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Women's fit **mag** **fitness**

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10 FLAT-BELLY FOODS

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IN 2 WEEKS!**

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IS FATIGUE
MAKING
YOU FAT?
Fight back!

How to...
Beat any
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8

ways to tone
on the go

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' CRAVING SWEETS?
HAVING TUMMY TROUBLES?
SAPPED OF ENERGY?
THERE COULD BE AN UNDERLYING HEALTH ISSUE TO FIX'

Body boost

Any health problem: sorted!

Get a health nudge that just won't go away? Nutritional therapist **Christine Bailey** could have the answer

You try to get the flu or other infections regularly, get something broken? Not quite right, either? You're becoming older, weight increases, losing control of your blood sugar levels, not feeling well... well, whatever, there could be an underlying health issue at hand. It's important to check with your GP. If you have chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or are a smoker, you should also check with your GP. If you have chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or are a smoker, you should also check with your GP.

THE PROBLEM:

I crave chocolate, especially around the time of my period

What's going on? Desiring Dairy Milk and hankering for HobNobs at that time of the month is often a sign of a blood sugar imbalance and/or magnesium deficiency. Other signs of the latter include muscle pain and fatigue, insomnia and restless leg syndrome. Magnesium is vital for energy production and muscle and nerve function, and can be depleted by exercise.

Fix it: Munch on magnesium-rich foods such as dark green leafy vegetables, nuts, seeds, beans, lentils, wholegrains and halibut. Eat protein and vegetables to help stabilise your blood sugar and avoid coffee, tea, alcohol and fizzy drinks. Consider taking supplements that balance blood sugar levels and give adrenal support, such as 300-400mg magnesium, daily.

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Try: Lamberts MagAsorb, £7.10, www.revital.co.uk

THE PROBLEM:

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I feel tired all day and sometimes

I feel dizzy when I stand up suddenly

What's going on? Dizziness is a classic sign of low adrenal function. The adrenal glands are responsible for keeping your blood pressure in a normal range when you move from sitting or lying to standing. Prolonged stress can impair adrenal function, resulting in insufficient amounts of the get-up-and-go hormones cortisol, adrenaline, noradrenaline and DHEA, making you feel sleepy.

Other signs include craving salty foods, perspiring easily, grinding your teeth and having a tendency towards skin spots.

Fix it: It's worth getting your DHEA and cortisol levels measured with a simple saliva test by a nutritionist. Stress can deplete many vitamins and minerals, so take a daily magnesium supplement of 300-500mg. Other important stress-relieving nutrients include vitamin C (take 1-3g daily) and B vitamins, especially B5 (take 500-1000mg three times a day). Herbs such as rhodiola rosea, Siberian ginseng and maca can be useful for adrenal health and are available as supplements.

Try: Higher Nature Rhodiola Stress Relief, £14.95, www.highernature.co.uk

**THE PROBLEM:**

Eating certain foods makes me feel tired or bloated

What's going on? Bloating after meals is a sign that your digestion is not at its best. You may be low in stomach acid or not producing sufficient digestive enzymes to break foods down properly. This can be aggravated by stress or an imbalance of gut bacteria.

Your body needs zinc and B vitamins to produce sufficient stomach acid, so these may be low in your diet.

Fix it: Chew your food thoroughly to improve digestion and help break it down with salivary enzymes. Keep a food diary and see if certain foods aggravate the condition. Don't overdo it with the meat - this can feed certain types of unwanted bacteria - and limit your dairy intake. Chew-down-on raw vegetables, sprouted seeds, and pineapple and papaya, which contain enzymes that aid digestion. Natural yogurt and fermented foods like sauerkraut also contain beneficial bacteria. Eliminate sugars, alcohol and refined carbohydrates such as white bread and pasta. Drinking a warm liquid before meals may improve digestion too, especially warm water with lemon, mint tea or a little apple cider vinegar in water.

