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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

With naturopath Rumana Zahn

Eat your way to good health

Have you ever thought how food can have an effect on you? In our modern world when things go wrong with our health we turn to medicines to fix our health without realising that foods can often do the trick in some cases.

A new emerging area of functional foods, as the term is now coined, are foods that play a particular role in our health offering us medicinal benefits.

Some of us might already know this but while the science catches up and industry thinks up innovative products, what does this mean?

Take, for instance, probiotic drinks which are full of good gut bacteria. They can help our digestive system perform better and may even influence reduction in cholesterol levels.

We will see many more 'new foods' coming on to the market. Taking heed that we don't get marketed at unnecessarily, the laws are beginning to change to protect us. Yet with the knowledge that foods can have profound effects on our health, research is exploding in this area too.

What about foods that we already have and know about. Would you turn to some foods when your health needs it?

Let's look at the humble plum. Plums are quite well-known for their effects on our digestive systems as a laxative. But did you know that they are one of the highest categorised antioxidant foods?

Particularly the dried version of the plum we call prunes, which is why sometimes they are described as a superfood.

Plums will give our body a helping hand to remove some of the damage we do with

an excess of drinking, eating and stressing out too much. The antioxidants in the fruit are just wonderful.

It's these antioxidants that help our skin look good, keep our immune systems working well and slow down our rate of ageing.

If you don't like eating the fruit itself, you can juice it, or make some apple and plum pudding or take it in a yoghurt and get the benefits of the bacteria too.

Prunes are dried plums, remember, and the laxative effect is stronger when dried. I love the agen prunes which are soft and tasty, a little bit more expensive as they're classified gourmet, however you'll find these in most supermarkets. Try two or three in your breakfast. Delicious!

- Rumana Zahn is a naturopath, nutritionist and medical herbalist.

She is passionate about people taking control and restoring their health through eating natural foods and herbs.

She runs clinics in Newcastle and Yarm and has just launched her online health club. Visit her website www.rumanahealth.com or contact her on 0845 680 1418.

Rumana is a member of the British Register of Complementary Practitioners.



Rumana Zahn extols the virtues of the humble plum



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