



LARRY WOOD

Q Like many psoriasis sufferers, I'm dreading summer and the fact that I'm going to have to take my clothes off. I usually apologise in advance for what people are going to see and keep my T-shirt on when I swim. There must be something I can do to put a stop to this. Can you help?

Name and address withheld

A I have heard good reports of an unusual approach to psoriasis that relies on two little-known African products I have written about before, but set in connection with this skin condition.

Thembu is a topical ointment made from the kigelia or "sausage" tree, so called because of the way its fruits hang from the branches, looking like sausages. African healers use this for a range of skin complaints, including eczema, dermatitis and psoriasis. You should apply this cream to affected areas morning and night.

Simba is another African supplement, this time in capsule form, made from the potato tuber plant, which is used to boost the immune system. Since there is clearly a link between immensity and psoriasis, this would explain why this novel approach appears to produce such good results.

Combine the two, and you have an excellent chance of having clearer skin. Both products are available by mail order from the Little Herb Company (01484 685100). Thembu, which includes lavender, olive vera, calendula and vitamin E, costs £11.95 plus £1 p&p. Simba costs £24.50 for one month's supply, plus £2 p&p.

Q Our family holiday was ruined last year when my husband fell sick on the second day with a serious bout of food poisoning. Is there anything to keep us on our feet so we can enjoy a long-awaited summer break in the sun this year?

G. Chorley, by e-mail

A Regular readers of this page will know what I am going to recommend: a good-quality probiotic to increase levels of the good gut bacteria that should help wipe out the pathogens that start the digestive tract, especially from infected food.

What they will not know is that the product I want to recommend, Bio-Care's advanced new TravelGuard, makes use of a patented duo-cap technology. With this, you swallow a single capsule that provides the probiotic (plus antibacterial garlic concentrate) in the inner capsule and antimicrobial plant oils (including coconut, cinnamon, clove, oregano, ginger and rosemary) in the outer layer of the capsule. These oils are released into the stomach first, and then the probiotic contents of the inner capsule, which would otherwise be destroyed by the stomach acid if all the contents were mixed, are released into the small intestine to protect the digestive tract from a range of infections.

TravelGuard will help protect against food poisoning and parasitic infections while travelling, but can also help alleviate the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, food intolerances and fungal infections, including candidiasis and gastroenteritis. It costs £15.95 for 15 capsules and is available from Revital (0800 252875). Take as directed on the box.

Q I am only 47 but, over the past year, have been experiencing a range of distressing symptoms including total exhaustion, loss of libido and thinning hair. Blood tests have ruled out any problems with the thyroid, and I am not suffering from diabetes. Is there anything I can take to get back to normal?

Name and address withheld

A Earlier this year, I wrote about Mincra, a remedy formulated for men suffering from emotional and sexual burnout. Judging by the response, it clearly struck a chord with readers: hundreds of women

called its Swiss makers to ask if the same remedy would work for them.

The short answer, then, was no. However, such was the level of interest in a similar remedy tailored for women, that the herbalists started work straightaway on a new formulation called Femela, which is now available in the UK.

It is one of the spagyric remedies that are popular on the Continent, but which differ slightly from herbal or homeopathic medicines (although, as with the latter and also flower essences, they work on an energetic as well as a physical level). The key difference is that the complex technique of extraction in the spagyric preparation process (it's the resulting tincture of all alkaloids and other toxic elements that may be present in the whole plant. Spagyric remedies, which are safe to take with other medication, are also said to treat the body, mind and soul.

Femela is a blend of six different plant extracts, including Siberian ginseng, creeping clab moss, sweet clover, sea kelp and arnica. You take the tincture internally — if you do not like the taste, add your drops to fruit juice — but you can even rub the tincture into the skin.

Both Femela and Mincra are available from the Karma Healing Sanctuary (0870 777 2425). Both cost £25 for 100ml, plus £2 p&p for one item and £2.50 for two.

For more information on natural health, visit my website: www.whattodoyourkarma.co.uk

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

Before following any medical or dietary advice in this column, please consult your GP if you suffer from any health problems or special conditions, or are in doubt as to its suitability.