

# Breakspear Medical Bulletin

## Notes on the benefits of organic foods

**Organic food:** food that has been produced to strict standards designed to limit chemicals and pesticides.

Many patients who have food and chemical sensitivities report being intolerant to non-organic food.

As long ago as the late 1980s the

House of Commons Agriculture Committee, chaired by Sir Richard Body, reported the findings of increased pesticide responses in patients who attended the Department of Allergy and Environmental Medicine at the Lister Hospital in London.



Laboratory results have shown that many patients who are sensitive to numerous foods suffer from pesticide, herbicide, fungicide or fertiliser exposures and the resulting metabolic effects.

Doctors and nutritionists at Breakspear have found that patients often benefit from switching to an organic diet.

When choosing between organic and non-organic foods, many shoppers ask, "Is organic better?"

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Offering ways to help with weight management

Dr Prem Bajaj is introducing a special approach to weight management at Breakspear that combines acupuncture, cognitive behavioural therapy and auto-relaxation.

About 60% of adults and 20% of school children in the European Union are overweight

or obese. This is an increase of 10-15% within the last decade.

It is predicted that half the UK population will be clinically obese within 20 years.

Being overweight or obese is defined as having an excess ratio of body fat to body mass.



**It is predicted that half the UK population will be clinically obese within 20 years.**

One's fat to mass ratio can be calculated using the body mass index (BMI), also known as the Quetelet index. One is

considered overweight if one's BMI is between 25 and 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and obese when it is greater than 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. (See formula to calculate your BMI on page 4.)

In the United States, a range of 7- 41% of cancers, such as colon, liver, breast, endometrium, pancreas and kidney, are attributed to obesity.

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## On the market: goji berry supplement

For years, goji berries have been topping super food lists, as they contain beta-carotene, thought to help prevent heart disease, highly concentrated vitamin C, polysaccharides to help the immune system, and amino acids.

Grown in the Himalayan mountain valleys, dried



goji berries are a deep red and about the same size as raisins. They are available in many grocery stores as well as health food stores.

Nature's Answer Goji (Wolfberry Supreme) liquid supplement is on special offer at Breakspear Pharmacy. Buy 1 bottle and get the second one half price, while stocks last.

## Introducing Dr Dee Marshall

In Spring 2012, Dr Dee Marshall joined the Breakspear Medical team part-time.

Dr Marshall's interest in Nutritional-Environmental medicine began after she saw one of her children get better using a simple dietary intervention, where conventional treatment had not managed to help him.

The more she looked into different approaches to health, and why people get ill, the more she



In Spring 2012, Dr Dee Marshall joined the Breakspear Medical team part-time.

developed a different understanding of how to deal with illness.

Dr Marshall says, "Looking at how we are affected by lifestyle, by the food we eat and the environment we live in

seems an obvious way of getting to the real causes of chronic illness. It allows for an approach which is supportive of the body's own healing mechanisms by dealing with problems such as digestive disorders, deficiencies, pollutants, infections and allergies."

Dr Marshall qualified in Medicine at Newcastle University Medical School. She subsequently trained in Medical Homoeopathy at the Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital (now the Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine) and completed the exams required to qualify as a Member of the Faculty of Homeopathy. She also studied Classical Homeopathy with the Purton House School of Homeopathy.

A long-term interest in nutrition and health led to more formalised training in Nutritional-Environmental Medicine through membership of the British Society for Ecological Medicine, whose meetings and lectures she attends regularly as ongoing education.

Prior to working at Breakspear, Dr Marshall ran her own practice in Environmental Medicine and Homeopathy in Maidenhead, Berkshire.

Dr Marshall finds the combination of nutritional and environmental approaches gives her an understanding of conventional diagnosis and management, while offering a holistic approach to treatment.

### Breakspear Medical Bulletin

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## Ask Dr Basant Puri

**I've been told that I have a vitamin B12 deficiency. Could you explain what this means and how I can increase my levels?**

The main symptoms of vitamin B12 deficiency are:

- fatigue (extreme tiredness)
- lethargy (lack of energy)
- dyspnoea (breathlessness)
- faintness
- headache
- a decline in mental abilities, such as memory, understanding and judgement.

