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Looking back at last month's news, we're not sure what happened to the long hot summer, but the swine flu certainly arrived with a vengeance. We hope you are continuing with the Immune+ and are staying in good health.

For August we'd like to revitalise you with words about the wonderful **Acai** berries and keep you calm in a crisis with an extract from green tea – **L Theanine**.

Acai (*ah-sigh-ee*)

Acai berries for health, beauty and vitality!

Ever since America's favourite anti-ageing health guru, Dr Nicolas Perricone, recommended **Acai** berry as his number 1 superfood, celebrities and youth hungry Hollywood stars have been eager to get their hands on this elite super-berry. Brazilian **Acai** berries are considered to have the best nutritional value of any fruit on earth: packed with essential fats, vitamins and minerals and twice as many anti-oxidants as the blueberry. High praise indeed, so no wonder this berry is regarded as the ultimate anti-ageing treat. These healthy berries have been harvested and consumed for centuries by the locals in Brazil, to increase stamina and vitality. Their special anti-oxidant compounds, anthocyanidins, flavonoids and polyphenols support healthy ageing and protect collagen by neutralising free radicals that cause damage to cells. Their 18 essential amino acids support maintenance, growth and repair of body tissues and the beneficial plant sterols naturally support cardiovascular health, keeping bad cholesterol at bay.

However, here is the down side! Try getting your hands on these berries and it's not easy! So why not try the capsules as an alternative for a super – healthy boost. Available from Solgar Vitamins.

Echinacea for Immunity

The best defence against viral infections is a healthy immune system. We take a look at the most popular traditional herb – Echinacea.

Last month we looked at Immune+ for strengthening the immune system. If your preference is to take a herb in a liquid form or if you have children from 2 years old, **Echinacea** may prove to be a popular alternative.

Flu pandemics occur approximately every 30 years, when a virus mutates to such an extent that people no longer have any immunity to these new forms. The swine flu virus, first identified in Mexico, can no longer be contained and we are beginning to see the effects of the economic and social impact of such a virus. On a personal level, swine flu can make us feel mildly unwell in the best instance and can have the most serious consequences for those who are more vulnerable.

Whilst we would not like to profess that **Echinacea** is in any way specific in the prevention of swine flu, by strengthening our immune systems, we empower ourselves to be more resilient to contracting any disease. It's a case of being responsible for our own health and wellbeing.

Probably the best known traditional herbal remedy is **Echinacea**. Native to the Midwestern region of North America, this plant supports immune function encouraging the better recognition and destruction of invading pathogens. As it strengthens the immune system generally, rather than working on a specific pathogen, it is ideal for prophylactic use. **Echinacea** enhances the action of T-cells, which are responsible for identifying unfriendly molecules in the body, thus improving the body's ability to recognise pathogens. Another benefit of **Echinacea** is that it encourages interferon, which prevents viruses from replicating, thus defending the body against all type of microbial attack.

Echinacea can safely be taken by children from two years upwards. Many children these days have weakened immune systems, causing them to succumb to infection after infection. This is particularly noticeable when they start a new school term. Whilst it is

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important that children's immune systems are exposed to some challenges to allow them to mature, an immune system that is already weak will not benefit from repeated infections. **Echinacea** is available in small, pleasant tasting chewable tablets or as a tincture, and both are free from synthetic preservatives, flavouring and colouring.

The herb offers ant-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, antiviral and antiseptic effects and can be used for children's ailments such as colds, flu, chicken pox and recurrent infections. Contrary to the perception of many people, there are no restrictions to long term use of **Echinacea**.

Calm in a crisis!

Green Tea has long been known as a relaxing beverage and scientists now believe that both the taste of green tea and its relaxing properties, are attributed to its **Theanine** content. **Theanine** appears to counteract the stimulatory affects of caffeine, which may explain why people drinking green tea often feel relaxed, despite the fact that it contains some caffeine.

The relaxing properties of **Theanine** have been scientifically investigated and the conclusion is that this amino acid stimulates the production of alpha brain waves. These brain waves are abundant when relaxed, calm and lucid and are common in states of deep relaxation such as during meditation. Within 30-40 minutes participants in the study appeared to achieve a relaxed, yet focused state of mind, without sedation.

