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# SUSSEX LIFE

April 2006

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# Ask Susie

Our health expert and nutritional therapist, Susie Perry (BSc Dip ION) delivers some practical solutions and sensible advice

## Hot flushes

**Q** I am 56 and I feel like I've been going through the menopause for far too long. I've been getting hot flushes two or three times a day for the last three years, will it ever end or do I have to resort to HRT?

**Sylvia, Hailsham**

**A** Unfortunately many women can experience menopausal symptoms for up to five years. However the good news is that there are plenty of things you can do to help reduce your hot flushes which are caused by fluctuating hormone levels across the day. Factors that are known to cause hormones to fluctuate are skipping meals, having too many stimulants like tea, coffee, nicotine, eating too many sugar snacks and being exposed to excessive levels of stress. So make sure you have a good hearty breakfast, swap tea and coffee for herbals or water and snack on fruit or nuts rather than biscuits. Also increase foods which are rich in phyto-oestrogens like soya products, flax seeds, oats, lentils, alfalfa, and brown rice.

## Natural remedies

**Q** My daughter and her husband have been trying for a baby for some time now with no success; they can't afford IVF treatment and are stuck as to what to do now.

**Helen, Worthing**

**A** Your doctor can refer you both for investigative work on the NHS to help identify if there is a reason as to why you haven't got lucky so far. Sussex Natural Fertility offer natural solutions to infertility problems if they want to avoid going down a medical route. Call 01273 737020

## Stroke prevention

**Q** My husband has just had a mini stroke, he is now on medication but is there anything he should do to build his protection for a further attack?

**Janis, Steyning**

**A** Yes definitely, he needs to increase his fibre as this helps to control cholesterol. This can be done by eating five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, having porridge or an oat based muesli for breakfast and switching white bread, pasta and rice to the wholemeal options. Next he should cut down on salt or switch to LowSalt which is available from all supermarkets. Eating oily fish like mackerel, herrings, tuna, salmon or trout three times a week helps to keep blood fats in check. Once he is feeling better he also needs to take up some gentle exercise but consult his doctor to find out when this is appropriate.

## Sleepless nights

**Q** My son is at university and is finding that he can't sleep at night: it's starting to affect his work and his mood. What can you suggest?

**David, Cuckfield**

**A** Magnesium helps the nervous system to relax and calms the mind. This mineral is found in green leafy vegetables, nuts and seeds. Being a student it may be unlikely that he is getting enough of these foods in his diet. Magnesium is depleted by stress so if he is finding his course a little challenging then he may have a higher need for magnesium in his diet. Suggest more magnesium rich foods and taking a magnesium supplement two hours before he wants to go to sleep.

## Help with pelvic pain

**Q** My mother-in-law suffers from terrible cystitis and antibiotics don't seem to be effective. What should she do?

**Anne, Petworth**

**A** It sounds to me like she is suffering from Interstitial Cystitis. This form of cystitis is not caused by an infection which is why it is not helped by standard antibiotic treatment. The form of cystitis relates to loss of muscular and tissue tone within the pelvic area. What happens is that the muscle and tissue which normally hold and support the bladder and tubes which carry urine away from the bladder become less strong in structure which causes distress to the bladder resulting in pain, inflammation and the symptoms of cystitis. She needs to start doing pelvic floor exercises which helps to tone pelvic muscles and restore bladder support. Joining a pilates class will also help to strengthen this area of her body.

## Your view

If you have diet concerns and you would like Susie's advice, then please send your question into us at: Health Sussex Life, 28 Teville Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 1UG or email: [health@sussexlife.co.uk](mailto:health@sussexlife.co.uk)