In our diets, the source of this vitamin is food that is of animal origin, such as meat, fish and dairy products.



From a clinical point of view, deficiency of either vitamin B12 or folic acid may be associated with the development of megaloblastic anaemia, which is a condition where normal red blood cell production is impaired, resulting in the patient becoming deficient in healthy red blood cells. A major function of red blood cells is to carry oxygen in the blood to cells throughout the body.

To answer the second part of your question, cobalamin is biosynthesised, which means it is naturally processed into more complex products in our bodies, by micro-organisms. In our diets, the source of this vitamin is food that is of animal

Over time, a vitamin B12 deficiency may be associated with:

- heart disease
- certain types of cancer
- Alzheimer's
- fibromyalgia
- stroke
- chronic depression.

The technical name for vitamin B12 is cobalamin. There are several different chemical forms of cobalamin. The natural forms include: 2-deoxyadenosyl (ado) -, methyl- and hydroxo-cobalamin. Adocobalamin is the main form found naturally and is present in mitochondria, which is the part of the cell essential to creating energy for the body.

Methylcobalamin is found in the cytosol, which is the gel-like substance inside cells, and blood plasma, which is the liquid component of blood that suspends blood cells. It is an important component for methionine synthase. Methionine synthase is an enzyme (a natural catalyst), which is used by the human body in important reactions.

In conjunction with various types of folic acid, vitamin B12 is involved in many important methylation reactions, which are essential for maintaining energy and health. These body processes include synthesis of DNA, and development of red blood cells and of the insulation sheath (the myelin sheath) that surrounds nerve cells and aids the conduction of signals in the nervous system.

origin, such as meat, fish and dairy products. For this reason, a strict vegan diet will not contain vitamin B12 unless one eats vegetables and fruit, nuts and seeds which are not properly cleaned and which have been contaminated by bacteria. In general, it would be advisable for strict vegans to consider vitamin B12 supplementation.

Most cases of vitamin B12 and folate deficiency are easily treated. Supplements of vitamin B12 can be given by injection at first, followed by tablets until the deficiency is under control. For example, at Breakspear, some patients are prescribed methylcobalamin, which they can easily self-administer (after being shown how to do so the first time) by injection just under the skin.

Severe depletion manifests as pernicious anaemia, which is a disease that interferes with the body's ability to absorb vitamin B12. Historically, pernicious anaemia was invariably fatal until the discovery of vitamin B12 in liver in the 1920s. Early symptoms may include fatigue, low blood pressure, depression and muscle weakness while long-term complications may include gastric cancer and carcinoid.

But long before anaemia sets in, other conditions may manifest, most often neurological problems such as numbness, pins-and-needles sensations, a burning feeling in the feet, shaking, muscle fatigue, sleep disorders, memory loss, irrational anger, impaired mental function and Alzheimer's disease, or psychological conditions such as dementia, depression, psychosis and obsessive-compulsive behaviour.

## Offering ways to help with weight management

(Continued from page 1)

In the western world, where starvation is not an issue for most, people's lifespan has been lengthened. However at the same time, modern day antibiotics, inducing hormones and easily accessible and inexpensive processed food have contributed to the incidence of obesity, as well as obesity-related causes of death.

In the USA, from the period 1970 to 1997, there was more than a 200% increase in consumption of soft drinks and potatoes. There was also a 1240% increase in the consumption of fructose corn syrup, which is chemically similar to table sugar.

As well as affecting general health, obesity is also an accelerated form of ageing.

Abdominal obesity, which is defined as a waist circumference greater than 89 centimetres for women and 115 centimetres for men, statistically increases the risk of heart failure, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, raised cholesterol, obstructive sleep apnoea (abnormal pauses in breathing during sleep), stroke, osteoarthritis, cancers, and mortality from all causes.

As many people know, losing weight is difficult. While reducing intake of food and exercising is the standard formula for losing weight, many people find it difficult to succeed, even with the help of a counsellor.

Alternative methods, including pharmacotherapy (using drugs) and bariatric surgery (stomach bypassing, gastric banding or removal of part of the stomach), have become popular but both methods are associated with many risks and potential complications.

