

FEATURES

>>YOUR SIX-PAGE WEEKLY SECTION

HERALD family & health

> NUTRITION

ASK ELSA

Q I'm trying to be healthy and eat more fruit. I tend to go for fruit juices instead of eating pieces of fruit, is there any difference from a health point of view?

A Yes, there is. In fact, there are many reasons why whole fruit yields more health benefits than fruit juice, particularly if the juice comes from a carton or plastic bottle.

In the processing of fruit juice the fruit is dehydrated and then reconstituted to produce the juice, this process means that many of the vitamins, minerals and antioxidants are lost in the heating process.

Whole fruit contains beneficial fibre for healthy bowel function, whereas juice has had the fibre removed. Fruits also encourage the health and strengthening of the teeth and gums (particularly apples) due to the action of chewing and the production of enzymes in the mouth.

Fruits contain natural sugars (fructose) to give energy whereas the sugars in fruit juice are concentrated with added sucrose, which can wreak havoc on our blood sugar levels. Imbalanced blood sugar levels can lead to energy dips, sweet cravings and weight gain.

If you want to continue drinking juices, I suggest that you make them yourself in a juicer and combine both fruit and vegetables into the mix. See my website for some healthy juice ideas.

Q I'd like to improve my gut and digestive health. I constantly see ads for probiotic yogurts and drinks which claim to improve digestion, bloating, etc. Can you explain what these products actually do and would you recommend them?

A The probiotic culture added to yogurt is essentially good bacteria. Your gut contains 'good' and 'bad' bacteria and the aim is to increase the amount of good bacteria to improve digestion, immunity and overall health. However, the drawback with the majority of these yogurt/drinks is that they also contain lots of added sugar which, in effect, cancels out the benefit of the probiotic cultures. This is because bad bacteria feed off sugar, so while you are putting in good bacteria, you are simultaneously feeding the bad. Some brands on the market offer a 'light' alternative in which sugar is replaced with artificial sweeteners, which are also bad news for health.

Stick to natural probiotic yogurts which have no sugar added; Glenisk do a good range. To improve gut health eat a diet which is low in sugar, yeasts and alcohol. Eat plenty of probiotic foods such as oats, onion, leek, asparagus, garlic and legumes. These foods actually feed the good bacteria in the gut. Think of them as 'fertiliser' for good bacteria. You might also benefit from taking a good quality probiotic supplement.

Elsa Jones is a nutritional therapist and presenter of *How Healthy are You?* on TV3. Elsa offers one-to-one consultations and group nutrition courses.
www.elsajonesnutrition.ie



TESTING THE ALTERNATIVES

SOMETIMES TRADITIONAL MEDICINE DOESN'T SOLVE ALL LIFE'S WOES, SO HOLLY WHITE LOOKED AT WHAT ELSE IS OUT THERE



WHAT'S ON THE CARDS? Holly with Christine Danielle who practises spiritual tarot reading

HAVE a friend who, following a bad break up, tumbled into a bout of depression. At first I assumed it was natural, but after a year it became harder to understand and sympathy turned to irritation. Little did I know she was doing everything she could to try to lift herself out of the daily sadness but was failing miserably.

Two years on, having done everything conventional medicine could prescribe, she found herself at the door of an energy healer, Rebecca Singleton in Kimmage, wondering what on earth she was doing.

Rebecca assessed the situation and stated that we all have bonds between the people we meet day-to-day, friends, family, co-workers and, of course, lovers. When someone directs ill will toward you, they can drain your energy. What followed was a process called 'cutting the ties', thereby releasing her from the sadness the situation had left her with.

My friend left feeling like a weight had been lifted from her shoulders and has never looked back. As much as I didn't quite 'get' what she had been through, I couldn't help but notice that my happy mate was back.

I was cynical and curious. The fact that Rebecca had 'cured' my friend in an hour, where other methods had failed, led me to explore more holistic therapies. So here's an outline of the therapies I've tried in the past year.

>> ACUPUNCTURE

WHAT IS IT? Acupuncture is a major part of Chinese medicine, which works in the knowledge that the body has 14 energetic meridians. When these become blocked, due to muscle tension, emotional pain, poor diet or poor lifestyle, the body is not functioning at its optimum.

Acupuncturist Anne Hughes places fine needles to stimulate the energetic channels.

WHAT DOES IT DO? Acupuncture has been known to cure a range of ailments from poor digestion, stress, muscle tension, emotional issues, infertility and pain. It can also be used to relieve facial tension achieving a more youthful appearance.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS? Anne inserted fine needles into areas where she feels the chi, or energy, is blocked.

She also used moxibustion, which is where a clump of herbs is placed on the end of the needle and set alight. The sensation is of deep heat penetration which was so soothing I could feel tension melt away and my circulation instantly stimulated.

