

Health & wellbeing

Great advice to keep you happy and healthy

Q. I've recently been told I have bursitis. I like to stay active and want to try to do as much as I can without aggravating this further. What would you suggest?



William Kenton, leading specialist physiotherapist and spokesperson for Mentholatum, is here to help.

Bursitis is a painful condition that is characterised by inflammation at the fluid-filled sacs (the bursa) that cushion our joints. In the initial and often very painful phase, I would suggest using an anti-inflammatory gel such as Deep Relief.

You can supplement this with ice for 15- to 20-minute intervals once or

twice a day, ensuring you do not apply ice directly to the skin.

Depending on where the bursitis is and as your pain allows, exercise can help prevent further complications, such as reduction in range of movement.

You may want to adopt a trial and error approach to exercise to see what works for you. Monitor your pain during exercise and into the following day. Pain should be kept to a minimum.

Remember to seek medical advice at any stage should your symptoms not improve or if they worsen at any stage.



In The News

New Parkinson's Discovery

Scientists have discovered that Parkinson's disease – which was always thought to occur later in life – actually starts in the womb.

Specialists in California have identified that the abnormal brain cells which put people at risk of the disease are formed in the brain before birth, only triggering symptoms later in life.

The good news is that this discovery paves the way for the development of drugs which could reverse those abnormalities before the tremors and balance loss of Parkinson's start.

Effective Flossing

We know we should floss our teeth at least once a day, but are we doing it correctly? London dental practice Holford Partners Curaden share their top flossing tips:

- Floss at night – although a quick floss in the morning or before going out will help freshen your mouth, the before-bed floss is the most effective at preventing tooth decay and gum disease
- Use the floss to make a C-shape around the inside of the tooth, then move it up and down five times, going slightly below the gum line
- Use floss rather than a tooth pick because it performs better, especially in small spaces between the teeth
- Try not to reuse the same section of floss, but change the part of the floss you use as you move from one tooth to another



Health Bite

You don't have to wait for your bananas to ripen properly to enjoy the health benefits of this delicious fruit.

In fact, green bananas are a better source of prebiotics (the special fibres which feed good bacteria in the gut) than ripe yellow ones because the prebiotic fibres tend to break down as the fruit ripens.

Not only are prebiotics good for your gut, studies suggest that they can help stimulate absorption of calcium and so support bone health, too.

Avoid fatty foods at night



Heartburn And Reflux



Our Health Writer, Colleen Shannon, finds out what you can do.

HARTBURN is a common problem that affects up to one in four adults, according to the digestive conditions charity Guts UK. Sometimes it's only a passing nuisance. However, if heartburn persists, it might be due to a condition called gastro-oesophageal reflux disease or GORD, also known as reflux for short.

To learn more, I spoke to Julie Thompson, Specialist Gastroenterology Dietician and Information Manager at Guts UK.

She told me that reflux happens when some of your stomach's contents come back up into your oesophagus (your food pipe).

There is a ring of muscle at the bottom of the oesophagus that is meant to close up and stop this happening, but sometimes this ring is weakened, and the contents of your stomach leak out.

Because your stomach produces acid to digest your food, it hurts when this happens.

A healthy stomach has a protective lining that keeps the acid from harming your tissues, but the oesophagus does not have this lining, so you get that burning pain.

You might also feel the partially-digested food coming up into your throat or mouth, or have a cough. These symptoms can be worse when you are lying down, or at night.

If you are having heartburn symptoms, talk to your pharmacist. They can advise you on over-the-counter remedies (OTC), or point you towards the GP if needed.

Losing weight, reducing your alcohol intake and stopping smoking can often make a big difference.

Try to avoid eating late at night, especially fatty foods, so you don't go to bed with a full stomach. Propping your head up in bed may help, too.

If you have a sensation of food getting stuck in the oesophagus, vomiting or any unintentional weight loss along with heartburn symptoms, see your GP quickly. These symptoms could indicate a serious problem.

In line with NHS information, Guts UK also advises seeing your GP if there is heartburn on most days for three weeks or more, or if lifestyle changes and OTC medicines are not helping.

It is important to see a GP if symptoms are continuing, as one in 10 people who experience reflux can have complications.

The GP will ask about your symptoms and may initially give you more information on diet and lifestyle, and possibly prescribe some tablets.

They may also refer you to hospital for a gastroscopy, where a specialist looks inside your oesophagus through a tube. Sometimes a special X-ray called a barium swallow will give the answer.

You can find more information about heartburn and reflux on the Guts UK website at gutscharity.org.uk where you can also read about a range of other digestive conditions.

If you are not online, you can write to Guts UK, 3 St Andrews Place, London NW1 4LB, or call 0207 486 0341. ■

Scrap Your Shopping List

Attention span and memory are maintained, or improved, through practice and the well-known old adage "use it or lose it" is certainly true.

So if you want to keep your brain firing on all cylinders, one piece of advice is to scrap your shopping list.

Shopping is a regular weekly challenge made more complex by the inevitable distractions you might face, but try breaking your list down into categories, such as vegetables, meat and cleaning products, to make remembering easier.



And Relax . . .

If you're suffering from any aches and pains or simply want to destress in a warm bath, then try Tisserand Aromatherapy.

Their Lavender & Chamomile range blends the finest lavender and chamomile essential oils, perfect for dry, sensitive skin.

Included in the range is the bath oil (£9.45), body oil (£10.45) and a Lavender Warming Body Wrap (£17.95), perfect for easing muscles after a post-workout body repair.

Available from Boots and Tisserand.com.

