

Q&A

ask our EXPERTS

Got a problem you can't bear to share with your GP? Don't worry – you can always ask Zest's experts!

Q WHY DO I OFTEN FEEL SICK AND DIZZY?

I've recently been feeling sick and dizzy, especially during the day when I'm rushing around with lots on my mind and lots of things to get done. I'm never actually sick, but I'm starting to worry there might be something seriously wrong with me.

A There are lots of things that can cause you to feel sick and dizzy, but the fact that your symptoms seem to be worse when you are rushing around with lots on your plate suggests it could be stress related. A little bit of stress is a good thing and can make you feel more vibrant and alert, but if you're living off stress hormones (cortisol and adrenaline), you can feel physically unwell as a result. Next time, make a list of all the things you have to do, in order of importance. Chances

are, the things at the bottom of the list can be written off or at least delegated to someone else. If having less to do, doesn't help your symptoms, see your GP who will look into other possible causes. **DH**

Q WHY DOES MY FOOT ACHE DURING EXERCISE?

Sometimes while I'm running or working out at the gym I get a stiffness and pain in the arch of my foot. If I stop and flex my foot a few times it usually goes away, but sometimes it comes back as an uncomfortable pulling sensation. What could be causing it and is there anything I can do to stop it?

A There are several possible explanations for this and you will probably need to visit a podiatrist for an examination to get to

the root of the problem. It could be that you simply need to buy a new pair of running shoes with more flexible soles that mould to your foot. However, mid-foot pain at the connective tissue that supports the arch of your foot (plantar fascia) is a likely cause and this needs a good foot and leg video analysis and orthotic foot support prescribed by a podiatrist. Rarer causes could be a compartment syndrome – where trauma has caused swelling within the muscle – which only comes about with exercise and needs investigating by a podiatrist. You might also have a nerve problem in your foot, or problem with a nerve that starts in the spine and travels down your leg, or even a back problem. If the pain persists, stop exercising and see a podiatrist to prevent any long-term problems developing. **ES**

Q WHAT 'S THE JELLY-LIKE SUBSTANCE IN MY PERIOD?

I sometimes get quite large jelly-like lumps of blood during a heavy period. Is this normal?

A Although rather alarming to look at, these are just clots that can occur with heavy periods. Sometimes the lining of your womb can clump together and come away in blobs that look like tissue. The size of the clot depends on the rate of blood loss from the lining of your uterus. If blood loss is very slow, the blood that appears is often dark and scanty with few obvious clots. If there is a sudden significant blood loss, it can collect in pockets before it appears and come out as a clot. These can look like black or dark jelly-like clots, which are shiny, or more granular brownish ones, which can look like bits of liver or tissue. Don't worry, they are nothing to worry about. **JR**



Q WHAT ARE THESE SORE PATCHES IN MY MOUTH?

I've noticed I have some very rough patches of skin on the inside of my cheeks, which feel horrible and are sometimes really sore. Could I have mouth cancer?

A It sounds like you could be absent-mindedly chewing the inside of your mouth, either when you're concentrating or stressed, which can cause extreme irritation and soreness. But if you're not doing that, or these patches don't heal, you should get yourself checked out immediately by a dentist or doctor. Soreness, lumps or swelling in your mouth or neck, ulcers which do not heal and red or white patches in the mouth are all easily recognisable warning signs of mouth cancer. The disease is primarily linked with smoking and drinking alcohol, but increasing numbers of people displaying none of the common risk factors are being diagnosed. Visit your dentist regularly to keep yourself in the clear. **NC**

... AND WHAT ABOUT HIM? WHY DOES HE HAVE A RASH ON HIS GROIN?

My boyfriend has developed a red rash around his groin and scrotum. Although he says it sometimes itches, he isn't in any pain, but I'm worried it could be a sign of something more sinister.

A This could simply be caused by sweating or friction from clothes rubbing in that area during exercise, but if it's itching, it's more likely to be a type of eczema called seborrhoeic – a scaly red rash, which can also appear on the face, scalp and underarms. Another possibility is a fungus called tinea, which is likely if your boyfriend has athlete's foot and has transferred

the fungus to his groin area by using the same towel to dry after showering. If he is sweating a lot, he could try using an absorbent powder after he has showered and dried himself to minimise sweating and hopefully get rid of the rash. If this doesn't make a difference after a few days, try an anti-fungal treatment (such as Daktarin), but make sure it doesn't contain cortisone because this can thin the skin in such a sensitive area of the body. All these measures should help, but if there is still no improvement, tell him to see his GP or a dermatologist for a formal diagnosis. **NL**

Photographs: Scope Beauty

Send your questions to our experts at zest.mail@natmags.co.uk

MEET OUR PANEL



THE GP
Dr Dawn Harper is a Gloucestershire-based GP and has an interest in women's health. She also runs a private clinic at the Cheltenham And Gloucester Nuffield Hospital (01242 246543).



THE COSMETIC SURGEON
Simon Withey is a consultant plastic surgeon with London Plastic Surgery Associates (www.LPSA.co.uk). He specialises in all areas of aesthetic surgery.



THE GASTROENTEROLOGIST
Dr Richard Marley is the lead consultant for gastroenterology and hepatology at Barts And The London NHS Trust. He also practises at The Princess Grace Hospital, London.



THE PODIATRIST
Emma Supple is a podiatrist and spokesperson for the Society Of Chiropodists And Podiatrists (www.feetforlife.org). She's also the founder of London's SuppleFeet Podiatry Clinic (www.supplefeet.com).



THE GYNAECOLOGIST
Dr Janice Rymer is a consultant gynaecologist at Guy's And St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust (www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk), and a Royal College Of Obstetricians And Gynaecologists council member.



THE DENTIST
Dr Nigel Carter is a qualified dentist with over 20 years' experience. He's also the chief executive of the British Dental Health Foundation (www.dentalhealth.org.uk), a dental-health charity.



THE DERMATOLOGIST
Dr Nick Lowe is a consultant dermatologist at The Cranley Clinic in Marylebone, London (020 7499 3223). He is a member of the British Association Of Dermatologists.



THE PSYCHOSEXUAL EXPERT
Paula Hall is a sexual/relationship therapist for Relate and her own private practice (www.therelationshipspecialists.com). She's BASRT and BACP accredited. For advice on sex, visit www.relate.org.



THE COGNITIVE THERAPIST
Dr Jennifer Wild is a cognitive behavioural therapist who specialises in anxiety disorders. She also works as a research clinical psychologist at the Institute Of Psychiatry, King's College London.



THE TRICHOLOGIST
Philip Kingsley founded the Philip Kingsley Trichological Clinic (www.philipkingsley.co.uk) and is a fellow of The Institute Of Trichologists. He has many celeb clients and is the UK's leading expert in his field.



THE SEXUAL-HEALTH EXPERT
Dr Nneka Nwokolo is a sexual health consultant at Chelsea And Westminster Healthcare NHS Trust and lead clinician at Dr Thom (www.drthom.com), which provides STI testing and treatment.



THE UROLOGIST
Julian Shah is a consultant urologist and senior lecturer at the Institute Of Urology And Nephrology at University College London. He has a special interest in the treatment of incontinence.