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You ask the experts

From sinusitis to sciatica, our alternative health practitioners have the answers to your problems



Katrin Hempel
A herbalist, acupuncturist, nutritionist and naturopath practising in London (www.london.naturaltherapies.co.uk).



Clive Walker
An aromatherapy expert specialising in organic health and beauty (www.blendcollective.co.uk).



Charles Berger
A principal osteopath and founder of Wallington Green Osteopaths in Surrey (www.wallingtongreenosteos.co.uk).



Dr Marilyn Glenville
A leading nutritionist specialising in women's health (www.marilynglenville.com)



Dr Carina Norris
A registered nutritionist, health journalist, nutrition consultant and author of The Food Manual (Haynes, £18.99).



Sally Penford
The education manager for the UK branch of the International Dermal Institute, and a leading spokesperson on skincare.

Face ache

I have chronic sinusitis, which makes my face tender and sore. Is there anything natural I can try?
Maira, Farnborough

Katrin Hempel says Sinusitis occurs when the mucous membranes around the sinuses become inflamed, causing congestion in the nose and back of the throat. Dietary changes can improve ongoing problems. Dairy and wheat can encourage the production of catarrh – try soya or almond-based dairy substitutes or wheat-free foods instead. Include plenty of hot liquids such as herbal teas and herbs such as garlic and horseradish, to help decongest sinuses. Echinacea supplements help stimulate a low immune system, a trigger for sinus problems. High

Sinusitis can be very painful – plentiful hot drinks and avoiding dairy and wheat could all help

doses of vitamin C (up to 10g per day), krill or cod liver oil, zinc, quercetin and vitamin E may also support healing of the mucous membranes. Acupuncture and biopuncture (injection of homeopathic remedies into acupuncture points) are useful therapies to try, as they stimulate key points round the face that encourage sinus drainage through the nose. At home, apply warm compresses over painful areas to increase circulation, or try a steam bath with a couple of drops of eucalyptus essential oil. Sleep with your head elevated and keep your bedroom dust-free – house dust mite droppings can irritate sinuses.

Feet first

I have painful corns on my toes. How can I tackle them naturally?
Anna, Epsom

Clive Walker says Corns are patches of tough skin that form to protect sensitive foot tissue against repeated friction and pressure. They become painful when a shoe or toe puts pressure against the corn. Apply castor oil directly to corns after a bath to harden them, making them easier to file off with a pumice stone. If they're sore, soak your feet in warm water mixed with baking soda to smooth and soften skin, then apply a cotton ball soaked in diluted tea tree oil, which is anti-inflammatory, directly on the corns. File away any rough skin patches. To prevent corns coming back, avoid wearing too-small shoes, the main reason they appear.