Anne also placed a needle in a knot of tension between my eyebrows and the effect afterward was like a natural Botox. The knotty furrow disappeared and my forehead was smoother.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS? Acupuncture is not entirely regulated in Ireland, so it is vital to ensure that whoever you go to is thoroughly qualified.

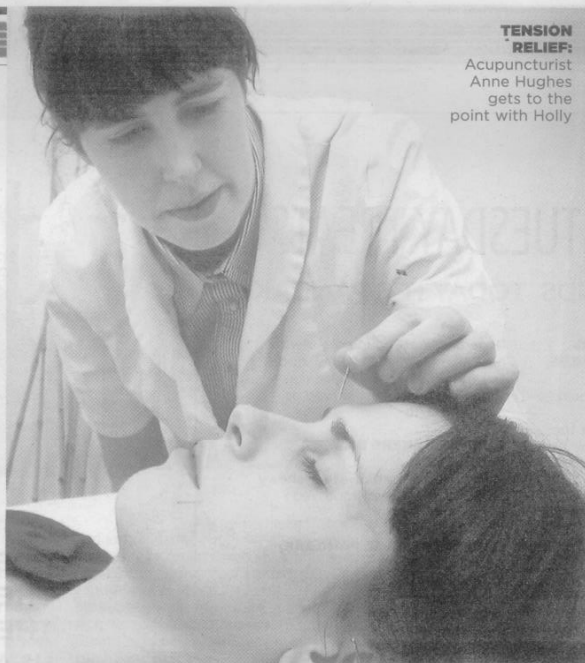
WHAT IT COSTS? A one-hour session is €50.

www.well-being-dublin.com, or
call 087 624 9555

>>SPIRITUAL TAROT

WHAT IS IT? With 15 years' professional experience, Christine Danielle Vierling is a highly intuitive woman who uses tarot

WHAT FOLLOWED WAS A PROCESS CALLED 'CUTTING THE TIES', THEREBY RELEASING HER FROM THE SADNESS THE SITUATION HAD LEFT HER WITH



TENSION RELIEF:
Acupuncturist Anne Hughes gets to the point with Holly

>>NATURAL FACIAL REJUVENATION

WHAT IS IT? Practised by Mairead McHugh, the origins of this technique lie in Ayurveda and it is thousands of years old. Rejuvenation involves massage techniques, acupressure points, lymphatic drainage, energy balancing and facial exercises, all of which help to lift the face, smoothing out fine wrinkles.

WHAT DOES IT DO? It increases circulation to the face and relieves tension. It is relaxing. This would be good for sensitive skin as no products are used.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS? The treatment involved the most thorough massaging my face has ever had. The areas around my eyes, that are almost always dark, benefited from the lymphatic drainage.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS? A few sessions are needed before a long-term effect can be noticed.

WHAT IT COSTS? A one-hour session costs €50. Buy two sessions and get a third free.

Call 086 873 5053

>>CHAKRA BALANCING TREATMENT

WHAT IS IT? This is based upon the knowledge that the body has seven chakras. Chakras are energy centres along the spine located at major branchings of the human nervous system that govern aspects of our emotional health. This treatment diagnoses which are out of balance and aims to regulate them.

WHAT DOES IT DO? Using kinesiology, a way of pushing on a muscle, the therapist diagnoses which areas are out-of-sync. Treatment uses healing crystals and aromatherapy to direct healing energy towards the body.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS? I laid down on my front as oils and crystals were placed on certain points on my back. I felt relaxed and, strangely, as one crystal was placed on my solar plexus my whole body heated up and it almost felt uncomfortable.

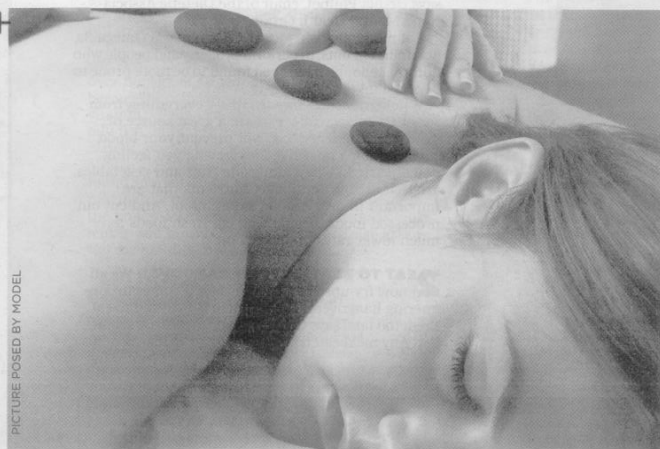
I was then turned on to my back and the treatment continued. I left feeling very weary but, after one of the best night's sleep I ever had, I felt fully charged up.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS? This treatment is highly effective and should not be undertaken lightly. It can be quite emotional and for some people this could mean tears or feeling low initially as the repressed feelings are released.