An important factor to consider when addressing weight management is the circadian rhythm. The circadian rhythm is the cyclic pattern of rest and activity followed by the organs, systems and cells. For example, stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol, are naturally released in the early morning to help promote physical

activity, while the sleep-inducing hormone, melatonin, is secreted in response to darkness.

Along with sleeping patterns, the circadian rhythm also regulates appetite and metabolic patterns. Disruption to the rhythm can affect production of certain appetite-related genes and hormones, which affects metabolism and insulin production. One hormone that is known to be

affected by disruption of the rhythm is leptin, which is produced by fat cells and inhibits appetite.

Appetite control is the standard key to successful weight loss. Becoming overweight is often caused by a mismatch between the expected pleasure gained from consuming, compared to the actual energy required from food.

Dr Bajaj believes that ego-strengthening suggestions during auto-relaxation are therefore an important part of

obesity intervention. The British Medical Association also recognises the role of this in obesity treatment programmes.

Ego strengthening helps with both the biological and psychological factors responsible for excessive weight. Therefore a combination of acupuncture treatment with auto-relaxation and cognitive behavioural therapy helps many people manage their weight.

During auto-relaxation, patients can self-administer instructions for effective behaviours as alternatives to overeating. Ego strengthening helps to provide new, alternative strategies to combat eating excessively.

A recent acupuncture study (Lien CY et al. 2012) showed that after 4 weeks of ear acupuncture treatment, significant reductions in body weight, BMI and waist circumferences were reported, along with the release of the ghrelin hormone from the stomach, which is attributed with sending signals of fullness and satisfaction to the brain.

*If you would like to make a weight loss programme appointment with Dr Prem Bajaj, telephone Reception 01442 261 333 Option 3.*

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{mass (kg)}}{\text{height (m)}^2}$$



## New thoughts on Lyme borreliosis testing



According to figures on the Health Protection Agency (HPA) website, in 2011, 972 cases of Lyme borreliosis (LB) were identified in England and Wales residents, which is an incident rate of 1.75/100,000 in total population. This compares with 905 cases and an incident rate of 1.64/100,000 in 2010.

In May 2012, the HPA issued a public letter announcing that the HPA Lyme disease laboratory and clinical support was to be located at the Rare & Imported Pathogens Laboratory, Porton Down, starting 1 June 2012.

Before diagnostic tests are requested from Porton, a patient's risk of exposure to ticks is to be assessed and the clinical history evaluated for features compatible with LB. The HPA states, "Tests should not be requested if there is no significant risk of a patient having Lyme borreliosis".

Although screening tests for LB will continue to be the responsibility of local and regional laboratories, a new confirmatory immunoblot has been introduced at Porton. The new test is a strip blot with fully automated processing of the strips: detecting the intensity of the bands, which indicate the patient's antibody levels, and accurately comparing this with the control cutoff. The previous Western blot was read by hand: subjectively separating and judging varying shades of grey.

The immunoblot test is a very important tool in diagnosing LB, particularly in the early stages, when it is easier to treat.

Think of LB as having 3 categories of infection: acute, early disseminated and chronic.

Depending on the stage of development, not all patients will have antibodies at all times when tested, which can make test results misleading and therefore diagnosis difficult, particularly in the later stages.

At Breakspear, in order to diagnose difficult cases, several laboratory tests may be used, including the LTT (lymphocyte transformation test) MELISA (memory lymphocyte stimulation assay) which differs from ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay) and Western blot.

