for the sauce and set aside.
- Using a large stainless steel steamer basket, add the carrots and steam them for five minutes. Now add all the remaining vegetables – the courgettes, mushrooms, spinach and bean sprouts and steam together for another five minutes. Set a timer so you don't forget to turn them off after five minutes.
- While the veg is steaming, work on your tofu. Press the water out of it and cut into 1.5cm cubes or thin 1.5cm thick slices. Sprinkle the salt over the tofu cubes/slices.

- Sauté the tofu in a frying pan with the oil on a medium heat until golden brown on both sides, about five minutes. Pour the soy sauce over the tofu, add the black pepper and fry for an additional three minutes. Set aside.
- In a small bowl, combine all the sauce ingredients and stir until well mixed, adding enough water to your preferred thickness. Pour into four small ramekins so everyone has their own portion of sauce.
- To assemble, place a serving of cooked rice into each person's bowl. If presenting for a dinner party or you want to do it restaurant-style, arrange the prepared vegetables (carrots, courgettes, mushrooms, spinach, bean sprouts and kimchi) neatly around the edges of the rice and add the tofu in the middle. Most Koreans don't arrange it when cooking at home.
- Drizzle with the sesame oil and sprinkle with sesame seeds to garnish. Serve with the gochujang sauce on the side. Add the desired amount of gochujang sauce to the bowl and mix everything together thoroughly.

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