



HIGHLIGHTS

Can vitamin D help your body fight Covid-19?

This vitamin is particularly important to the immune system (At-home tests available to detect deficiencies.)

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Which face mask should I wear?

Pros & cons of various masks with regard to Covid-19.

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Mental health support for you & your family

Psychological counsellor Daniel Segal is offering his services via Skype.

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He has a career, a young family & enjoys Djing while

Living with multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS)

Francesco Cenci is a long-time patient of Breakspear Medical who believes that low-dose immunotherapy is the key to maintaining his successful career & busy life. He shares his story of his journey from Italy to Breakspear Medical to give hope to other MCS sufferers.

My name is Francesco Cenci, I am from Rome, Italy and I have multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS), food allergies, electrical sensitivity and chronic fatigue. I will tell you a little about my life so that you can understand why I believe the treatment that I receive at Breakspear Medical is fundamental for my well-being. When I was 21 years old, I had everything going for me. I enjoyed

competitive swimming, played in a band, had a girlfriend, and I was studying sociology and computer programming at university. Everything was great.

Then I decided to travel to and explore South America and before going, I had three travel vaccinations: hepatitis A and B, and typhoid. (I found out later that the typhoid vaccine was one that was

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CORONAVIRUS SPECIAL

See page 2.

CORONAVIRUS SPECIAL



Boost your immunity to

Help your body fight Covid-19

The name “Covid-19” is derived from ‘Corona Virus Disease 2019’. It was first identified in December 2019, in Wuhan, China, and has spread rapidly, in part because nobody had immunity and it has become a global pandemic.

Coronaviruses are a group of related viruses which cause diseases in different species and cause mild to lethal respiratory and gastrointestinal illness in humans and some animals. Covid-19 is a type of coronavirus and common symptoms include a fever, dry cough, shortness of breath and fatigue.

Distance yourself at least 2 metres away from other people

Covid-19 spreads readily between people in droplets from coughing, sneezing or talking. The droplets may remain airborne for three or four hours, but they lose their infectivity rapidly. Within about an hour, half of their potency has gone. Based on various reports, they may remain viable (still able to cause infection) on surfaces like on cardboard for about 24 hours and plastic and stainless steel

for two to four days. Some reports say that after six to seven hours on steel or plastic, half of the particles have lost viability. As some may remain viable, it is best to use caution at all times.

Wear a suitable mask, if possible.

To help avoid droplets entering your mouth and in order to protect others (if you are infected but are unaware), wear a suitable mask, if you can (See *Should I wear a face mask?* page 6). When coughing or sneezing, be sure to cover your nose and mouth with your forearm or with a tissue and immediately dispose of the tissue in a closed container. This can also help to protect you from other infections that would result in reduced immune system function.

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Use caution when using objects or surfaces that could be contaminated by other people.

To reduce the risk of becoming infected, you should avoid touching door knobs, elevator buttons and light switches with your hands. The viral particles picked up from cloth are only 1% of the number of particles picked up from hard surfaces. Natural fibres break up the droplets in which the virus is suspended, allowing the virus to dry out quickly and die.

Be very aware of the symptoms in yourself & others.

The incubation period from exposure to illness is two to 14 days, with an average of five days. Symptoms related to Covid-19 infection occur as a result of the immune system trying to deal with the infection. When the symptoms worsen, this is likely to be due to an overactive immune response, hence why at late stages of the disease, antiviral agents may not work.

Boost your immune system to help your body deal with all infections.

It is important to support your immune system during this pandemic and particularly important to boost it in the early stages of this disease. The use of anti-oxidants and some anti-inflammatory may help as prevention or support during early infection. These immune

boosting therapies should not be used at the point when severe reactions to the infection (sepsis) has set in.

There are two phases of infection:

Phase one - gradual illness with fever, dry cough, fatigue, aches, pains and sore throat.

Phase two - worsening cough, shortness of breath, with or without chest pain, fever, and possibly low blood pressure.

