

POLLUTION PROTECTION

I've recently moved to the centre of Birmingham, which rates among Britain's most polluted cities. I'm going to be relying on my bicycle as my primary mode of transport, but I'm concerned about the amount of pollution I will be subjected to. Aside from wearing a mask, which isn't practical all of the time, are there any other ways in which I can protect my body from the worst effects?

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Dr Harald Gaier advises:

All too often, a mask doesn't fit the contours of your face properly, so you would still breathe in polluted air even when you wear one. The pollution is largely derived from the burning of fossil fuels and is made up of either minute poisonous particles suspended in the air or noxious gases. Obviously, these are unhealthy for all road users and pedestrians. But for cyclists there is the need for the lungs to pump at a greater speed to inhale more oxygen to compensate for the greater muscular effort.

However, it's an observed fact that some people react to pollution much sooner and more severely than others. The reason for this is that they're sensitive to one or more of the components of the pollution, including diesel and petrol exhaust fumes, burnt North Sea gas (from boilers in buildings), sulphur dioxide, formaldehyde, dioxins, toluene and cadmium. Your personal sensitivity to these, except the last mentioned, can be established by a simple blood test, called a Lymphocyte Chemical Sensitivity Test. Depending on the degree of sensitivity the test shows up, you may decide not to cycle in the traffic and get your aerobic exercise some other way. The important thing to remember with these pollutants is that the critical exposure level at which anyone is affected seems to vary from individual to individual, and appears to depend on the individual's pre-programmed degree of sensitivity to them. The cadmium present in you can be measured through a good hair mineral analysis (one done by measuring atomic emission and atomic absorption) because this neuro-toxic metal accumulates in your body.

The good news is that there's an effective method, devised by homeopaths in France, called isopathic drainage, which has been shown in controlled experiments to remove specific chemicals and pollutants from your body in a targeted way. Treatment involves taking drops daily for about three months. A multi-vitamin will also mop up a little.

I CAN'T STOP SWEATING

I seem to sweat more heavily than everyone else. All my shoes smell – even leather flip-flops – and my armpits are soaked within an hour or two of getting dressed. I've noticed that it's worse when I'm stressed. I'm conscious of my sweaty hands at work, and the fact that I sometimes smell, and often take a change of clothes with me. I wear loose, natural fibres and wash regularly. Any ideas on what else I could do?

Stephanie Driver advises:

In most cases, sweating is perfectly natural, especially as a result of exercise or hot temperatures, or if something has happened to cause an emotional response (anger, embarrassment, nervousness, fear or anxiety). But how much you sweat and even the way your sweat smells can be influenced by your moods, certain foods and beverages, some drugs and medical conditions, and even by your hormone levels. I would first rule out any medical conditions. Hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid) is known to cause increases in perspiration. Diabetes or hypoglycaemia can cause the sweat to smell sweet. Menopause can also cause increased sweating, due to changes in hormones. Is this the case for you?

If not, you're not alone here. One per cent of the population suffers from hyperhidrosis (excessive sweating), whereby sweat is increased for no apparent reason. To try and minimise this condition, I can offer some simple solutions. First, try a crystal stick natural deodorant to underarms and soles of feet as often as required. Eliminate acid-forming foods (wheat, sugar, dairy, red meat). Sour sweat can indicate that your body is too acidic. Try alfalfa tablets and chlorophyll-type supplements including wheat grass, chlorella, barley grass and spirulina. They work by alkalising the body and thus reducing its acidity.

Reduce or avoid heat-forming foods that increase sweating such as alcohol, tea, coffee, hot spices (ginger, cayenne, pepper) garlic and onions, salsa, vinegar (especially apple cider), red meat, tomatoes, orange juice, cultured foods such as yoghurt and sour cream. At the same time, increase the cooling-type foods that reduce sweating, including pears, bananas, cold potatoes, soda crackers, raw broccoli, kidney beans, tofu, and raw vegetables in general.

The herb sage is helpful in reducing sweating, as are the homeopathic remedies silicea and calcarea carbonica (6C potency, four times daily for two weeks). Acupuncture and

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MEET THE PANEL

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has been a practising medical herbalist since 1988 and now runs Napiers herbal health care in Edinburgh (the UK's largest herbal house), where she specialises in skin problems, arthritis and joint problems. She writes regular articles and columns in newspapers and magazines and has made TV and radio appearances.

DR CAROLINE LONGMORE



worked as a Paediatric Doctor in Paris and for Medicine Sans Frontieres before retraining in naturopathic medicine in the UK. She co-founded Galen Naturopathic Centre in Richmond, Surrey, where she specialises in acupuncture, detox/destress and anti-ageing treatments. Telephone

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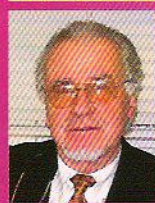
STEPHANIE DRIVER



studied for her Bachelor of Science and Naturopathy in Perth, Western Australia. She has worked in two naturopath clinics near Perth for four years, specialising in nutrition and herbal medicine. She started practice as a senior naturopath at Apotheke 20-20 & Jurlique Day

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HARALD GAIER



is a naturopathic physician with recognition of equivalence to a medical degree in Austria and has a doctorate in naturopathic and botanical medicine. Harald is registered in the UK as an osteopath, naturopath, acupuncturist, medical herbalist and homeopath. He has published

papers on medical research and on the current economics of medicine in the medical literature. He served on the Research Committee of the Prince of Wales' Foundation for Integrated Health for six and a half years and is currenserved on the Research Committee of the Prince of Wales' Foundation for Integrated Health for six and a half years and is currently on the Foundation's Education and Training Committee. Contact: 11 Harley Street, London on 020 7612 9800 or visit drgaier.com

Chinese herbs are also effective as they help to 'clear dampness', calm the nervous system and regulate Qi. Lastly, consider looking at your stress levels – relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, B vitamins and magnesium all support the organs affected by stress.