

EXPERT ADVICE



Students and practitioners, time to get your questions answered!

There are lots of fully-qualified Nutritional Therapists who have gone on to achieve great success hosting TV shows, lecturing, writing books and running busy private clinics. Now it's your chance to tap into their wealth of clinical experience and specialist knowledge. It doesn't matter how simple or technical your question is, just email it to us and we'll get one of our trained experts to answer it for you.

Q: Helping stay-at-home mothers

Giving too much time to their children and not enough time to themselves can lead mothers down a path to unhappiness. How can we help to rebuild self-confidence and self-esteem in clients who are stay-at-home mothers?

MELANIE FIRTH ADVISES:

A study of more than 60 000 US mothers found that 41 per cent of those not in work experienced symptoms of worry, compared to only 34 per cent of those employed. Of course, all mothers have their own experiences, depending often on the kind of support they have, the kind of children they have and their own life experiences. Through working with mothers in my clinic, I have found that there can be a number of triggers that can lead a mother to feel 'lost'. Many feel guilty that they are not contributing to the financial income of the household, and often feel that their role is not respected by those close to them. They miss the social interaction of the workplace and the feeling of achieving something. Often they have put motherhood on a pedestal, and when they discover that motherhood is not perfect and that it's hard to be the perfect mother, the disappointment can be overwhelming. The reality for many is that motherhood is exhausting, because unlike most other jobs, you are emotionally attached. There are three suggestions that I recommend to clients who are stay-at-home mothers, to help them overcome feeling 'lost' and exhausted.

Firstly, I recommend they take a break, this may involve their child going to a friend, to a nursery/childminder for one day, to a grandparent. This can help mothers feel refreshed and better able to cope, and it allows their children to build their trust in other adults that may look after them, in turn helping their confidence and self-esteem.

Secondly, everyone needs help, so encouraging them to lean on willing family members or do swaps with other mothers they trust are good strategies. Help can come in lots of different forms; it doesn't always mean handing children over to someone else, it may be extra help around the house, or asking a friend to run a couple of errands.

Thirdly, when the time is right I suggest taking on a project, hobby, course or part-time work. Any time spent doing something different, using skills achieved before becoming a parent, helps restore a sense of identity and purpose. Even if they are not 'mumpreneur ready', they may find a mumpreneur who needs help a few hours a week. Good website include www.workingmums.co.uk, www.workformums.co.uk and www.mumpreneuruk.com.



MELANIE is the lead coach at Life Practice Brighton, part of the UK-wide Life Practice UK, run by renowned Life Coach, mentor and Author, Mark Shields. She works with a wide range of clients, but particularly enjoys her work with mums, helping them to overcome anxiety and depression, confidence issues and low self-esteem. When you feel lost and overwhelmed, the most important thing is to have a plan. Find someone to hold your hand and go on that journey with you, just until you are on the right track. www.lifepracticebrighton.co.uk



RACHEL BARTHOLOMEW, BA (HONS), DIP ION, MBANT, CNHC, is an experienced Nutrition Consultant and Writer, with special interests in children's health and nutrition, functional sports nutrition and an integrative approach to weight loss. Rachel is based at her own busy clinic in Lancashire, is a regular contributor to leading health magazines, has a freelance consultant role for Nutri Advanced and is co-author of *Mindful Eating*, published by Cico Books (January 2014).
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Q: New approaches for fibromyalgia

As the warmer weather starts to roll in, clients tend to turn their focus onto exercise and outdoor activities. But those who suffer from conditions such as fibromyalgia can find just small increases in activity very challenging. Are there any new approaches to dealing with this condition?

RACHEL BARTHOLOMEW ADVISES:

Fibromyalgia (FM) is a debilitating condition characterised by generalised musculoskeletal pain and stiffness, chronic aching, fatigue, and multiple areas of tenderness often referred to as 'tender points'. In addition, clients with fibromyalgia can often present with co-occurring symptoms such as disturbed sleep, headaches, depression, gastrointestinal symptoms and cardiovascular problems too.