Drinking green tea is therefore a good option for increasing **Theanine** in the diet. However, the amount derived from green tea is relatively small, making **L-Theanine** supplementation a good option for a more potent effect. In fact, if you split open a capsule of **L Theanine** and tip the powder under the tongue to dissolve, the effect is immediate. This can be very useful for states of high anxiety, such as a fear of flying or for those who suffer with panic attacks. When taken by local DJ Ian Downs (Downsy) from KICK FM, he described it as a 'gentle massage of the shoulders'.

The Wonders of Natural Fibre

The health benefits of insoluble and soluble fibres have been well documented. National food surveys reveal that we consume a fraction of the fibre we need. While the

government suggests 5 servings per day of fresh fruits and vegetables, the average is closer to 2. The average low fibre diet provides only 10-20 grams of fibre daily. A daily fibre intake of at least 25 grams is recommended for good health.

All fibres fall into two basic categories: water soluble and water insoluble.

Insoluble fibres

(wheat bran, whole grains, nuts and skins of fruits and vegetables)

- pass through the intestinal tract unchanged
- absorb large amounts of water (up to 15 times their weight)
- stimulate the intestinal tract
- effective bulking agent
- metabolised by intestinal bacteria into substances that prevent colon cancer.

Soluble Fibre

(Oats, pectin, guar, barley, beans, sea vegetable, **psyllium husks**)

- characteristically sticky and mesh with water to form gels
- modulate blood glucose
- lower elevated blood cholesterol
- chelate toxins in the testinal tract for elimination

One of the best known insoluble fibres is **psyllium husks**. Its tiny seeds are coated with mucilage, that swells upon contact with moisture and for this reason **psyllium husks** are especially useful in cases of constipation. They are not digested in the small intestine but are partially broken down in the colon, where they act as a food source for friendly flora. The soft bulky mass passes through the colon quickly, absorbing potential toxic waste, which is evacuated more smoothly and easily. Lepicol, which contains **psyllium husk**, prebiotics and probiotics is ideal for gentle colon cleansing.

For ongoing use, it is best to take **psyllium husks** once or twice a day, in a glass of water or juice, and an hour before or an hour after food. Adequate fluid intake is vitally important. Psyllium husks can also be incorporated into soups, sauces and smoothies.

Cut out the voucher below and redeem against Lepicol.

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Aromatherapy oil of the month

Lemon (*Citrus limonum*)

The **Lemon** tree originates in the east and is now in widespread cultivation for its fruit. The essential oil is expressed from the peel and has a clean, tangy and extremely fresh fragrance and is a very invigorating oil. With a strong antiseptic and antibacterial action, it is effective in treating infectious conditions, especially cold, flu and sore throats. Additionally, **lemon** stimulates the immune system and enhances the body's resistance to infection.

Lemon has a tonic action on the circulatory system and also regulates body fluids, reducing tissue congestion and water retention, thus making it useful in treating cellulite.

In skin care, **lemon** is useful for oily and spotty skin types and has been used to lighten freckles. It is also helpful in treating warts, verrucas and corns.

All about.....Aloe Vera

What is Aloe Vera?

Aloe Vera is one of the most remarkable health and beauty plants of the modern era. Although Aloe Vera has been around for centuries (it is mentioned in the Bible), scientists continue to discover new ways of using its healing gifts. It is a plant with long, toothed fleshy leaves.

What are the health benefits?

- internal and external healing
- regeneration of healthy cells
- recuperative

What are the common uses?

- Sunburn, burns, cuts, rashes, sores
- ulcerations
- digestive problems (IBS)
- arthritis

What nutrients does Aloe Vera have?

22 amino acids, complex carbohydrates, vitamins B1, B2, B6, B12, pantothenic acid, folic acid, biotin, choline, inositol, magnesium, iron, zinc, manganese and potassium.

In what form is it available?

As a gel or lotion, (for external use) or as a liquid. Aloe Vera capsules are also available, but the liquid is far more powerful.

Does it come in different strengths?

In liquid form - yes. We recommend the Higher Nature Aloe Gold, containing 18000 polysaccharides per litre (the strongest on the market).

What's on 'in store'

Tuesday 28 July

Free Nutritional Consultations with Miriam Saltmarsh

Wednesday 12 August

Free Nutritional Consultations with Kim Knight

24 – 29 August

Kids Week

What to look out for.....

Thursday 6 August

NWN Business Today – feature on 'Conker Varicose Veins'



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