

WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?

by Susan Clark

Q I'm a 27-year-old male who feels exhausted all the time. Some days I sleep for 16-18 hours and still feel tired. My doctor says I am not diabetic and don't have a thyroid problem. Any suggestions?
Mr M Giles, Birmingham

A Your symptoms could be the result of any one of a number of underlying conditions, ranging from a problem with your adrenal glands to an overburdened liver. There are, though, some important steps you can take to boost your energy levels and improve your wellbeing until you find out what is going on.

First, you need to cut out any stimulants such as caffeine and sugar from your diet. These have no nutritional value and deplete the body of energy. Dawn Hamilton, a nutrition and lifestyle consultant, says your chronic tiredness could be caused by a potassium deficiency, so you should increase the fruit and vegetable content of your diet to

rectify this. She suggests a daily juice drink of carrot, celery and beetroot, which is packed with vitamins and live enzymes — thereby acting as an energy tonic. Take a good-quality multivitamin supplement that includes folic acid, plus zinc, iron and copper.

You should also investigate a possible food intolerance and the level of toxic metals in your body. A qualified nutritionist can arrange this.

Dawn Hamilton charges £60 for an initial consultation. She can be contacted on 0181-883 2408

If you have any questions or tips, write to What's the Alternative? Style Section, The Sunday Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XW. 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 the suitability of the advice

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BY SUSAN CLARK



Q My 13-month-old daughter suffers from eczema, is allergic to cows' milk and sensitive to eggs. She is prone to thrush and I wondered if there is anything that could help her fight these infections. The last attack was triggered by antibiotics. I am also very worried about her upcoming MMR. We are seeing a paediatrician soon but she's had painful reactions to all her previous vaccinations.

Mrs A Evans, Manchester

A The eczema, the thrush and your child's reaction to vaccinations may all improve if you take steps to strengthen her digestive tract. You don't say if her eczema clears if she

avoids cows' milk and eggs; if not, eliminate wheat from her diet as well. The nutritionist Dawn Hamilton says lots of babies cannot tolerate cows' milk and suggests you blend nuts such as brazils and almonds or seeds, for example sunflower and pumpkin, with water. The resulting liquid is like a milk and is packed with vitamins and minerals.

Give your daughter the child's version of probiotics, which help replace the good bacteria in the gut that have been wiped out by antibiotics. Solgar's ABC Dophilus powder is formulated for children and costs £12.59 for 1¼oz. Ensure an organic diet with lots of fresh fruit, vegetables and rice and avoid preservatives and refined sugar. This should strengthen your daughter's immune system within eight weeks.

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Q I am a 45-year-old mother of four and, since the birth of my last child seven years ago, I have suffered from premenstrual tension. As I get older, it seems to get worse. What can I do to alleviate the irritability, fluid retention, fatigue and mood swings that plague me each month?
Mrs C Feakes, Surrey

A Your symptoms sound like PMT but they could also point to a glucose intolerance resulting in low blood-sugar levels, warns Dawn Hamilton, a north London-based nutritionist. Bearing in mind your age, she says your symptoms could also be signs of the onset of the menopause. What is certain is that PMT, if left unchecked, gets worse year on year, and if the problem isn't tackled, will make the menopause pretty miserable. You may also be suffering from a hidden candida (yeast) infection, which is highly implicated in PMT, and if you have taken a lot of antibiotics in the past or eat a high-sugar diet, you should investigate candida treatments.

In the meantime, cut out junk food and stimulants (eg coffee) and eat less salt — it can cause fluid retention. Eat more complex carbohydrates — these include brown rice, lentils and wholegrains — as they reduce excess oestrogen and stabilise blood sugars.

Moderate exercise will encourage the liver to metabolise excess hormones and flush them out of the body and a daily relaxation programme would help you unwind. Hamilton says you should see some improvement within three months but if your symptoms persist, a nutritionist can organise a hormone profile for a more detailed analysis.

Dawn Hamilton practises at the Muswell Healing Arts Clinic in north London. She charges £60 for an initial consultation and offers nutritional counselling over the telephone. Call 0181-883 2408

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