There are many similarities between FM and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) - it is the presence of 'tender points' that often separates FM from CFS. Unfortunately, conventional treatments are often ineffective and can result in unwanted side-effects. A natural approach that incorporates nutritional support can be very beneficial.

While there is no single known cause, there are a wide range of possible contributing factors. Mitochondrial dysfunction is believed to be a primary factor in the aetiology of the condition; many patients with FM have often been exposed to significant life stress, which suggests that dysregulation of the HPA axis may also be a factor.

Key nutrients to consider as a starting point with fibromyalgia

are those necessary for mitochondrial energy production and nutrients to support a balanced stress response:

High strength magnesium may be the single most important nutrient to consider with FM. Magnesium is intimately involved in energy production, and is used up in high amounts during periods of stress too. Supplementation with high strength magnesium is best in the form of bisglycinate, as this form is well-tolerated by the gastrointestinal system. Powder forms are easily absorbed and may be the most effective method of delivery.

Vitamins such as B1, B2, B3 and B5 are essential for energy production and to support a healthy stress response. Vitamin C is used up in high amounts during stress, is important for energy production and also helps to protect the mitochondria against oxidative damage.

Malic acid is a natural compound found in apples that is essential for the production of ATP.

N-acetyl-carnitine is a key nutrient that helps to transport nutrients into the mitochondria for energy production.

Alpha lipoic acid is a useful antioxidant nutrient that can help to protect the mitochondria from damaging free radicals. ▶

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Q: Valuable test for clients with migraine...

I seem to be seeing more clients who suffer from migraines, and I tend to suggest they avoid the obvious - cheese, chocolate, coffee and red wine - this always delivers some improvement, but recently I have been wondering if suggesting a food intolerance test could be of value. Is there evidence to support this suggestion?

NICKY ESTER ADVISES:

There is growing evidence that food intolerance tests can be of benefit for migraine sufferers. This is exciting given that they may be able to help the six million sufferers in the UK. This means roughly one in seven adults in the UK suffers from migraines, with women being three times more likely to be affected than men.

There are some suspected culprits, and you have already eliminated these from your clients' diets. By including a food intolerance test, you'll gain information on any raised IgG antibodies to food antigens, and this can help you to see further improvements in their symptoms.

The reason for this can be understood from looking at the research. In 2005, a prospective audit was done among migraine patients, the conclusion of which highlighted the possible relationship between food intolerance and migraine and the need for more research to support its findings. In 2007, a study completed in Mexico looked at 108 food allergens and asked participants to avoid those foods which they showed positive IgG antibodies to for a period of

six months. After one to six months following their individual diets, 43 of the 56 patients reported not having had any migraines, four saw improvements and only nine saw no change in symptoms. In 2010 a randomised, double-blind, cross-over study using 266 foods, found a statistically significant reduction occurred in both the number of days as well as the number of migraine attacks experienced by participants.

While the mechanism behind IgG mediated food intolerance is not fully understood, it has been speculated that food antigens activate T helper cells and lymphocytes, which in turn increase the production of IgG and cytokines. This then leads to the inflammatory response thought to play a role in the development of symptoms, migraines or otherwise.

While it is evident that more research needs to be undertaken, the current evidence points towards the benefit of using IgG antibody testing to help give relief of migraines. Hopefully this will go some way towards helping sufferers regain some of the days and months they've lost to what is a very debilitating condition.



NICKY ESTER, MSC, DNMED, RNUTR, has over 10 years of experience in clinical practice, during which she worked for Erica White for three years before setting up her own clinical practice. During this time she also taught as a Clinical Tutor at Premier Training International and joined Cambridge Nutritional Sciences as a Nutritionist in 2012. Nicky enjoys the variety that this new role brings, supporting both customers and practitioners, as well as giving seminars to help improve the existing knowledge on food intolerance.