80% of people recover from Phase one, while 20% enter Phase two. Both groups continue to shed the virus in secretions and may still be contagious even after symptoms end.

If you suspect you have Covid -19, self-isolate as government guidelines recommend

Even after contracting the virus, there have been anecdotal reports of people becoming re-infected. You should continue to practise personal protective measures at all times.

Take care of your body

A good healthy diet, which includes plenty of green vegetables and fresh fruits, adequate sleep and moderate exercise, if you're able, will help your well-being. There are a number of nutritional supplements which may boost your immune system. (See *Can vitamin D help your body fight Covid-19?* page 5 and *Supplements for protecting against & treating viral infections, including coronavirus* on page 8.)

References and further reading available upon request.

Actions to reduce the spread of Covid-19

There are general principles you should follow to help prevent the spread of airway and chest infections caused by respiratory viruses, including:

- wash your hands more often - with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitiser. Do this after you blow your nose, sneeze or cough, after you eat or handle food and, of course, after toileting
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who have symptoms
- cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home



Protecting you & others

In March 2020, the UK was put on an unprecedented police-enforced lockdown to help slow down the spread of Covid-19. “For the foreseeable future, we are going to have to find ways to go about our lives with this virus as a constant threat to our lives.” - David Nabarro, professor of global health at Imperial College, London

Covid-19 can make anyone seriously ill. Many patients of Breakspear Medical fall into the category of being at increased risk. Adhere to government guidelines and take additional actions whenever possible to further protect yourself.

From the beginning, Breakspear Medical planned to remain open to continue care for our patients. We felt this would help ensure our patients could continue their treatment programmes without interruption and also we would potentially be relieving the NHS of health concerns of patients we could help. The early government guidelines state that people are allowed to leave their homes for medical needs and our staff can travel to work, as they are unable to work from home.

We believe our patients should be extremely careful to protect themselves and only leave their home for limited, essential purposes. Anyone working should try to work from home.

We recommend that our patients try to avoid going food shopping by ordering online or

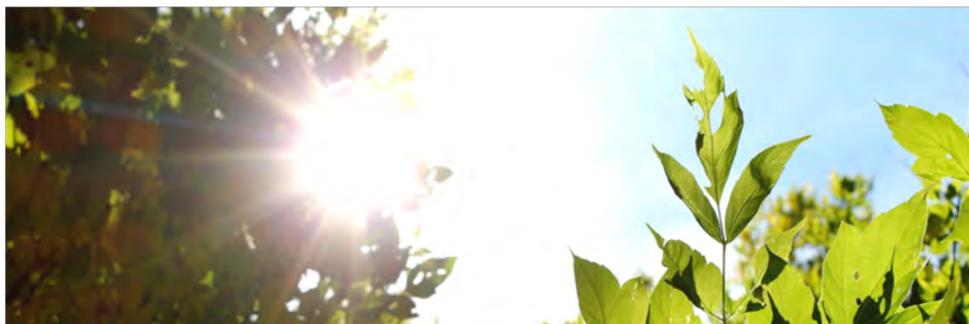
having a family member or friend deliver food. While one form of exercise each day is very beneficial, it is best to complete it at home or outdoors where it can be assured that a minimum of two metres may be kept between oneself and other people.

In order to reduce footfall at the clinic and to keep appropriate social distancing, we have reduced the number of daily patient appointments. We are offering telephone follow-up consultations to reduce both our patients' and team's exposure.

Many of our services have reduced or been temporarily suspended, such as our in-house catering. This means that there are fewer staff members onsite, which further reduces the risk.

Everyone who enters the building, both patients and staff, has their temperature taken at the front entrance and are asked some basic health questions by a member of the clinical team.

If you suspect or know that you have ever had Covid-19, inform Reception before booking your appointment.



Can vitamin D help your body fight Covid-19?

Vitamin D is fat-soluble vitamin that has a significant impact on the body for many reasons, including keeping the immune system healthy.

While vitamin C is traditionally the go-to vitamin to help fight the common cold (upper respiratory tract infection, URTI), there are many papers discussing vitamin D's importance in preventing respiratory infections.