During the LTT MELISA, a foreign antigen, which is part of the Lyme bacterium, is added to the patient's blood sample and the degree of lymphocytic reaction is measured. This test is used in measuring disease activity and is useful



The clinical signs of LB listed on the Health Protection Agency website are:

- Erythema migrans (a pink or red rash spreading from the site of a tick bite), which appears about 3-30 days after a tick bite).
- Nonspecific flu-like symptoms with tiredness, headaches, arthralgia (joint pains) and myalgia (muscle aches).
- Neuroborreliosis (infection of the nervous system) is the commonest complication of LB. Neuroborreliosis can cause facial palsy (weakness or paralysis of the muscles on one or both sides of the face), viral-like meningitis, pain, weakness or altered sensation of limbs or trunk, or other symptoms.
- Lyme arthritis, which usually affects the knee, is rare in patients with UK-acquired infection, but is more common when the disease is acquired in North America or some parts of Europe.
- Other complications affecting the heart, eye and other organs and tissues are rare.
- A small proportion of patients who have had LB may go on to develop a post-infection syndrome resembling chronic fatigue syndrome or fibromyalgia, which has been termed 'post-Lyme syndrome'. Similar symptoms can be triggered by a number of other infectious and non-infectious conditions.

for patients whose immune system fails to identify, and therefore neutralise, these harmful bacteria, which results in their antibody levels being low, resulting in a seemingly negative test result. It is also a useful test where LB is not present in the blood but in the deep tissue.

Multi-peptide ELISA is a test that is looking for antibodies to the Borrelia antigen. This test is assessing whether the body is producing enough of an immunity reaction to fight the infection and also tests for different related subspecies, which may thrive when the immune system is compromised while dealing with LB.

An IGeneX test can be performed to test for co-

*(Continued on page 6)*



## New thoughts on Lyme borreliosis testing

(Continued from page 5)

infections, which may have been transmitted through a tick bite.

As the risk of LB infection in the UK is increasing, all precautionary measures should be taken to avoid exposure. Diagnosis requires extensive evaluation of a patient's medical history and current symptoms in addition to laboratory tests. The earlier the infection is detected and treated, the higher the likelihood of success.

## Notes on the benefits of organic foods

(Continued from page 1)

Non-organic crops may be treated with a commonly-used class of pesticides called organophosphates, which contain neurotoxins that are damaging to the brain and nerve cells.

Aside from the regulated farming techniques, which ban most artificial fertilisers and pesticides, there is research that concludes that organic produce is more nutritious than non-organic.



"I do not see why people cannot see organic really is better for us. Not only for the environment but for human health." - *The Prince of Wales*

as "organic" by the Soil Association (the UK's leading membership charity governing foods that can be classified as organic) will not contain

According to research done by McCance and Widdowson for Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Publications, the general mineral depletion in foods between 1940 – 1991 has been shown to be gross – often depletions of more than 50%.

There are many studies that conclude that non-organic food has the same nutritional value as organic. However, the method that they use to determine this has been questioned.

According to a study published in 1993,<sup>1</sup> "Organic food was compared with commercially produced foods. The average elemental concentration in organic foods on a fresh weight basis was found to be about twice that of commercial foods".

As pointed out in a recent article, 'Organic's salad days are over' in the Daily Telegraph 5 September 2012, "...every time a report championing organic is published, a rival comes out to debunk it."

The article states that there is one particular range of organic food which is increasing in sales while overall sales of organic are dropping and

that is baby food. "...of the 430 baby food products on sale in Tesco, 228 are organic." Because children's growing brains and smaller bodies are far more susceptible to toxins than adults', it is not surprising that many parents have concerns.

As well as containing fewer chemicals from pesticides and fertilisers, foods that are approved

hydrogenated fats, controversial additives like aspartame, tartrazine and MSG (monosodium glutamate) and/or genetically-modified crops or ingredients.

There are also restrictions on the use of antibiotics, synthetic hormones and drugs that animals reared for meat receive.

The Soil Association website states that "Organic farms are havens for wildlife and provide homes for bees, birds and butterflies. In fact, plant, insect and bird life is up to 50% greater on organic farms." This higher quantity of surrounding wildlife may be in part due to reduced chemical pollution in the surrounding water systems.

In 1986, the Prince of Wales converted the Duchy Home Farm to a completely organic system to demonstrate the environmental and commercial benefits. Prince Charles has stated, "I do not see why people cannot see organic really is better for us. Not only for the environment but for human health."

1. Smith BL. Organic foods vs supermarket foods: element levels. J Appl Nutr. 1993;45:35-9.

## Recommended recipe



Angelette Müller

Nuts, seeds, grains and legumes are all plant seeds, and are packed full of nutrients.