Try: BioCare Digestal, £16.95, www.biolabynourish.com

THE PROBLEM:

Even a small amount of wine makes me feel tipsy and hangover

What's going on? If you're feeling slightly wobbled after a modest glass of Pinot, it could be that your liver needs support. The liver is the main organ of detoxification, and breaks down substances like metabolic waste, drugs, ammonia, chemicals and alcohol so that they can be excreted. A lack of zinc can stop your liver from functioning properly, creating a toxic build-up of alcohol in the body. Low levels of the amino acids glutathione, cysteine and glycine may also impair liver function.

Fix it: Reduce your alcohol intake and limit other toxins such as caffeine, nicotine, processed foods and sugar. Drink plenty of water and fresh juices made from a mix of sprouting and greens such as asparagus, and chew on chlorella tablets. Load up on zinc-rich shellfish, eggs, pumpkin seeds, nuts, sesame seeds and tahini. Herbal supplements derived from artichoke and milk thistle can support liver function, too. You can also buy powdered detoxification support formulas to give your liver a helping hand.

Try: A. Vogel Milk Thistle Complex, £9.75, www.avogel.co.uk





THE PROBLEM:

I struggle to lose weight and have a foggy head

■ **What's going on?** The butterfly-shaped gland in the neck called the thyroid produces hormones that help to regulate the body's metabolism. Difficulty in shifting the pounds is one of the many signs of low thyroid function; other others include constipation, feeling cold, poor circulation, poor memory, dry skin, dry hair and hair loss. If you're concerned, pay a visit to your GP.

■ **Fix it:** If your thyroid function is low, load up on protein such as lean meat, eggs and legumes. Protein is a source of tyrosine, an amino acid needed for the production of thyroid hormones. Certain foods – such as cabbage, kale, broccoli, sweet potato, peanuts and soy products – can hinder thyroid health as they contain goitrogens (thyroid suppressants), which can block the uptake of iodine (an essential nutrient for the gland). Goitrogens are more of a problem when the foods are eaten raw, so cook them – and eat them in moderation. Take a thyroid-supporting multivitamin and mineral formula containing iodine, selenium, zinc, manganese, folic acid and B12, and consider supplementing with tyrosine (500mg–1000mg daily).

■ **Try:** Nutri-Thyroid, £75.45, www.nutricentre.com

'SUGAR HIGHS AND LOWS CAUSE MOOD SWINGS, IRRITABILITY AND DIFFICULTY IN LOSING WEIGHT'

THE PROBLEM:

I feel shaky and irritable if I've not eaten for a while

■ **What's going on?** This common problem may indicate a blood sugar imbalance, which can be sparked by eating too many refined carbohydrates (white breads, rice, pasta, cakes and biscuits) and not enough protein. When you eat carbohydrate-rich foods, your blood sugar rises, and your body responds by producing insulin to get it out of the blood. Excess glucose is converted into fat – particularly tummy fat. This causes your blood sugar to fall, triggering cravings. This can result in an ongoing rollercoaster of sugar highs and lows, causing mood swings, irritability and difficulty in losing weight. Other common signs include afternoon lethargy, headaches if meals are skipped or delayed, and cravings for coffee or sweet foods.

■ **Fix it:** Keep your blood sugar balanced to boost your energy, curb cravings and aid weight loss. Do this by choosing foods that release glucose slowly into the bloodstream (foods with a 'low glycaemic load') such as sweet potatoes, quinoa and wholegrains. It's important that you include plenty of protein in each meal, eat every three hours, eliminate refined, white, sugary foods and stimulants, and always eat breakfast. One of the most important nutrients for balancing blood sugar is chromium, so take 200mcg of chromium picolinate or polynicotinate once or twice daily. Cinnamon has been shown to improve insulin function, so try adding one teaspoon daily to foods.

■ **Try:** BioNova GlucoBalance, £25.95, www.vitalityhealth.com