To date, while there is no scientific evidence that vitamin D can protect against Covid-19, deficient levels of vitamin D have been associated with an increased susceptibility to infection, disease and immune-related disorders.*

For example, a vitamin D deficiency has been shown to increase the risk of acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), which is the main complication of Covid-19 infection.

It is estimated that in the UK, 20% of adults and 16% of children between the ages of 11 and 18 years are estimated to be deficient in vitamin D. While vitamin D deficiencies are common in many populations around the world, older adults and darker skinned people are more susceptible. This is because dietary sources of vitamin D are limited and the main natural source is through exposure to sunlight. Dark skin produces less vitamin D than pale skin, which can lead to a vitamin D deficiency particularly when the dark skin person lives in an area with dark winters.

Vitamin D can be obtained from some foods, such as oily fish, fortified foods, supplements or by injection.

If you would like to boost your vitamin D levels, Breakspear Medical's Pharmacy has supplements suitable for sensitive patients.

How do you know if you are vitamin D deficient?

If you wish to test your vitamin D levels, there is a quick and easy way to determine if one is vitamin D deficient using an at-home kit. Using a sterile pricking device on your finger will help you to collect a small blood sample, which is then posted to the laboratory for analysis. Your results will be sent to Breakspear Medical and you will then receive the results from us.

If you have been found to be deficient, a telephone consultation can be arranged to discuss options such as ergocalciferol injection or higher concentration supplements.

At-home vitamin D testing kit

If you would like to have your levels of vitamin D measured while you stay at home, contact a member of our Patient Liaison Team, quoting the kit code: DL-VITD-T, available for £53.

*Accurate at time of publication-May 2020.

Air pollution & Covid-19

Globally, air pollution is an unpleasant reality. For some of us, it's an ongoing daily health hazard that may be a deadly cofactor in the current Covid-19 outbreak.

Environmental researchers from Aarhus University, Denmark, hypothesised whether there could be a link between the high death rates seen in northern Italy (12% compared with the rest of Italy with 4.5%) and the level of air pollution seen in the same region.

Factors that have been put forward to explain the high mortality rates in Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna are: advanced age of the Italian population, the wide difference between Italian regional health systems, ICU capacity and the reporting of deaths – all of which may have contributed to the large numbers. However, these two northern Italian regions are among the most air-polluted regions in Europe, according to data from the NASA Aura satellite and comparison data from the Air Quality Index, which uses data from several thousand measuring stations all over Europe.

The researchers believe that prolonged exposure to atmospheric pollution could modify and weaken the immune system, leading to complications for patients with Covid-19. Pollution has been shown to damage the first line of defence of upper airways, namely the cilia, allowing the virus access to the lower airways. This can lead to acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) and severe respiratory and cardiovascular comorbidities.

Which face mask should I wear?

Dr Nikita White

Early in the Covid-19 pandemic, many people asked whether they should wear a face mask. By mid May, the Government recommended wearing cloth face masks where it is difficult to maintain social distancing.

Deciding on which face mask to wear is not a simple decision. There are two different types of hospital-grade face masks usually available. There are the surgical face masks that are loose-fitting and there are the tight-fitting respirators, which come in different grades, depending on the protection required. Choosing between these two types depends on the setting that you are in, what you are trying to avoid, and the cost.

Currently, healthcare workers and people in close contact to infectious persons are prioritised to receive respirators, as these provide a greater level of protection to the wearer than surgical face masks. Healthcare workers also require protection of their eyes, which can be achieved with goggles, and ideally the whole face, which requires a face safety shield. Ideally, everyone would have respirators to use, but it not realistic at the moment.

Surgical face masks are effective in protecting from droplets spread from a wearer who would be considered infectious and are also somewhat effective for the wearer trying to protect themselves, although to a lesser degree than respirators. Because surgical masks are loose-fitting, they do not create a good seal, which means that you will not be protected from the tiny particles suspended in the air called aerosols. It is of note that even many respirators that are currently in use do not provide 100% protection from aerosols.