While some people shy away from nuts because of their high fat content, nuts help satisfy hunger and give energy, as well as containing a variety of important vitamins and minerals. As well as tasting good, the fat contained in nuts is mostly unsaturated fats, some of which actually helps decrease the level of “bad” LDL cholesterol and maintain the desirable levels of “good” HDL cholesterol.

Nuts can act as antioxidants and even play a role in repairing genetic material (DNA). They also a low glycaemic index (GI) food, which supports better blood sugar regulation.

In this recipe the blanched nuts are soaked to make them softer, creamier and milder. Soaking is also a way to reduce the phytates (phytic acids). Once in our bodies, phytates can bind with a number of nutrients, such as zinc, iron, calcium, and magnesium, which results in reduction of their absorption. These minerals are needed for strong bones and teeth, and overall health.

Enjoy this herb nut spread on any breads, crackers, rice cakes or celery, mixed with noodles, or even by the spoonful.

### References

Kumar V, Sinha AK, Makkar HPS, and Becker K. Dietary roles of phytate and phytase in human nutrition: a review. Food Chemistry, 2010: 945-9.

## Recipe

### appeal to readers

Do you have some favourite recipes that you'd like to share with other people who have common food allergies/sensitivities?

Email your recipes to the editor:  
**cmonro@breakspearmedical.com** or  
 send a copy in the post to the clinic,  
 Attn: CN Monro.

## Herb nut spread

Free from dairy and grains



### Ingredients

- 160 grams blanched almonds (soaked overnight)
- 90 millilitres water
- juice of ½-1 lemon
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1-2 cloves fresh minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped chives and parsley
- ½ teaspoon xanthum gum (optional)
- ½ teaspoon probiotics or 1 teaspoon grain-free *live* miso (optional)

### Method

1. Blend soaked almonds, water and lemon juice using a high-speed blender until smooth.
2. Add remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly. You may wish to use muslin cheese cloth to squeeze excess water out.
3. Transfer mixture to ring mould to shape the herb nut spread and push down contents to create a flattened surface. Remove ring mould gently. (Alternatively, you can use a rolling pin and a cookie-cutter.)
4. If you have added probiotics, you can leave the spread overnight in fridge to develop flavour.



## New thoughts on poor teeth brushing and cancer

**Dental plaque, which is made up of a film of bacteria covering the surface of teeth and gums, is a potential source of infection and has been previously implicated in systemic health problems.**

A Swedish study, published on [bmjopen.bmj.com](http://bmjopen.bmj.com) earlier this year, concluded that an increased amount of dental plaque has been linked to premature death from cancer.

The study examined 1390 randomly selected healthy young Swedes followed up from 1985 to 2009. The subjects all underwent oral clinical examination and answered a questionnaire assessing background variables such as socioeconomic status and smoking.



Of the 1390 participants, 58 had died by the time of the follow-up, 35 as a result of cancer. The amount of dental plaque found in those who had died compared with that in survivors was statistically significant.

The types of cancer found in men were more widely scattered, while breast cancer was the most frequent cause of death in women.

The authors write, "Based on the present findings, the high bacterial load on tooth surfaces and in gingival pockets over prolonged time may indeed play a role in carcinogenesis [initiation of cancer formation]." The researchers caution that further research is required to determine whether there is any causal element in the observed association.

## Evidence of changes in health complaints after removal of dental amalgam

A study by the University of Bergen, Norway, published in the *Journal of Oral Rehabilitation* 2011, was conducted to investigate whether removal of all amalgam fillings was associated with long-term changes in health complaints in a group of patients who attributed their health complaints to amalgam fillings.

The study divided the subjects into 2 groups. The treatment group had all amalgam fillings replaced with other restorative materials. Follow-ups took place 3 months, 12 months and 36 months after the removal of the fillings. The reference group had no intervention.

The subjective health complaints were measured by numeric rating scales in both groups. The analysis showed that the treatment group had significant reductions in intra-oral and general health complaints from inclusion into the study to the 36 month follow-up. The reference group changes during the same period were not significant.

