

What's hot in health

Susan Clark, our award-winning natural health guru, answers your questions every week



HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM CANCER?

Both my mother and my older sister have had breast cancer. Are there any natural remedies I can take to help reduce my risk?

SARAH, 36, TAUNTON

I'D NEVER DESCRIBE any natural remedy as a "cure" for cancer, but what I will do is report on natural agents that

researchers suggest could have cancer-protecting properties. One of these is pomegranate. There's been a lot of interest in this fruit since clinical trials in the US showed how one of its key active agents, ellagic acid, can stop the division of cancer cells. The acid helps protect a gene called P53, which is one of the safeguards against cancer-causing changes to the body's cells. The supplement that I would be taking if I had your family history is Doctor's A-Z Pomegranate capsules (£14.95 for 60 capsules; Victoria Health, 0800 389 8195). I recommend this brand as its contents have been standardised to provide a high potency (40 per cent) of ellagic acid. Take one tablet a day.



Can you help me beat my chocolate craving?

I can't stop eating chocolate and it is really starting to bring me down. The second I finish lunch, I can't wait to run to the shop and buy the biggest chocolate bar I can get my hands on. Can you help me find a way to kick my habit?

GAYNOR, 28, BIRMINGHAM

ONE OF THE reasons so many people turn to the nearest chocolate bar when the going gets tough

is that it contains phenylalanine – the same chemical the brain makes more of when we fall in love. First, ask your doctor to check that you aren't suffering from blood-sugar problems, which could be a sign of diabetes. If you get the all-clear, try Bioharmony's Hoodia gordonii (£19.99 for 150ml); Revital, 0800 252 8751). Made from an African cactus, it is thought to help tackle cravings. Take 10 to 15 drops in juice twice daily. Finally, switch to chocolate with a 70 per cent cocoa content, as this is so rich that just a few small squares should satisfy you. Try Green & Black's Dark 70% or go to www.hotchocolate.co.uk for bars with an even higher cocoa content.

IS THERE ANYTHING THAT WILL EASE MY PSORIASIS?

Can you suggest a natural cream to help me with psoriasis on the palms of my hands and the soles of my feet?

CHARLOTTE, 34, LONDON

THEMBA (AN AFRICAN WORD FOR HOPE) is a cream made from the *Kigelia africana* or sausage tree – so called because the fruits hanging down from the branches look like sausages. African healers use this plant to treat skin complaints, including eczema, dermatitis and psoriasis. You need to apply the cream to affected areas morning and night. **Simba** is another African supplement – this time made from the African potato tuber plant – which is used to regulate the immune system. There's a link between compromised immunity and psoriasis, so by combining these two remedies, you have a great chance of clearing your skin. **The Little Herbal Company** (01484 685100) sells both. Themba, which also includes lavender, aloe vera, calendula and vitamin E, costs £11.95 plus £1.50 p&p. Simba is £24.50 for 90 capsules, plus £1.50 p&p.

★ PRODUCT OF THE WEEK



Try **Detox Express** (£9.99 for 9 sachets; Bioconcepts, 023 9265 8248). The lemon-flavour detox powder contains liver-friendly herbs, prune juice, green tea, seaweed and fructo oligo saccharides, which encourages the growth of good bacteria in your gut.