

# Time to forget the tablets...



IT OFTEN SEEMS LIKE THE EASIEST SOLUTION: IF YOU'VE GOT AN ACHE OR A PAIN, YOU INSTINCTIVELY REACH FOR A TABLET. BUT DR ELLIE CANNON SAYS YOU DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TO POP SOME PILLS...

**W**hile it may seem there's a pill to cure every ailment nowadays, in the case of many health conditions you should be trying other things first. Lifestyle changes you can start yourself can often be as effective as medication – and, of course, don't come with side effects. Talk to your GP and see if you can ditch the drugs!

## COMBAT CHOLESTEROL

It used to be very normal to take a statin, even if your cholesterol was only a bit high. Doctors realise now that actually many people can use lifestyle to reduce their cholesterol, rather than drugs. Cholesterol numbers will come down with a low-fat diet and by upping your exercise. Having soya, almonds and cholesterol-lowering drinks can all help, without the need to take medication or risk side effects.



## STRESS RELIEF

There are many ways to help irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) without tablets. Stress has a big part to play, and any form of relaxation or stress relief will help. For some people with IBS, exercise will help symptoms, and experimenting with dietary changes, like avoiding gluten or dairy, is worth a go. Experts recommend trying four weeks of a probiotic food supplement – 'friendly bacteria' – which can reduce pain or bloating.

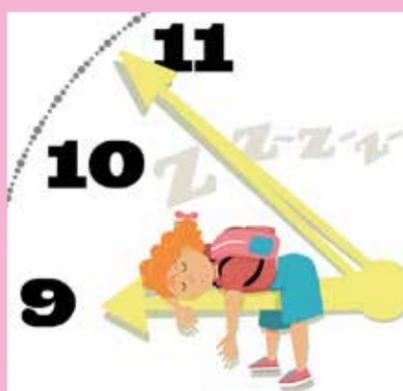
## UNDER PRESSURE

For most people, high blood pressure usually means taking tablets. Cutting salt from your diet is one of the quickest ways to lower your blood pressure and improve your readings without medication. You should have less than 6g of salt a day, but most of us have more than 8g. Don't add salt to food, and look for products that are labelled 'low salt', with less than 0.3g salt per 100g.

## SOOTHING SLEEP

Not being able to sleep is horrible, and suffering night after night can lead to mental-health problems. It's totally understandable to want a quick fix, but

sleeping tablets do not work as well as we once thought. Instead, ask your doctor about referring you for sleep-restriction therapy, where you retrain your brain to associate your bed with sleep. Avoiding sleeping tablets is better for you long-term.



## FEEL RELAXED

Suffering from anxiety can be very distressing and really affect quality of life. One-on-one therapy known as CBT is usually tried before medication, and can be incredibly effective. If you have anxiety, exercising regularly is a good way to control symptoms, as is trying self-help relaxation such as yoga, meditation or mindfulness. Cutting down caffeine can lessen some physical feelings of panic.



## GOOD CARBS

Even type 2 diabetes can be treated without medication. Type 2 diabetes is very strongly related to poor diet and carrying weight around the tummy. Losing weight can reduce blood sugar enough that you might be able to avoid tablets. A low-GI diet, where you swap carbs like white bread and potatoes for good ones such as brown bread and sweet potatoes, will change the way your body uses sugar, and can even help reverse diabetes.

## IMPROVE DIGESTION

Heartburn, or acid reflux, is a common problem, and one for which lots of people turn to indigestion remedies from the chemist or ask for a prescription. You can improve your symptoms without drugs – cutting down caffeine, smoking and alcohol would be a great start. Other trigger foods you could try avoiding would be chocolate, tomatoes and fatty or spicy food. Make sure you eat your evening meal at least four hours before going to bed.

# Look younger with Lesley



Anti-ageing guru **Lesley Reynolds** reveals the latest treatments to help you stay youthful

Overdone the sun? Sadly, holidays can still mean baking under the rays, and there's a risk of damage – even if you're covered in SPF. Here's how to deal with it...

## SMOOTH WRINKLES AND SAGGING

One of the biggest causes of premature ageing is sun damage, and this is visible in fine lines, wrinkles and sagging. Repair the damage with collagen-boosting treatments like micro-needling. A barrel-like hand roller, with hundreds of very fine needles thinner than your own hair, is rolled over the skin, leaving tiny pinpricks. The body recognises this as damage, which activates a wound-heal response to regenerate the skin and boost collagen. Three to six treatments, six to eight weeks apart, may be necessary.

## FADE SUNSPOTS

Repeated and prolonged exposure to sun results in pigmentation. VI Peels are a new generation of peels suitable for all skin types, and will help treat uneven skin tone and spots on the face, neck and hands. They are a simple, fast and effective way to rejuvenate your skin, and will restore a smooth, even tone. Medical-grade ingredients are used, but the peels are pain-free and can be adjusted to suit your skin and problem. From £60 per peel.



## REPAIR LONG-TERM DAMAGE

Laser resurfacing will deal with more severe, long-term sun damage on the face, hands and chest. For example, SmartXide Dot CO2 emits tiny shots of laser energy into the skin, causing controlled damage, while also stimulating new cells. It's good at evening out patchy skin tone, and can be adjusted to the scale of sun damage. Expect red, flaky skin for a week. From £300 a session.

## AND DON'T FORGET...

- Use aloe vera lotion, which has a cooling effect on skin. Ibuprofen will help relieve pain and inflammation, too.
- Avoid creams or lotions containing petroleum, benzocaine or lidocaine – they can trap heat in the skin and cause irritation.
- Use antioxidant-rich products to help protect the skin's DNA.
- AstaSun Skin Support (£9.36, Power Health) will also prepare skin for the sun by boosting natural protection. The tablets contain astaxanthin, shown to be stronger than vitamin E and beta-carotene, helping to decrease sensitivity to the sun and reducing sunburn.
- If a mole is growing, it needs checking. See your GP.

For more information on Lesley and her team of doctors, please visit [harleystreetskinclinic.com](http://harleystreetskinclinic.com)