The researchers concluded that the mechanism behind the results needs to be identified, as other factors beyond the reduced exposure to dental amalgams, such as patient-centred treatment and follow-ups, and elimination of worry, may have influenced the results.

### About dental amalgams

*Extracted from  
Breakspear Medical Bulletin, Issue 11.*

Dental amalgams (silver fillings) came into use in the 1800s.

Still used today, high quality amalgam has high silver content and low mercury content. Poor quality amalgam has low silver content and high mercury content. This type tends to corrode easily and release additional mercury more easily. Lower grade amalgam is generally used due to low cost of the material.

If one chooses to replace dental amalgam, the materials used for replacing the fillings should be as biocompatible as possible. Most commonly used and the most generally affordable materials are composite resins (which are basically plastics) and glass ionomers. Other materials include gold and porcelain. Porcelain is the most inert material, but it is also expensive.



## Notes on the amino acid carnitine

Michele Kingston BSc (Nutritional Medicine),  
mBANT

The amino acid carnitine is both produced by the body and absorbed from foods. It has several functions, but of primary importance is its role in energy metabolism.

Carnitine transports fatty acids into the power house of the cell, called mitochondria, to be broken down by a process known as oxidation and then used for making energy.

The production of carnitine occurs primarily in the kidneys, liver and brain from the essential amino acids lysine and methionine. Vitamin C (ascorbic acid), ferrous iron, pyridoxine and niacin are also essential for the synthesis of carnitine.

Levels of carnitine in the body are primarily maintained by absorption from dietary sources such as lean meat, fish and dairy products, and by re-absorption by the kidneys and synthesis in the body. Consequently, a nutrient-rich diet that provides these vitamins and minerals is critical to maintain energy production. Exercise has also been shown to increase the synthesis of carnitine, as the body naturally increases production as energy is used.

As the major dietary sources of carnitine are animal products, strict vegetarians and vegans obtain very little from their diet. In these cases, the body will synthesise more than 90% of the required carnitine, whereas in an omnivore 75% will come from the diet.

There are many conditions that may benefit from L-carnitine supplementation, including cardiovascular disease, liver disease, low sperm count and motility, anorexia and hyperlipidaemia.

There is also some evidence indicating that carnitine may be beneficial in treating obesity and improving glucose tolerance by preventing mitochondrial overload from excess carbohydrates or fats.

L-carnitine supplementation has also been used with good results in patients with chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS).



**Amino acids** - used in every cell in the body, amino acids are the building blocks of proteins and are essential for most bodily functions. There are many different kinds of amino acids; some are produced by the body and others must be taken in as food. Food-sourced amino acids are called "essential".

One study found a statistically significant correlation between raising serum carnitine levels by supplementation and reduction in

...a nutrient-rich diet that provides these vitamins and minerals is critical to maintain energy production. Exercise has also been shown to increase the synthesis of carnitine.

fatigue symptoms.<sup>1</sup> The study's authors hypothesised that carnitine worked by improving mitochondrial dysfunction, which is a

common dysfunction in CFS patients.

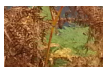
However, other studies have contradicted this finding, stating that serum carnitine deficiency does not contribute to, or cause, the symptoms in many CFS patients. Further studies are required to challenge this inconsistency, but it is clear from clinical observation that many individual CFS patients do benefit from L-carnitine supplementation.

When supplementing with carnitine, L-carnitine is the preferred form because it is biologically active, unlike the D-carnitine form. Also, it is important that doses are divided throughout the day between meals, as the digestive tract can absorb only up to 2 grams of carnitine at one time, and therefore there is no advantage in supplementing more than this amount.

It is important to seek medical advice before supplementing with carnitine, particularly in cases where there is a suspected inability to metabolise fatty acids.

For more information about carnitine, please ask your doctor or nutritionist directly.

1. Plioplys AV. Plioplys S. Serum levels of carnitine in chronic fatigue syndrome: clinical correlates. Neuropsychobiology. 1995;32(3):132-8.



## Did you know...?



### An apple a day may keep allergy away

A study published in Clinical and Experimental Allergy 2010 investigated the possibility of the immune system being modulated with nutrition to prevent the development, or to treat the symptoms, of allergy.

