



Mum-of-three Dr Philippa works in a busy NHS practice and in private practice

Ask Dr Philippa

Woman's GP Dr Philippa Kaye answers your burning questions in her surgery this week

'Anxiety is ruining my career'

Q I get hugely anxious before job interviews. I become a gibbering wreck, sweating and shaking. Of course, I never get the job, despite knowing I can do it. The rest of the time I am fine, even at work. What can I do?

A Anxiety can be very specific, as you describe. You get flooded with adrenaline, the fight or flight hormone leading to shaking, sweating and feeling sick. Your doctor may be able to

prescribe you a beta blocker called propranolol to stop these physical symptoms, which may help you feel calmer. Propranolol doesn't have to be taken all the time, you could take it just when you need it. It works by blocking the receptors for adrenaline, so you are less likely to be shaky and sweaty – and, if the physical symptoms are removed, you may feel less anxious. Talking therapy and breathing techniques may also be helpful.

'IS MY PIERCING INFECTED?'

Q Recently I had the top of my ear pierced and it just doesn't seem to be healing. It's red and sore and sometimes oozy. Should I take out the piercing?

A It sounds like the piercing has become infected. Your GP will be able to decide what treatment is needed. Sometimes an antibiotic cream is required or an oral antibiotic. Do not remove the piercing unless your GP tells you to, as in some cases leaving the piercing in helps any pus to drain and stops an abscess forming (an abscess is a collection of pus which tends to need draining). So get it checked over! When you have a new piercing, clean it a couple of times a day with surgical spirit. Do this for a few days as it can help prevent an infection occurring.

'Eating is a real struggle'

Q My jaw hurts and feels tense all the time. It's worse when I eat, but I don't think it is a toothache. Should I see my doctor or dentist?

A Start at the dentist to check your teeth and they can also look at the temporomandibular joints, which are your jaw joints. Many people clench or grind their teeth at night, which can also cause joint pain, or the joints can become inflamed. Your dentist may recommend an ibuprofen gel to rub on the joints or, if appropriate, sometimes recommend a mouth guard at night to stop you clenching or grinding. Jaw grinding or clenching can also be associated with headaches and neck pain and may be due to, or worsened by stress, so some exercise and relaxation techniques could help. If your dentist doesn't think there is a dental problem then make an appointment to visit your GP.

'WHY DOES HE NEED THE LOO SO OFTEN?'

Q My husband wakes up five times in the night to go to the toilet. It's driving me mad as he wakes me each time. Help!

A Your husband needs to pop along to his doctor to be checked over, it could be that he has a urinary tract infection, or that his prostate has become enlarged. The prostate is a gland that sits under the bladder and surrounds the urethra which carries urine from the bladder out. If the prostate gland swells it can squeeze the urethra and lead to symptoms like needing to go to the toilet frequently, not being able to start urinating, having poor flow and some dribbling after urinating. Your doctor is likely to examine the prostate, which involves a rectal examination, and he may also recommend a blood test. The enlargement is often benign and can be treated with medication, which aims to shrink the prostate slightly, stopping it from constricting the urethra – and hopefully relieving his symptoms so you can both get some sleep!

*** I'd love to answer any questions you have – don't be shy! Email askdrphilippa@timeinc.com, or write to me at 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP.**

WORDS: KIRA AGASS. PHOTOS: GETTY

3

WAYS TO BOOST YOUR HEALTH THIS WEEK

The scientists have spoken! Try these easy ways to achieve a happier, healthier life...



Try a retreat

Struggling to stay trim? Then try a weight-loss retreat. Slimmeria offers a range of programmes that will help you detox, and slim down along with coastal walks and spa treatments. Sounds good to us! Visit slimmeria.com.

Cluster crazy

Snacking doesn't have to be unhealthy. New Pure Bite Blueberry & Cranberry Popped Rice Clusters (£1.49 for 20g, ilovebite.co) are high in fibre and low in fat. And the bite-sized baked treats are only 80 calories.



Under pressure

Almost half of us monitor our step count, but just one in seven adults check their heart health. The Braun iCheck 7 (£99.99, boots.com) allows you to measure your blood pressure in seconds.