Face masks are usually not necessary in large, open spaces unless you are within two metres of an infectious person because ventilation is one of the best means to reduce transmission of airborne infections. Small, enclosed spaces, which are poorly ventilated, carry a much greater risk for infection. Even after an infectious person has left a room, the aerosols can be suspended in air for up to three hours.

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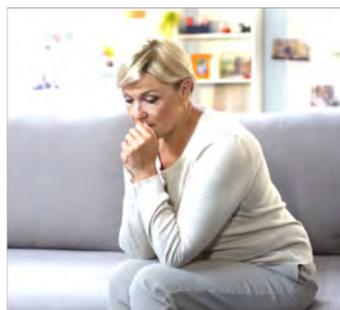
Surgical face mask (top); basic respirator (bottom).

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At this time, the Government is recommending people (who are not frontline healthcare workers) to wear a cloth face covering, which should cover your mouth and nose while allowing you to breathe comfortably. Their website states, "It can be as simple as a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head." New papers suggest that the best material for homemade face masks may be a combination of two fabrics, including a densely woven fabric, to avoid droplets getting in. Another good option is to encase a well-reputed HEPA filter (ones that are produced for vacuum cleaners are suitable) between the layered fabric and ensure it covers both nose and mouth. The face covering should not be in contact with the mouth or nostrils because if it becomes wet, this may risk transmission of viruses in the droplets through the material to your mucosal membranes.

Mask tips & recommendations

- Ensure that you carry a hand sanitiser and use it regularly and often.
- Whenever possible, keep the windows open.
- Wash your hands before and after putting a mask on and taking it off. They must be put on and off in a specific way to avoid transmission of any organisms that are present on the face mask or respirator.
- If you are considered vulnerable to developing more severe infection, consider purchasing respirators if at all possible and learn how to ensure a good seal is achieved. If wearing a respirator, be aware that prolonged use causes you to retain more carbon dioxide, which can make you feel dizzy and develop a headache.
- Do not fold or bend the masks unnecessarily as this can compromise the integrity of the material and therefore reduce the level of protection.
- If the surgical mask or respirator becomes wet or contaminated, replace it with a new one as soon as possible.
- The Government is recommending homemade face masks. Multiple layers of fabric and insertion of a HEPA filter will help the mask filter aerosols.
- If you wear gloves, you should always use hand sanitizer anyway, particularly before and after putting them on and removal thereof. If they become contaminated, they will spread infection also. Sometimes it is best to avoid gloves and just continue hand washing to avoid a false sense of security. Gloves are used by professionals and are changed between patients to avoid contamination.



Mental health support for you & your family

The current Covid-19 pandemic is profoundly unsettling for many reasons, including the uncertainty and isolation.

Our mental health expert, Daniel Segal, BA Psychology, MSc Mental Health Counseling, can help those suffering from anxiety, stress, depression and relationship issues, and help anyone develop positive processes, techniques and schedules to find peace of mind to gain a sense of control of their life.

Anyone may book a session. (Clinical information is not required.)

Initial consultation of up to 90mins: £165. Follow-up sessions up to 60 minutes: £110 or up to 30mins: £55.

Skype sessions may be arranged by contacting Breakspear Medical Reception: 01442 261 333 or by email: info@breakspearmedical.com



ACNEM recommends:

Supplements for supporting the immune system to protect against viral infections, including coronavirus

Based in Melbourne, Australia, the Australasian College of Nutrition and Environmental Medicine is a leader in education and training of medical professionals in the principles of nutritional & environmental medicine, drawing on the latest biomedical and genetic science and research to develop new treatment approaches to illness and disease.

Optimal nutrition is a key factor for a healthy immune system. Supplementation of nutrients that are essential but lacking in one's diet may help strengthen the immune system.

The Australasian College of Nutrition and Environmental Medicine (ACNEM) has compiled a list of nutritional supplements which can help one's immune system mount a defence against colds, flus and coronavirus. It may be beneficial to review their recommendations, which are based on their research and experience, and learn about the nutritional programme that they recommend.

