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•Ask America's Ultimate Experts

Q "Help! I want a natural cure!"

Looking for an alternative to over-the-counter and prescription medications? Read on to discover the best all-natural health solutions for common problems!

Lower your cholesterol!

Trying to lower your number? Natural-medicine expert Chris Kilham, Ph.D., suggests:

Cocoa!

Good news: This sweet treat can lower your "bad" LDL cholesterol by 6 mg./dL while raising your "good" HDL number, reports the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Cocoa's

secret? It's rich in polyphenol compounds that help block absorption of cholesterol and actually expel it from your body, explains Kilham. Try enjoying 1 oz. to 2 oz. of dark chocolate daily. **One to try:** Lindt's Excellence 70% Cocoa Bar, \$3.50 at Lindt.com.

Ease arthritis pain!

Tired of relying on OTC and prescription painkillers? Kilham and nutritionists Jonny Bowden, Ph.D., and Stella Metsovas, B.S., C.N., recommend:

Cat's claw!

This popular Peruvian plant is used by millions of South Americans for relief from arthritis pain. And studies prove they're on to something: The herb's rich supply of unique compounds stops inflammation-causing toxins, reports the *Journal of Natural Products.* Take 500 mg. daily. **One to try:** Nature's Herbs Cat's Claw, \$11.28

for 250 capsules at iHerb.com.

Curcumin!

A recent Italian study found that taking a daily dose of this spice—native to India and found in curry—for three months decreases joint pain by nearly 60% and can cut usage of painkillers by 63%! Credit goes to its ability to

block production of a protein that triggers inflammation. Aim for 400 mg. to 600 mg. daily. **One to try:** GNC Curcumin and Turmeric Extract, \$7.95 for 60 capsules at Amazon.com.

Overcome depression! Rhodiola rosea!

Mildly to moderately depressed folks who were given 680 mg. daily of this herbal extract saw their symptoms dramatically decrease after just six weeks, reports the *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry*. Researchers think it enhances the flow of mood-boosting serotonin through the brain. **One to try:** Nature's Way Rhodiola Rosea, \$11 for 60 capsules at Drugstore.com.

Heal and prevent ulcers!

If you're having ulcer pain or want to ward off future stomach woes, our experts suggest:

Ginger root tea!

This drink is filled with compounds that destroy the ulcer-causing bacteria H. pylori, one study found. Plus, ginger triggers the production of extra mucus in your digestive system, which helps protect your stomach lining. Drink one cup daily.

One to try: Triple Leaf Ginger Root Tea, \$3.10 for 20 bags at SuperSup.com.

Avoid PMS!

When cramping, bloating and irritability strike, our experts suggest skipping meds and sipping:

Skim milk!

Drink four 8-oz. glasses daily the week prior to your period, and you can say goodbye to PMS symptoms, reports the *Archives of Internal Medicine*. Credit goes to



Feeling puffy and uncomfortable? Try popping 1,000 mg. of taurine for two to three days. It'll safely expel excess water from your body, says Bowden. Try: TwinLab Mega Taurine Caps, \$6.74 at Walgreens.com.

> milk's rich supply of calcium, which helps correct the hormone imbalances that can trigger PMS. **More calcium-rich foods:** Try yogurt (240 mg. per 4 oz.), tofu (510 mg. per 4 oz.) or sardines (500 mg. per 4 oz.).

Make menopause easier!

If you're tired of hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings and fatigue, ask your doctor about:

Maca!

This South American root is packed with compounds that help stabilize your body's hormones—preventing hot flashes, vaginal dryness, night sweats, fatigue and more! Aim for 1,500 mg. daily. **One to try:** Andes Organic Maca, \$25 for 60 capsules at Amazon.com.

—Jennifer Leonard

Our expert panel



Chris Kilham, Ph.D., has conducted medicinal research in 20 countries and teaches at the University of Massachusetts. CNN calls him "The Indiana Jones of natural medicine," and he has been featured on Fox News.



"The Rogue Nutritionist" **Jonny Bowden, Ph.D.,** is board-certified by the American College of Nutrition. He's also the author of *The Most Effective Natural Cures on Earth* and has appeared as an expert on MSNBC, CNN and Fox News.



Stella Metsovas, B.S., C.N., a Laguna Beach, California-based certified nutritionist, was recently voted "Best Nutritionist" by CitySearch. She's also been quoted on Fox News, as well as in The New York Times.

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*Note: Talk to your doctor before taking any new supplement.