Health lessons you must learn

WITH INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS, IT'S OFTEN TOO EASY TO GET THE WRONG ADVICE ABOUT HEALTH DILEMMAS. DR ELLIE REVEALS THE TRUE FACTS YOU NEED...

Where do we get our health education? Perhaps from school, or our parents? More and more people are turning to online health sites for information, but may not be getting the right advice. In my clinic I often feel that some patients need a good dose of education – so here are the health lessons I wish everyone would learn.

GET MOVING

Exercise is for everyone, not just your sprightly neighbours. While you may not run marathons every weekend, you can still get fit without being a typical sporty type. Many people come to exercise later in life, and it's never too late. Walking for 30 minutes a day has huge benefits for anyone's cardiovascular health. Given how sedentary modern life has become, everyone needs to make an effort to get up and move!

AVOID ANTIBIOTICS

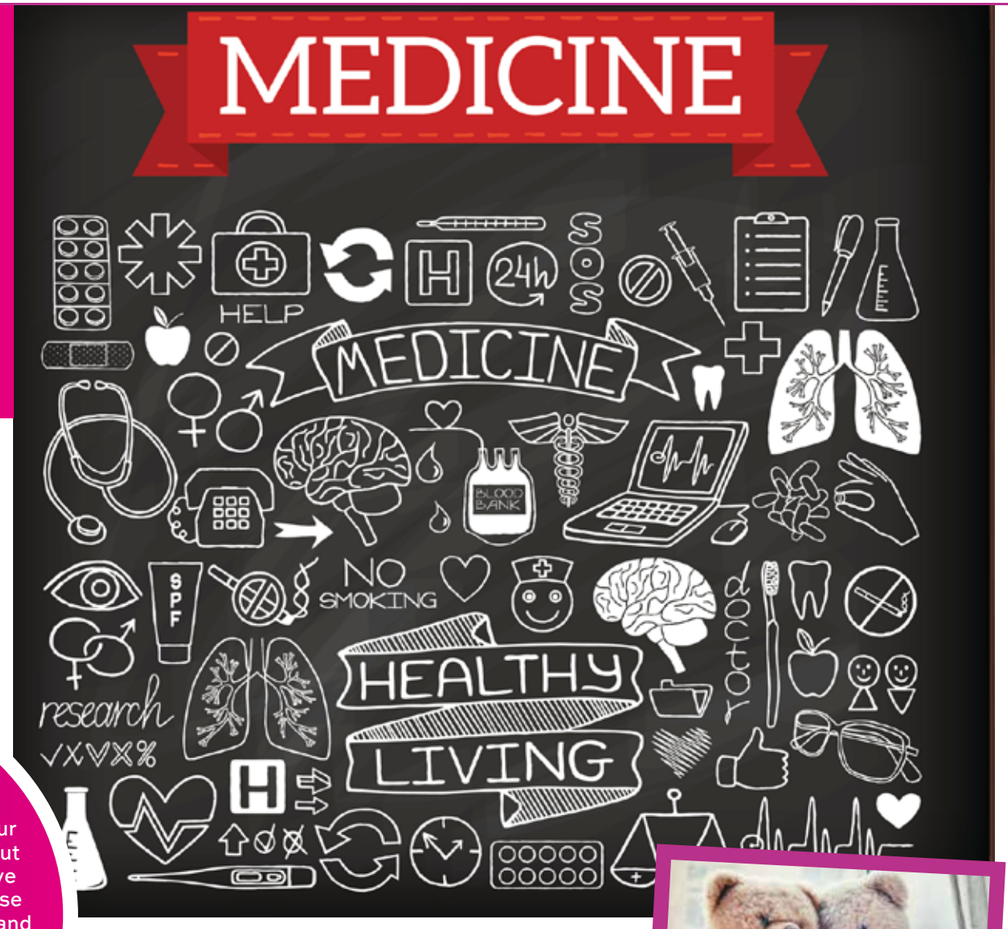
A virus does not need an antibiotic. Flu, tummy upsets, coughs, colds and sore throats are all caused by viruses, and the only treatment is rest and plenty of fluids. In recent decades, far too many antibiotics have been issued unnecessarily for these ailments, causing a crisis of antibiotic resistance. And don't expect to be better in a day or two, as it can take up to 10-14 days to recover.

