

# Health & wellbeing

Great advice to keep you happy and healthy

**Q. My teeth are so sensitive that I'm putting off visiting my dental hygienist. I know regular checks are important, but I dread going. Can you offer any advice?**



Anna Middleton, dental hygienist and founder of London Hygienist, is here to help.

Sensitive teeth can be caused by worn enamel, dental decay, broken teeth and leaking fillings. One of the most common reasons for sensitivity is through tooth wear. This is when the strong outer layer of your tooth (enamel) has been worn

away, exposing the softer underlying tissue (dentine). This is usually caused by acid erosion from food and drinks.

You may also experience sensitivity if you grind your teeth or if you have over-brushed, which can cause gum recession. Usually the pain goes away but it is persistent it could mean something more serious.

To prevent sensitivity, ensure you reduce sugar and acid in your diet and use a toothpaste designed to help treat the symptoms of sensitivity. Your dentist or hygienist can identify problems and advise how to prevent further wear.



## In The News

### Never Too Late To Quit

Ex-smokers can take heart. Scientists have discovered that the lungs have an almost magical ability to replace genetic mutations caused by smoking with healthy cells, once you've kicked the habit.

Biopsies on ex-smokers showed a sizeable group of cells that had escaped genetic damage – equivalent to the biopsies on those people who had never smoked.

Dr Peter Campbell, who headed up the study at University College London, says, "What is so exciting about our study is that it shows it's never too late to quit."



## Five Benefits Of Yoga

1. Body awareness – helps you develop an instinct towards how your body feels and reacts
2. Mental agility – clears your mind and destresses, giving you time to flex your mental muscles
3. Relaxing – creates an atmosphere of peace and calm away from screens and daily pressures
4. Connecting mind and body – the only exercise which works body and brain together, helping you feel fulfilled
5. Fitness – builds strength and flexibility



## Health Bite

Chickpeas are a rich source of vitamins, minerals and fibre, which means they are packed with health benefits such as improving digestion, boosting heart health and helping you manage your weight.

They are a great source of protein and make an excellent replacement for meat in vegetarian and vegan diets – just switching the same weight of chicken with chickpeas in any recipes gives you more iron, zinc, magnesium and potassium, as well as fibre.

Don't stockpile your medicine



## Sit Up Straight

If you tend to slouch in front of the TV to eat your evening meal you are more likely to get indigestion, as food will move very slowly through the digestive system. Sitting up straight at a table to eat allows gravity to help food move swiftly and your digestive process work more efficiently.

If you're eating lunch in the office, try to avoid eating at your desk because a stressful phone call or e-mail could trigger the release of the hormone adrenaline, which will slow your digestion, and rushing your food can cause you to swallow air, which can induce painful bloating.

Make time to enjoy your meals.



## Disposing Of Medicines



Our Health Writer, Colleen Shannon, explains how to protect the environment.

Nature, and take any expired or unused medicines to your local pharmacy where they can be disposed of safely. There is no charge for this service.

That is the advice from Shirin Alwash, Pharmacist and Ambassador of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society.

She agreed that medicines that get into our water have been shown to harm wildlife and ecosystems.

**D**o you have old medicines lurking in your cupboards? Most of us probably do. Wasted medicines cost the NHS an estimated £300 million every year and about half of that is down to leftovers.

These unused medicines can't be passed on to others, even if they have not reached their expiry date. That is because they might not be right for someone else.

Also, your medicines have not been stored in regulated conditions, as they would be in a pharmacy.

They must be disposed of properly, but please don't put your old medicines in the bin or down the drain, and don't flush them down the toilet as it is bad for the environment.

Medicines that go into your plumbing system will find their way into rivers, lakes, streams and even the sea. Those that go into landfill can leach into our underground water sources, too.

According to the Office for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), fish and frogs can then be affected by various commonly used medicines, including some painkillers and antihistamines.

Some prescription medicines for mental health and heart conditions can also affect fish behaviour or reproduction.

So, please do your part for Mother

As just one example, several studies have shown that the reproductive ability of male fish is affected by hormonal medicines such as contraceptive pills and also by the diabetes medicine metformin.

Some medicines have more of an impact than others because of the way they dissolve. Those that are more likely to dissolve in fat rather than water affect wildlife the most.

In addition to taking your medicine to the pharmacy (which is also a great opportunity to ask your pharmacist for a review of your medicines), there are other steps you can take to reduce waste.

The most expensive medicines for the NHS are those that do not get used. To help the health service, don't build up a stockpile of medicines "just in case". Only order or buy what you need.

Check the expiry dates on your medicines and, for those that are still good, use the oldest ones first. Once they have passed their date, expired medicines may not be safe or effective, because they can undergo chemical changes or become contaminated by bacteria.

If your medicine looks, tastes or smells different from when you first got it, even if it's within the expiry date, take it to your local pharmacy for further advice. ■

## Restful Sleep

Where most sleep-enhancing remedies focus on helping you fall asleep, Benenox Overnight Recharge works to ensure the best possible night's sleep so you can be at your best the next day.

It contains a combination of honey, two important amino acids and vitamin B6 to supplement the stored energy levels in the liver.

When taken before bed on a spoon or stirred into a cup of hot water, the blackcurrant-flavoured syrup works with your body overnight, restoring and rejuvenating key organs and cells to ensure that you get a more restful night's sleep with fewer interruptions.

Benenox Overnight Recharge is £9.99 from Boots.

