



## [WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?]

JENNIFER HARPER-DEACON

**Q** I have been diagnosed with rosacea, and was prescribed antibiotics, which upset my stomach. The lotion I was given subsequently does not seem to be helping, and my skin is really dry. The irritation, bumps and redness appear to get worse when I am stressed. Can you recommend something herbal that might help?

Sinead, Galway

**A** Rosacea is a condition of the skin on the face that causes redness and inflammation and looks like a flush or blushing. An alternative moisturising cream that may help is Little Herbal Kuswera Zuo (£20.49 for 60ml; [www.littleherbal-int.com](http://www.littleherbal-int.com)). It contains African potato tuber, which has potent anti-inflammatory properties. I know from first-hand experience that it can reduce both redness and pustules.

I believe that all skin conditions need to be treated internally, too, and I am impressed by how eastern medicine addresses underlying issues. Manjishta is an ayurvedic herb that reduces redness; its antibacterial qualities also help to eradicate pustules and reduce inflammation. Pukka Herbs Neem & Sarsaparilla (£14.45 for 90 capsules; [www.pukkaherbs.com](http://www.pukkaherbs.com)) is an organic formula that contains manjishta; take two capsules three times a day. Do not use it if you are pregnant. You should also drink lukewarm camomile or fresh-mint tea, which both have soothing properties, and avoid chocolate, cow's milk, sugary drinks, alcohol, coffee and spicy and greasy foods, all of which can exacerbate rosacea.

**Q** I heard on the news that, with the increase in temperature, coupled with the torrential rain we've experienced recently, mosquitoes are likely to proliferate in the UK. What natural

preventive measures can I take, and, if bitten, is there a natural cream to apply topically?

Sue, Cobham, Surrey

**A** Mosquitoes dislike bitter-tasting blood, so include foods such as chicory, endive and radicchio in your diet. Vitamin B1 is considered an effective deterrent; any excess is thought to be excreted through the skin, producing an odour undetectable to humans but repellent to mosquitoes. I have certainly noticed a reduction in bites when I have taken it. In our diet, the B vitamins are found as a group, not in isolation, so I suggest a general B-complex formula with a high level of vitamin B1, such as Viridian's High One B-Complex (£6.40 for 30 capsules, from the Nutri Centre; 0800 587 2290). Allow two weeks for it to take effect.

Water butts in gardens are notorious breeding grounds for mosquitoes. I spray Germ-a-Clenz (£6.95 for 60ml; [www.oliveleaf.co.uk](http://www.oliveleaf.co.uk)), a natural disinfectant, onto the water's surface, and drop in a couple of tablespoons of vegetable oil, which creates a barrier that suffocates the larvae.

If you are bitten, apply Charles Jordi SOS Mosquito Gel (£8.95; 0845 260 8005) topically. It contains antiseptic lavender and eucalyptus oils, red thyme, to eliminate toxins, and healing aloe vera.

**Q** I have osteoporosis and suffer from pain in my spine, for which paracetamol does nothing. Anti-inflammatories give me bad stomach ache. I would like a natural alternative. Should I try turmeric, bromelain or devil's claw? I take glucosamine for joint support.

S Maskell, Ealing

**A** For connective tissue to be renewed, you need a constant supply of glucosamine,

which occurs naturally in almost all body tissues. Taking glucosamine can slow the degenerative process and strengthen the tissues supporting the spinal discs, and may ease back pain. Lubramine G (£12.99 for 30 capsules, from Boots) contains glucosamine and the excellent anti-inflammatory Celadrin, a patented mix of fatty acids that is considered especially effective when used with glucosamine.

The spice turmeric and the enzyme bromelain (found in pineapple) are known for their anti-inflammatory effects, so include them regularly in your diet. Other foods with anti-inflammatory properties include red grapes, olives, berries, flax seeds and oily fish.

Traditionally, devil's claw has been used as a "bitter", or digestive stimulant, as it promotes the secretion of stomach acid. It is therefore not recommended for anyone suffering from gastric or duodenal ulcers, heartburn, gastritis, excessive stomach acid or gallstones. As you mention stomach ache, I would not recommend taking it, unless it is prescribed to you.

Jennifer Harper-Deacon is a registered naturopathic physician. For more information, visit [www.jenniferharper-deacon.com](http://www.jenniferharper-deacon.com)

If you have any questions, write to What's the Alternative?, Style, The Sunday Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E9B 1ST. We can provide replies to published letters only.

Before following any recommendation in this column, it is important to consult your GP if you suffer from any health problem or special condition, or are in doubt as to its suitability.

NEED TO KNOW "Vitamin B1 is considered an effective mosquito deterrent"