PROTECT FROM HARM

Vaccinating children has been a lifesaver around the world. Your kids will probably never talk about polio, yet your granny would have been terrified of it. That's because vaccination has almost put this, and other awful diseases, out of the picture. Protecting children against fatal and life-changing illnesses such as meningitis and measles is a must, even if you choose not to have a flu vaccine yourself.

FIGHT THE FADS

I hate to break it to you, but that fad diet is not going to make any difference. No matter what great before-and-after photos you see on social media, crazy crash diets simply do not work. In fact, they can be dangerous, and they won't help you lose weight in the long-term. We all want to think they will, but they won't. Sustained weight-loss comes from small, easy-to-achieve changes you can follow for life, along with a slow, steady approach to shedding the pounds.



DON'T SUFFER IN SILENCE

Having a mental-health condition is not a weakness. Mental-health issues can occur spontaneously, just like physical health problems, and we can't always find an obvious cause. There is still a stigma attached to mental-health conditions, sadly, and this leads to feelings of guilt and worthlessness among sufferers. Even the strongest people can suffer from depression.

STAY SOCIAL

Family and friends are important for good health. It may sound simplistic, but it's true. Scientific studies have shown us that being alone or in isolation, particularly in the elderly, is associated with failing health and a worse prognosis with certain diseases. Taking time to talk and laugh with friends is not only good for mental health, but the stress relief improves physical wellbeing and the immune system.

BE PROACTIVE

Prevention is better than the cure, so being proactive about health preservation reaps benefits. Whether it's attending your smear test and mammogram or adopting safe drinking levels, it will all be of value. All diseases are easier to treat in their early stages, which is why screening tests are so crucial. Certain risks, such as smoking, are so indelibly linked to incurable diseases they should always be avoided.

Look younger with Lesley

Anti-ageing guru **Lesley Reynolds** reveals the latest treatments to help you stay youthful

We categorise skin-types as dry, oily, combination and sensitive, but it's much more complicated than that. Here's my approach to modern-day complexion crises.

MENOPAUSE FACE

Often for those aged 40-plus, skin is thinner, prone to breakouts and sensitive around the eyes. Blame your hormones: 30% of collagen is lost in the first five years after menopause kicks in. Sculptra injections stimulate collagen levels to target sagging around the eyes and jawline and thicken the dermis. You may need three treatments a month apart to get the best results. Slight swelling is expected for a few days. From £450 a treatment.

TOXIC SKIN

Pollution bombards our complexions daily with a cocktail of chemicals that can trigger premature ageing, spots and sagging. Smog particles are 20 times smaller than pores, and can actually be as damaging to skin as exposure to UV light. An enzyme peel taken from green papaya has minimal downtime, and takes away surface dead skin cells without harming the healthy living ones, boosting radiance. One a month for three months makes a difference. From £60 a treatment.

STRESSED SKIN

When under pressure, skin can show dehydration, dullness, fatigue and breakouts. Microneedling improves skin texture with a peptide solution followed by a hand roller with hundreds of fine needles to gently puncture the epidermis, activating a 'wound-heal' response to regenerate collagen. Try three treatments at two-week intervals, from £450 a treatment.

AND DON'T FORGET...

- Your skin type can change throughout the year and over time, so it's important you adjust your routine when required. Take time each season to review your complexion and add and take away products as necessary. Your skincare needs are a lot different during the winter than they are during the summer, for instance.
- Don't pigeonhole your skin. Complexions can vary – you could be on the drier side of dry, or have hormonal skin prone to flare-ups.
- You are what you eat, so review your diet according to your skin concern. Broccoli boosts skin elasticity, while foods high in vitamin C balance out the signs of stress, so tuck into oranges and kiwi.

For more information on Lesley and her team of doctors, please visit harleystreetskinclinic.com

PICTURES: GETTY, ISTOCK