The researchers used a polyphenol-enriched apple extract either during sensitisation or just before the challenge. After the challenge, allergic symptoms were scored using various methods, such as a multiplex assay and gene expression profile in the intestine.

The researchers concluded that the apple extract can reduce food allergy symptoms in sensitised mice via two distinct possible mechanisms.

### Early exposure to germs may build immunity

According to labnews.co.uk May 2012, "Researchers in America have provided the first evidence to support the hygiene hypothesis - the idea that exposing people to germs at an early age will build up their immunity."

By studying the immune system of mice, the researchers found that germ-free mice had exaggerated inflammation of the lungs and colon resembling asthma and colitis, while exposing mice to microbes during the first few weeks led to a normalised immune system.

### Nuts may improve abdominal obesity, high blood sugar and high blood pressure

According to a University of Barcelona study published in November 2011, various conditions may be improved by consuming raw, unpeeled mixed nuts, such as walnuts, almonds and hazelnuts.

During the 12-week study, 22 men and women with a high risk of heart disease received 1 ounce of mixed nuts daily and were compared to a group of 20 subjects who avoided nuts for the same period of time.

The scientists analysed the broad spectrum of compounds excreted in the patients' urine and found evidence of several healthful changes.

One surprise was evidence that nut consumption had boosted patients' levels of serotonin metabolites in urine, since these findings suggest the role of serotonin in the beneficial effects of nuts. Serotonin is a substance that helps transmit nerve signals and decreases feelings of hunger, makes people feel happier and improves heart health.

### Cranberry juice fights bacterial infection

Cranberries are a rich source of proanthocyanidins, a type of antioxidant flavonoid, and studies have suggested that the compound lends cranberry juice its infection-fighting properties.

American research at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Massachusetts, has been studying cranberry juice as a possible alternative to antibiotics to fight urinary tract infections (UTIs). Evidence has been found to suggest that, along with killing E. coli bacteria, the juice may also create an energy barrier that keeps the bacteria from getting close to the urinary tract lining in the first place.



**Ticks will source food from you, your children and your pet.**

### Newspaper reports on Tony Bent's fight against Lyme disease

Breakspear patient Tony Bent, 38, told his story of battling with Lyme disease to the Thurrock Gazette 16 July 2012.

The story started 5 years ago when Mr Bent was a healthy man out walking his dog and was bitten by a Lyme borreliosis-infected tick. Over the next few years, he became chronically fatigued, developed an inflamed heart, multiple food and chemical sensitivities, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and a disorder of the nervous system.

After being diagnosed at Breakspear in March 2012, Mr Bent has received treatment and hopes to be able to return to work soon.

## Available at our Pharmacy



After 3 years of the online shop looking the same, earlier this year we made some changes, including organising the products into new categories, and adding special offers.

Don't worry! The functions are (nearly) all the same; it is still easy to use, whether you are ordering items to be shipped directly or you wish to collect your order at the Pharmacy, picked, packed and waiting for you to collect at a time suitable for you.

Visit Breakspear Pharmacy's online shop anytime of the day or night to order and pay securely for all the Pharmacy items available.

[www.breakspearmedical.com/shop](http://www.breakspearmedical.com/shop)

## Help us to help you

### by completing our new patient satisfaction questionnaire

We would be grateful if you would take a few minutes to complete our new, more in-depth patient satisfaction questionnaire in order to help us improve our service to you in the future.

#### We will be using your feedback to help us improve

At Breakspear, we work hard to make your time with us as relaxed, informative and as trouble-free as possible. We are continually striving to improve our standards and we are committed to providing an ever-improving service.

One of the ways to make sure we are providing the best levels of service is to ask for feedback from existing patients.

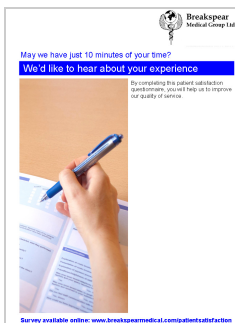
Each of the questionnaires will be reviewed and investigations will be performed to ensure that any concerns are dealt with promptly, fairly and objectively.

