

# Nutrition CLINIC

PRACTICAL EXPERT ADVICE FOR  
YOUR HEALTH AND DIET DILEMMAS

## Are there any ways I can alleviate my eczema through my diet?

**Dr Gill Jenkins says:** 'Whilst there's often a family history of eczema, it can also be exacerbated by certain foods such as eggs and peanuts, so eliminate them for a month to see if your skin improves. Vitamin E is beneficial, so eating avocados, nuts and seeds (pumpkin seeds are great), regularly, can help. Oily fish (salmon, mackerel, halibut and sardines) helps to reduce skin inflammation thanks to the omega-3 content. Eczema sufferers can be low in zinc so do eat spinach, oysters, chicken and chickpeas. Keep your diet as green as possible with fruit and vegetables, and also drink green tea which boosts skin health.'



## My GP has advised that I go on a low-salt diet. Are there any particular foods which I should avoid?

**Katherine Kimber says:** 'A low or decreased salt diet focuses on limiting salt intake to 3.75 - 6g per day (that's 2/3 tsp - 1 tsp of salt or 1500-2300mg sodium). A huge proportion of our salt intake comes from processed foods and adding salt whilst cooking or at the table. Try to use fresh ingredients where possible, plus plenty of herbs and spices to keep food tasting delicious. Surprising hidden sources of salt include: pickled foods, cured meats, cheese, stock cubes, sauces, nut butters, salt substitutes, soy sauce, condiments, bread and some cereals - so do make sure you check the labels!'



## Which is better for me - frozen veg, tinned veg or fresh veg? I feel very confused.

**Suzie Sawyer says:** 'It's always best to try to eat fruit and veg which is locally grown and in season; as there's evidence to suggest the nutritional value may be higher, and the taste is certainly better. The longer vegetables are stored the more their nutrients are lost and if they're shipped half way around the world before reaching a supermarket, storage times can be quite long. Frozen fruits and vegetables are generally picked and then frozen quickly; which means, less nutrients will be lost and most freeze very successfully. Tinned fruits and vegetables may have additional salt or sugar added, so do look at the labels. Some may contain preservatives as well, so there's a chemical element. However, another great way of boosting your fruit and veg intake is to take a vitamin and mineral supplement such as the Alive! range which contains a blend of 26 fruits and vegetables to ensure that any gaps in your diet are plugged together with all the vital nutrients that our body needs daily.'



# 30-second summary:





**I'm trying to stop grazing so many crisps and biscuits. Can you suggest some healthier snacks, please?**

**Emma Brown says:** "Use your snacks as an opportunity to get some all-important nutrients into your diet and keep you satisfied until your next meal. Try chopped-up fruits topped with low fat natural or Greek yogurt which provides some of your 5-a-day, calcium and protein. Vegetable sticks such as carrot and celery, dipped in reduced fat houmous - help towards your 5-a-day, plus the houmous provides protein and fibre. Have 20-25g of mixed plain nuts - they are high in calories, but they provide good fats and protein. Wholemeal toast with 100% nut peanut butter is a high-fibre, high-protein satisfying snack. 100% nut butter is a wise way to avoid added salt, sugar and saturated fats. A chopped apple dipped in 100% nut peanut butter is also yummy and if you really want something sweet eat a few dates."

**I have lost my appetite and am feeling a bit low. Can you suggest any foods which might boost my mood?**

**Dr Gill Jenkins says:** "Low mood can often reduce appetite. This can be due to a depletion of our happy hormone, serotonin. Foods which help to boost levels include milk products, (as well as soy), chicken, fish, oats and all whole grains, nuts and seeds, liver and green leafy vegetables, so there's lots of choice! Try to eat some (or all) of these every day. Refined foods such as cakes and biscuits have a much lower nutrient value and certainly won't help low mood; in fact they can upset blood sugar balance, which will also deplete energy levels. If you're suffering from any kind of digestive issues, this can affect mood. Eating a predominantly wholefood diet should help, as can including foods such as Jerusalem artichoke, asparagus, leeks and onion and drinking black or green tea to feed your beneficial gut flora. If your appetite doesn't improve over the coming weeks, it may be worth a visit to your doctor."



**I've put on half a stone since going through the menopause. Is this just par for the course as my body has changed?**

**Dr Judith Holmes says:** "Many menopausal women find they gain weight. There are reasons behind this. The loss of the female hormone oestrogen causes a redistribution of body fat from the limbs to the central abdomen, known as middle-aged spread. Increasing age also causes us to lose a percentage of our energy-burning lean muscle mass. This muscle is often replaced by fat, which is less energy consuming than muscle. This means even with an unchanged diet your body will need to burn less energy and will therefore store more of what you eat as fat. Many women find the menopause a time of heightened emotions. This may lead to 'comfort' eating, perhaps, coupled with less time spent exercising. Despite all these factors it is important to remember that with knowledge of what may be causing weight gain, it does not need to be a significant problem and gaining weight is not inevitable."



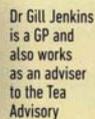
**Our Experts**



Katherine Kimber is a registered dietitian with years of experience in the NHS and the private sector [nudenutritionrd.com](http://nudenutritionrd.com)



Panel, [teaadvisorypanel.com](http://teaadvisorypanel.com)



Dr Gill Jenkins is a GP and also works as an adviser to the Tea Advisory



Suzie Sawyer is a clinical nutritionist at [feelaliveuk.com](http://feelaliveuk.com)



Emma Brown is a nutritionist for Nutracept, a calorie tracking app and website



Dr Judith Holmes runs a private GP service at Spire Parkway Hospital in Solihull

1 Did you know that middle-aged spread is not inevitable? 2 100% nut butter helps you to avoid salt, sugar and saturated fats 3 Look out for hidden salt in pickled foods, cheese, stock cubes and cereals 4 It's always best to eat locally grown fruit and veg in season as the longer produce is stored the more nutrients are lost 5 Oily fish can help to reduce skin inflammation thanks to its Omega-3 content 6 You can eat to improve your mood with a wholefood diet