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# NATURAL HEALTH

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MAY 2017

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## ASK THE EXPERTS

Don't suffer in silence - our wellbeing wonder-team of experts is on hand to answer your health questions

*I've recently been experiencing bloating a lot more than usual. Why might this be happening and what can I do to stop it?*

**Terry Gallagher**, director at the British Herbal Medical Association (BHMA), says:

Bloating is a common problem for both men and women and can be caused by flatulence, hormones, a high salt intake, a diet low in fibre or not drinking enough water. Food can be a common culprit of trapped wind so you could try keeping a record of what you're eating to see what might be causing you discomfort. Women often experience increased bloating just before or during their periods due to hormonal changes and you might find yourself suffering more in the summer as the body can be less efficient at removing excess fluid when it's hot.

Make sure you're drinking plenty of water and get moving, as exercise has been shown to help beat the bloat. You could also try taking HRI Water Balance ([hriherbalmedicine.co.uk](http://hriherbalmedicine.co.uk)), a traditional herbal medicine used to relieve symptoms of mild water retention. If your bloating persists despite diet and lifestyle changes you should make an appointment to see your doctor.

*I'm prone to breakouts on my face, particularly on my forehead and chin. What could be the cause and what can I do to keep my skin clear?*

**Dr Howard Murad**, dermatologist and founder of Murad Skincare ([murad.co.uk](http://murad.co.uk)), says:

Most people assume that blemishes only occur during their teenage years, but due to stress, hormonal changes, diet and environmental factors, it is common for women in their 20s, 30s and after the menopause to suffer from bad skin too. Menstrual cycles, pregnancy and changing, stopping or starting hormonal birth control can trigger hormone fluctuations that lead to breakouts, as can exposure to pollution and starting a new course or type of medication.

I recommend a three-step daily regime of cleansing, to rid the skin's surface of bacteria and dirt, followed by a treatment product that is formulated for your skincare needs, such as blemishes or blocked pores, and then a daily moisturiser that has broad spectrum sun protection. Always cleanse before bed and if you're prone to oily skin then you should do it in the morning too. It's also important to regularly clean make-up brushes and pillow cases.

Overall lifestyle has a big impact on the skin, and our diet often affects how we look and feel. Make sure you're eating lots of fruit and vegetables that are packed with hydrating, anti-inflammatory and nutrient-dense agents.

*What can I do to boost my fertility naturally?*

**Vera Martins**, a graduate from the College of Naturopathic Medicine ([naturopathy-uk.com](http://naturopathy-uk.com)), says:

A lot of things can disrupt our hormone system, but the key is bringing it back into balance. Ensure that you're eating lots of whole and anti-inflammatory foods rich in antioxidants such as berries, wild salmon, mackerel, avocado, turmeric and ginger. You could also make an appointment to see a naturopath who can put together a diet plan for you and offer supplementation advice. Only using all-natural skincare products is important too.

Herbs including shatavari, ashwagandha, vitex and maca have a long tradition of boosting fertility by balancing hormones, toning the uterus and reducing anxiety. A naturopathic herbalist can create a tailor-made formula to address your individual fertility concerns.

If you are feeling stressed then you need to address it and learn to relax to stay emotionally balanced. Acupuncture and reflexology are effective in promoting relaxation while also stimulating key organs.