



**Health, beauty & fitness**

**Ask the pharmacist**

**TOO BUSY** to see the GP? Angela Chalmers, Boots' expert pharmacist from their flagship Oxford Street store, answers your health queries. This week's complaint: mouth ulcers

**What are they?**  
 MOUTH ulcers are caused by a break in the mucous membrane that lines the inside of the mouth and may also accompany viral or bacterial infections. They are normally white or yellow in colour and are often painful, causing discomfort when eating or drinking. Mouth ulcers mostly occur in the inner cheek, inner lip, soft palate, on the tongue and occasionally in the throat.

They can be caused by stress, illness or accidental damage from over-zealous tooth brushing or hot food and drink, and can also occur if you are suffering from a vitamin B or C deficiency. If you have a mouth ulcer that isn't healing or you are suffering from recurring ulcers, seek advice from your GP.

**How can I reduce the pain?**  
 GARGLING and swallowing soluble paracetamol is an effective method of pain relief, while rinsing the mouth with iced water before a meal can make eating less painful. Pastilles and gels containing anaesthetic are easy to use and can provide temporary relief when applied to the ulcer. For a natural remedy try rinsing the mouth with cooled chamomile tea before swallowing.



**Products you can try:**  
 ● **Frador (£2.49)** is an anti-ulcer treatment with disposable applicators, so sufferers can pinpoint the ulcer core and treat it without risk of further infection.  
 ● For fast-acting pain relief try a soothing gel such as **Bonjela (£2.27)**.  
 ● **Boots Sustained Release Vitamin B Complex (£6.55)** may help defend against mouth ulcers by maintaining a healthy nervous and immune system.



**THE FRESHLY BAGGED UP AND CALORIE**

**Dial a diet delivered right to your door**

**I** CRAWL out of bed, head thumping and kidneys aching from another weekend of excess and try to avoid all mirrors on my way to the shower. It's more than three weeks into the new year and I should be on some sort of health kick.

Instead, I'm shattered, I haven't touched fruit or veg in days, I can't remember when I last set foot in the gym, and my skin looks like day-old porridge.

After a long day at work I can never be bothered to steam bok choy. It's far simpler to have cheese on crumpets. And I find getting to the office on time hard enough without spending precious minutes preparing a vitamin-packed fruit salad breakfast. It's easier to grab a bagel.

I've always envied stars who have their perfectly nutritionally balanced meals delivered every day to their film-set trailers. But now, we humble workaday Londoners can dine like a celebrity with The Pure Package, a programme designed to

**BY JANE MULKERRINS**

The dishes come in ready meal-style plastic trays so you can eat at your desk and the dinners can be microwaved, or oven-cooked in 20 minutes.

I wanted to kick-start my new health regime and hopefully lose a bit of festive weight. The qualified nutritionist at The Pure Package took me through health, diet and lifestyle questions in order to design my programme. I don't eat meat, so making sure I would have enough protein and essential fatty acids took a bit of thinking about, but I was assured I'd get all I

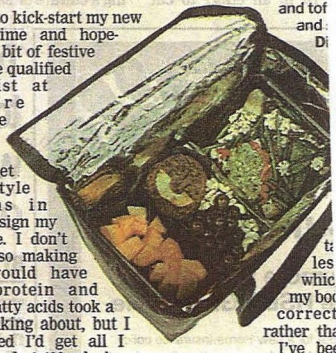
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**Day two**

**Breakfast:** fresh bread and hazelnut

**Lunch:** orzo and tofu and of

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