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Health Choices

WELLBEING SOLUTIONS
For your body and mind

JILL GARDNER, 42, a weight-loss coach, from Milton Keynes, was diagnosed with IBS when she was 18, having suffered with gut problems since childhood.



'I finally cured my IBS'

All my life I've had bouts of feeling bloated, constipated and lethargic. During flare-ups, my clothes would feel tight (or wouldn't fit!) so, combined with the discomfort and bloating, I didn't want to go out. The constipation really had a knock-on effect on my general wellbeing - but I found it embarrassing to talk about. My symptoms and not being able to go about my day-to-day life not only made me feel stressed and downhearted, they left me with brain fog and overwhelming tiredness.

I went to my GP regularly over the years, but he didn't have much advice - simply to use a hot-water bottle for the cramps. Having tried a variety of treatments and remedies to no avail, I read up on IBS myself and changed my diet, cutting out all dairy and gluten as they might be triggering symptoms. I ditched fatty, processed foods

'I saw a difference within days'

for healthy, organic alternatives and gave up alcohol. Although that all helped, I would still get symptoms. Stress definitely made them worse and it got particularly bad during my divorce and when my dad died. Last year, after a particularly bad flare-up

left me debilitated, I was at my wits' end. I consulted a nutritionist friend, who suggested I try VSL#3; the world's most concentrated poly-biotic, containing eight different types of bacteria. I was sceptical as I'd tried just about every probiotic on the market over the years, with little effect, but I decided I'd give it a go. I was surprised the product was in powder form rather than a tablet or liquid; each daily sachet can be mixed into a soft drink, or sprinkled into food, like yogurt or porridge. It works as a protective barrier by lining the gut with live, freeze-dried bacteria - 450 billion per dose - which, unlike other probiotics,

can survive the hostile environment of the stomach. The instructions explained that it might take up to a month to have an effect, but I saw a difference within a few days. I could not believe the results. My bowel movements increased, meaning I felt less lethargic and more energised - and the bloating vanished. I'd been worried that I'd always be ruled by IBS despite leading an active and healthy lifestyle. VSL#3 really was the missing piece of the puzzle for me - I now recommend it to all my clients who experience similar symptoms.



* VSL#3 costs £19.98 for 10 sachets from amazon.co.uk. Visit vsl3.co.uk for more information

What's This?

MealKitt

(£39.99, mealkitt.com)

is a simple new kitchen gadget, designed specifically to help individuals looking to lose, gain or maintain weight. It was created by Julian Gaine, a qualified personal trainer and nutritional advisor, to assist his mother to lose weight before a gastric bypass and then eat a balanced diet after the surgery caused her to lose too much weight and become malnourished. By putting food into the six designated compartments, it helps users to differentiate between food groups and control portion sizes, to ensure they're getting a healthy, balanced diet.



PHOTO: FRANKIE V. CANTINE
PHOTOS: GETTY

Not As Bad As You Think... Running (for your knees)

Contrary to popular belief, running isn't bad for your knees. In fact, the latest data from Brigham Young University in America suggests running could even reduce joint inflammation. The researchers measured levels of cytokines - markers of inflammation - in the knee joint fluid of people aged 18-35 before and after a run. After 30 minutes, the concentration of cytokines decreased, meaning an anti-inflammatory effect had been produced. The scientists are now even suggesting that running could delay the onset of osteoarthritis.



A New Read

Time Mastery: Banish Time Management Forever by John McLachlan and Karen Meager (£12.99, Panoma Press) takes the latest scientific and academic thinking and makes it usable

in everyday life. Both authors are clinically qualified in psychotherapy, hypnotherapy and are NLP Master Trainers. They use this experience to help people move beyond 'time management' to become 'time masters' in both their work and personal lives.