Vitamin C

For many years, vitamin C has been reported to help prevent the common cold and has been shown to reduce the severity of symptoms and duration of the common cold. It may help to counteract many types of bacterial and viral diseases, including the influenza virus.

Along with reference to many published medical papers, the ACNEM website cited an announcement from the Shanghai government, which announced its official recommendation is that Covid-19 should be treated with high doses of IV vitamin C, with amounts varying according to the severity of the illness.

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Vitamin D

Considerable evidence has been presented that in influenza epidemics, or with the common cold, our innate immune response is impaired by seasonal deficiencies of vitamin D. (See *Can vitamin D help your body fight Covid-19?* on page 5.)

Maintenance of a good level of vitamin D should significantly reduce the burden of illness. The ACNEM website states:

Former Centre for Disease Control (CDC) Chief Tom Frieden MD has gone on record advising that Vitamin D may strengthen the immune system and may help prevent infection with Covid-19. He states that: 'Vitamin D supplementation reduces the risk of respiratory infection, regulates cytokine production and can limit the risk of other viruses such as influenza. A respiratory infection can result in cytokine storms – a vicious cycle in which our inflammatory cells damage organs throughout the body – which increase mortality for those with Covid-19. Adequate vitamin D may potentially provide some modest protection for vulnerable populations'.

It has been known for many years that people with infections do better in sunlight. For example, for nearly 100 years, sun exposure was shown to help Tuberculosis (TB) sufferers. Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection spread through inhaling tiny droplets from the coughs or sneezes of infected people.

Echinacea

Echinacea is an herbal supplement derived from the Echinacea plant. It has been used as a dietary supplement for the common cold and various respiratory infections and topically for wounds or skin irritations. ACNEM released an educational video which stated that Echinacea and CoQ10 will help infections.

Zinc

Zinc is an essential nutrient which plays many vital roles. It is often added to nasal sprays,

lozenges and other natural cold treatments.

Zinc is necessary for immune cell function and cell signalling and therefore a deficiency can lead to a weakened immune response.

The ACNEM educational video stated that if zinc is taken preventatively, it may stop the binding of the virus to the mucosal cells and recommends taking it preventatively.

Dietary changes

ACNEM also recommends that people who wish to boost their immune system should also consider cutting out sugar and alcohol from their diet and be sure to eat a good, broad, varied diet. Diabetes and cardiovascular disease increases the risks with coronavirus.

Other coronavirus protection

The British Society for Ecological Medicine (BSEM) recommends melatonin to be taken with vitamin C to enhance the anti-inflammatory effect. Melatonin is a hormone made by the pineal gland at the base of the brain while it is dark (usually produced around 2:00-3:00am). Children make much more melatonin than adults. (Melatonin is a prescription-only medicine, POM, in the UK.) Also the BSEM recommends the flavonoids quercetin and elderberry. Flavonoids can stimulate the activities of numerous immunity related cell types. Research has highlighted that flavonoids including quercetin, hesperetin and catechin can be particularly effective in anti-infective activity.

A considerable body of evidence suggests that plant flavonoids may be health-promoting, disease-preventing and anti-inflammatory dietary compounds.

There are additional nutritional supplements, such as dietary mushrooms, pre-biotics and probiotics, which have been shown to help the immune system, which may help the body fight coronavirus. Humans currently do not have any pre-existing immunity to Covid-19 so the best thing we can do is support our body's immune resources as best we can.

