

Have your questions answered! If you would like to have one of our experts answer your questions, email them to health@acpmagazines.com.au. Your questions will be forwarded to the relevant expert, whose answer will appear in a future issue of *Good Health*. No personal correspondence will be entered into by any of our experts.

Q I'm pregnant and have been warned to avoid cold meats because of listeria. What can I safely eat for lunch?

A Listeria is a food-poisoning bacteria that can be serious for pregnant women, possibly causing miscarriage, premature birth or, in rare cases, stillbirth. To minimise risk:

- 1 Eat foods well within their use-by or best-before dates.
- 2 Eat freshly cooked, steaming hot foods (heating kills listeria).
- 3 Avoid food from salad bars, sandwich bars and buffets.
- 4 Steer clear of cold meats, raw or smoked seafood, pate, pre-packaged salads, soft cheeses as well as soft-serve ice-cream.



At home, use safe food-handling procedures. At work, freshly prepare your lunch and try sandwich combinations like cream cheese, grated carrot and sultanas; avocado, celery, tomato and lettuce; salmon and salad; baked beans and cheese; or peanut butter and banana.



Q Are people on a diet to lose weight more at risk of developing gall stones?

A Yes, particularly if weight loss is rapid. The most likely reason is that the amount of bile salts in bile is reduced, resulting in more cholesterol to form the stone. This is thought to be triggered by long periods without food or very low fat intake.

Bile is produced by the liver and stored in the gall bladder. Stones are formed when the gall bladder is not emptied completely or frequently enough. We need about 10g of fat in a meal or snack to trigger a complete emptying. Gall stones can occur as single large stones or as many smaller ones. It may cause severe pain or be 'silent'.

It's important to eat a meal containing at least 10g of fat twice a day. If you lose weight gradually, you're less likely to develop gall stones. ◊

Q Can diet help with PMS?

A Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) affects up to 75 per cent of women and can be debilitating. It is best to first have a dietitian or doctor assess what you're low on before taking supplements. The following strategies can help with PMS symptoms.

DIET/LIFESTYLE FACTORS	EFFECT
50mg vitamin B6	Improves depression, irritability and fatigue
1-2g evening primrose oil	Reduces breast pain
1200mg calcium	Assists symptoms generally
Small regular meals	Helps control cravings
4g fish oil	Reduces abdominal pain
Low-GI foods	Improves energy levels and stabilises mood
Reducing caffeine permanently	Diminishes irritability
Chocolate (70 per cent cocoa) - 2-4 squares	Reduces pain
Exercise, especially yoga	Decreases stress and general symptoms



Amanda Clark is an advanced accredited practising dietitian with over 20 years' experience. She runs her own Gold Coast-based practice.

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