Using the information from the completed surveys, an annual patient satisfaction report is completed, which helps us evaluate our patient services.

#### We welcome all comments

The new patient satisfaction questionnaire is estimated to take 10 minutes to complete. Completed forms may be left at Reception or sealed, stamped and posted back.

If you feel a particular member of staff or service at the clinic deserves a compliment, please let



us know by either telling a member of staff or writing a summary in the space provided at the end of the questionnaire.

#### How to find a form

Forms are available at Reception or from any member of staff. A completable pdf is available online:

[www.breakspearmedical.com/patientsatisfaction](http://www.breakspearmedical.com/patientsatisfaction)

*Forms may be completed anonymously. No personal information will be released to any other party.*

### Latest questionnaire report

The patient satisfaction questionnaire report - 2011 stated the following:

- 38% of respondents were recommended to attend Breakspear by a friend or family member.
- On average over the last 3 years, 64% of respondents have been female.
- For the 5th consecutive year, 100% of respondents said "Yes" when asked if they would recommend Breakspear Medical Group.
- The Nursing Care received very high patient satisfaction ratings. Some of the respondents named specific nurses to whom they were grateful.



## Important information for Breakspear patients

### Reminder of 12 month consultation limit

To adhere to national healthcare regulations, Breakspear Medical Group has a policy which requires patients receiving prescriptions to attend an in-person follow-up consultation at least every 12 months. This visit ensures that the patient's progress is monitored and reviewed, providing the opportunity to make adjustments, and/or address additional symptoms or new conditions, if required.

If more than 12 months have passed since the last consultation, the next consultation will be booked and charged as a "new patient consultation", which necessitates additional time and further expense for the patient.

In order to renew prescriptions and/or order nutritional products, patients must meet the annual consultation requirement. Prescriptions cannot be processed if more than 12 months pass without a patient attending a consultation.

### How to save on low-dose immunotherapy

It is a fact that reorders of antigen vaccines are subject to value added tax (VAT) of 20%.

However, if a patient attends the clinic for low-dose immunotherapy testing, or re-testing, the associated prescribed antigen vaccines are VAT exempt. That means that, depending on the size on the reorder, the money saved in VAT may pay for a re-testing session.

For many patients, re-testing is recommended every 3 to 6 months, or as soon as associated or new symptoms occur.

All low-dose immunotherapy vaccine reorders submitted by the patient whilst not at the clinic for testing/re-testing must be presented on an antigen vaccine order form. The Antigen Laboratory is no longer able to accept orders by telephone. The order form is available from staff at the clinic or online:

**[www.breakspearmedical.com/antigenvaccineorderform](http://www.breakspearmedical.com/antigenvaccineorderform)**

### How to update your personal details

If your address, name or general practitioner has changed or is changing, please complete and return a "Change of patient details form" to ensure that our records are up to date.

Forms are available at Reception or online:

**[www.breakspearmedical.com/changeofpersonaldetailsform](http://www.breakspearmedical.com/changeofpersonaldetailsform)**

### Changes to appointment times and fee structure

In response to patient feedback and review, appointment times and fee structure have been changed and the new prices are effective immediately. The changes are minor and should not affect current patients significantly. Please refer to the New Appointment Fee Structures 2012 leaflet or speak to a member of Accounts staff, who will explain how the recent changes affect you.

## Bulletin board

### Christmas holidays closing

Breakspear will be closed for the Christmas holidays from 5:00pm on Friday 21 December 2012 and reopen 9:00am on Wednesday 2 January 2013.

### Employees of the months

As announced earlier this year, Breakspear Medical Group introduced an employee of the month programme to recognise employees who 'go that extra mile'.

The latest recipients are:

- May: Marion Wood, Antigen Laboratory
- June: Janis Davies, Accounts
- July: Paul White, Medical Records
- August: Avril Harris, Clinical Team, and Margaret Schwartz, Medical Secretaries

Congratulations to all the winners!



### Our new promotional video online

As many of you know, a film crew visited Breakspear earlier this year and produced a video about what goes on at Breakspear.

Visit our homepage to view the 11 minute video:

**[www.breakspearmedical.com](http://www.breakspearmedical.com)**