WHAT IT COSTS? 90 minutes costs €190.

www.fourseasons.com/dublin/spa or
call 01 665 4000

>>For more information and other therapies
available see www.dublinholisticcentre.com
>>For information on Rebecca Singleton please
see www.metahhealing.com



PICTURE POSED BY MODEL

cards to answer questions people have about life direction, health, relationships, work, anything really.

WHAT DOES IT DO? Christine asks the cards to show the messages for the client which she then interprets psychically and spiritually.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS? I shuffled a deck of tarot cards to put my energy on them and then asked questions. I had to pick a card and Christine answered my question with her interpretation of the information shown on the card.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS? You need to have an open mind and be prepared to hear things you may not like. During my session Christine said one thing I didn't like the sound of, but it turned out to be true.

WHAT IT COSTS? A one-hour session is €75.

www.cdvierling.com or
call 085 703 4984

>>NATURAL SPIRITUAL HEALING

WHAT IS IT? Bernadette McPhillips is a former social worker and a counsellor

ENERGY FLOW:

Balancing the chakras with massage and hot stones

I was asked to lie on a massage table fully clothed. In silence she moved around my body occasionally touching it with incredibly warm hands, apparently channelling pure healing energy. The sensation is gentle and soothing. I drifted off and, although she barely touched me, the effect was as if I had had a week's worth of massages.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS? Although I felt relaxed, for some people it will seem like nothing is actually happening. You have to be a believer in energetic therapy to feel a benefit.

WHAT IT COSTS? A one-hour session is €50

www.dublinhealing.com or call 087 132 8579

whose therapy involves channelling positive energy directly on to the body.

WHAT DOES IT DO? It attempts to restore balance and is effective in dealing with depression and anxiety.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS? The session involved a lifestyle consultation, then

YUMMY MUMMY

HOW CAKE CAN CURE THE TERRIBLE TWOS

I WAS bitten on my thigh the other day. It really hurt. Baby Gary even left teeth marks. He is now two and it's all true about what people say about the terrible twos.

Where do I begin? My only child's favourite word is 'no!' He just can't say it enough. No matter what I ask, the answer is 'no'. Ever since he was born I've been looking forward to having cute little conversations with him. Hmm. Be careful what you wish for!

He won't eat either. Unless he's ravenous, he will either throw his food at the wall or mash it into his hair. He shook his bottle of milk so hard the other day that it exploded over our nice, new living-room carpet. And that's not all. He has dismantled a CD player, fax machine and a mobile phone in a matter of weeks, and when he fights he plays dirty. I ended up with a black eye the other day when he head-butted me for no reason.

The other night, when I was half-asleep, my toe hit something hard in the bed. I yelled in fright and turned on the light. A rolling-pin was under the duvet. Yes, a rolling pin and weighing scales!

I find all kinds of things now in places they're not supposed to be. I discovered my favourite new lipstick down the loo, a set of house keys in the bath and Gary's wellies in the washing machine. I've found Bob the Builder in the microwave and Peppa Pig in the oven.

Gary has tried to murder all of his toys one by one. The naughty step doesn't work. Well, not for me anyway. I know other parents sing the praises of the naughty step and it certainly seems to work for Supernanny. But my son finds the naughty step great fun. He sits there and hums away to himself. He thinks it's his special place and he's very happy there.

The only punishment that works is when I firmly say, "No cake". He doesn't like that at all. Gary adores cake and when he's good he gets a piece and when he's bold he's told "No cake".

Of course, my two-year-old terror does have a softer side too. He tries to help me sometimes by putting on his coat himself, fetching his own nappy out of the packet, and tidying away his belongings before going to bed. He'll occasionally rest his head on my lap, or else he'll hug me and say "Mama", which is music to my ears.

TEMPER

He has me wrapped around his little finger and he knows it. On the one occasion when I lost my temper and shouted at him he threw his head back and roared with laughter. I suddenly forgot why I was angry.

What I've learned is that there are no hard and fast rules for raising children as they are all different. I remember as a kid, my neighbour's mum always used to threaten him with "wait until your dad comes home". I used to wonder why she always said that. Surely it should have been a good thing to look forward to your father coming home? I remember another child on our road being constantly locked in her room. She became extremely disruptive and as a teen gave her parents plenty of grief.

I don't know how long the "No cake" line will work. I doubt I can keep that up right through his teens when he wants to go to discos and stay out late. But, for now, it's a million times more effective than time out on a step.



MARISA MACKLE

'I've found Bob the Builder in the microwave and Peppa Pig in the oven'