

# Health & Fitness

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CEREAL BAR

## HOLIDAY CONFIDENCE!

■ Wave goodbye to jet lag

## 10 EASY STEPS TO OPTIMUM NUTRITION

### Health Update + Health Update + Health

#### inshort

##### ayurvedic help

A new Ayurvedic charitable hospital, the first of its kind in the world outside India, has opened in London. It has 30 beds, provides free treatment, and is staffed with fully-qualified Ayurvedic doctors. The Ayurvedic Charitable Hospital, 81 Wimpole St, London W1M 7DB, call 020 7224 6070.

##### new arthritis treatment trials

Scientists have invented a device that could revolutionise treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. The Proserba Column is the first non-drug treatment for the disease and works in a similar way to kidney dialysis. It removes blood from the body, purifies it, then returns it. The treatment could replace strong painkillers and anti-inflammatory drugs which can have severe side-effects. Doctors hope to trial the device in the UK next year.

##### better ultrasound cancer test

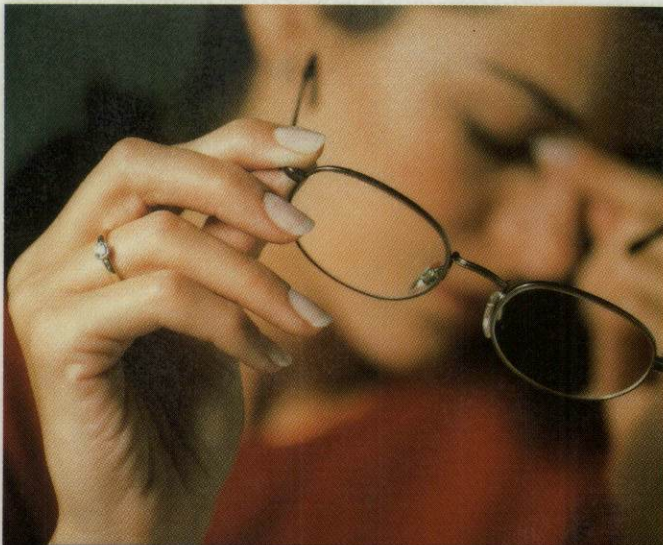
Doctors at the Medical Research Council are pioneering an ultrasound machine that could detect cancer tumours much earlier than at present. The sound waves vibrate through the body to detect even the smallest of tumours.

##### is Britain best for giving birth?

Norway is the safest place to be born, according to a Save The Children survey on the health of newborn babies and their mothers. Britain is in seventh place, while Canada is second and Australia is third. Last is Niger, in Africa, where one woman in nine dies in labour.

##### new scheme to beat heart disease

The Government has unveiled a £10m package to combat coronary heart disease in the UK. Projects to receive funding include a register to track 'at risk' patients and rapid-access chest pain clinics.



## Working against stress

Stress at work is as bad for your health as smoking, says a new report. The three-year study by the Health and Safety Executive has revealed that nearly two-thirds of us suffer from stress at work. Occupational stress has overtaken the common cold as the biggest cause of absenteeism. 'The UK workforce now boasts the longest working hours in Europe, with nearly half of us putting in a marathon 12-hour day,' says Cary Cooper, professor of organisational psychology at Manchester School of Management. 'This increase in stress is harming workers' physical and mental health,' he adds.

Adjusting our working patterns is the best way to combat this type of stress, but if this isn't possible, research shows the anti-anxiety herb Kava Kava, from Kira Ltd (£14.99, from chemists) can help alleviate the worst effects.

An overview of research into the herb compiled by Dr Ann Walker, senior lecturer in human nutrition at The University of Reading, reveals it reduces anxiety, headaches, palpitations and chest pain, as well as improving mood and well-being. 'Kava Kava contains active components called kava-lactones, which it is thought can affect the neurotransmitters in the brain, probably in the limbic system which controls emotions,' says Walker.

## Noisy eaters a risk

Noise levels in restaurants and bars regularly exceed industrial safety regulations, says a survey by *New Scientist*.

In almost half the venues tested, the noise level was 88 decibels, higher than the 85 at which there is a risk of hearing damage. The survey discovered that bars and restaurants with wood floors, bare walls and pillars are the noisiest because sound is reflected, not absorbed.

Talking all evening at this pitch can also trigger laryngitis. The report warned that staff working in these conditions 'ought to consider donning industrial ear muffs to protect them from possible hearing loss'.

## Operate on blushes

A new operation designed to help people whose lives are blighted by constant blushing is now available in Britain.

Pioneered in Sweden and the US, the 40-minute operation is done under general anaesthetic. It involves key-hole surgery to sever tiny nerves over the ribs, which trigger facial blushing. The operation is effective but has risks, such as air escaping from the lungs into the chest cavity.

It is available privately and costs £4,000. However, some experts have criticised the operation because this cure fails to tackle the psychological causes of blushing.

## HRT boosts memory

Researchers from the University of California in the US have discovered that women who take hormone-replacement therapy (HRT) may be protected against memory loss in later life.

The study, reported in the *Journal of Neurology*, shows that women of 65 or over who are taking a regular dose of HRT could be half as likely to suffer mental decline as those who don't. It is thought HRT may reduce thickening of the arteries in the neck. This can prevent the small vessel strokes suffered by many elderly people, which can result in mental deterioration.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROBERT HARDING

## Sunscreen saver

You're stocking up on sunscreen for your holidays but which protection factor should you choose? Do you play safe and spend a fortune on a variety of SPFs, or take a risk and opt for a cheaper, lower SPF?

Now there's an economical solution; a sunscreen with an SPF that adjusts. Variosun comprises two cartridges – one containing SPF 30 and one of SPF 2 – twisted into one dispenser. An adjustable dial allows you to change the SPF at any time. Press the dispenser and your chosen SPF is mixed and released. But, remember that dermatologists recommend using no lower than factor 15.

The cream also contains the skin-saving aloe vera, panthenol and vitamin E. Variosun is £11.99 from Harrods, or by mail order, on 0800-026 0220. Refill cartridges cost £3.99 for SPF 2 and £4.99 for SPF 30.