Living with MCS

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discontinued shortly after I had it.) Ten days before I left, I started to have stomach cramps and severe constipation. When I returned from this trip, I started to have dreadfully terrible health problems. I developed food allergies and experienced pudendal neuralgia (long-term pelvic pain from a main nerve in the pelvis) and sciatica (pain from the hip, down the leg). I saw many Italian doctors over a period of ten years and didn't receive a definitive diagnosis or understanding of what caused my ill-health. Some doctors said that there was nothing wrong with me, while others said, "I'll give you something that might help" but nothing helped. For many years, I tried to live my life with a lot of health problems. In 2010, after experiencing a lot of abdominal problems, I had to have a stomach operation and then decided have a simple tattoo done. At the same time, I decided to renovate my house. Unfortunately, all those changes caused my body to implode and my entire life to change. My problem was not just neurological and food allergies but I also experienced debilitating problems with chemicals. I started to wear a face mask all the time because I had problems breathing the chemicals in the air, particularly perfume, and I developed electrical sensitivity, which made me feel faint and disorientated when exposed.

Having electrical sensitivity caused very big problems in my life. At that time, I still didn't have a name for my illness. Some doctors suggested it was a neurological problem and others suggested that it was all due to reactions to foods. No one diagnosed what my illness was.

With the help of an association of MCS, I learned about an Italian doctor, Professor Giuseppe Genovesi, a famous immunology doctor at public hospital Umberto I, who was committed to helping patients with MCS and electrosensitivity. I went to him and had many pathology tests completed, and he then explained that my problem was MCS.

From that moment, I started a course of detoxification infusions and they addressed many of my food sensitivities/allergies. After nine months of Professor Genovesi's intense treatment, he told me there was another place in Europe that I could go to for further treatment of my illness called Breakspear Medical.

Sadly, Prof Genovesi died in January 2018, but I always believed he was an angel for what he did for me. He helped me get an official disability certification, which helped me continue to work. As part of my contract, I have an air filter in my office. I don't know how many people with chemical sensitivity can still work but I am one of those and I am very happy and thankful. I am very sad about a lot of people who cannot work with MCS. I am not a "superman" and am fortunate to have a job that works for me. When I came to Breakspear Medical on Prof Genovesi's recommendation, I felt that it was the only possibility to get my life back. Dr Jean Monro is my second angel and honestly, she gave me the foundation to get my life back under my control.

My first visit to the clinic was for five weeks. At that time, I wore only white cotton clothes because every other fabric and colour of clothes caused an allergic skin reaction. I weighed only 46kg and could only eat rice and potato without suffering from food allergy symptoms.

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Prof Genovesi had advised me to do everything that the people at Breakspear Medical told me to do. I started with blood tests and then started testing for low-dose immunotherapy (LDI) for chemicals and foods. I found it very hard to be on my own for so long, but I did not have a choice. When I returned to Italy, I told my dad about my experience. I remember that I could feel that the air in Rome was terrible for me. When I was in England doing the LDI testing, I could sit in an open garden without a mask but in Rome, I needed a mask.

As well as using my LDI vaccines, I started to eat more foods, using the rotation diet that Dr Monro had recommended and I stopped eating gluten, milk and cheese. I did all the therapy that she recommended, including supplements, infusions and oxygen therapy. I was told that it is not a simple miracle cure and that I would have to proceed step by step, very slowly.

Dr Monro told me that you have not only your body but also your mind and that you have to look after them both. With that advice in mind, I live day by day to regain control of my life. I work hard but I also love music. When I was younger, I played in a band and now I DJ vinyls but I don't perform

in a closed space with smoke or perfume but instead perform in open spaces in the summertime. While DJing in an open space is better, I do find that I have to rest the day after a performance. I am still learning to balance work and the things I do in my free time.

There was a time when I tried to stop my LDI treatment but I found that this treatment is fundamental for me. It is like you have a house and under the house there are the foundations and after that are the rooms, such as the kitchen, the bedroom, the living room, but without the foundations, the house doesn't exist. For those with MCS, LDI is like the foundations of the house. All the very important other things are the rooms, such as the supplements, infusions and oxygen therapy. Without LDI, you can't live in the house.

I have been a patient at the clinic for over nine years and come back every three months or so to do the LDI retesting. It gives me balance so I can work, socialise and enjoy my private life with my beautiful, loving and understanding girlfriend, our children and take part in my hobbies.

When I have to die, I will die. But until the day before, I will keep going, until the last of my energy is gone.



MCS sufferers live in fear everyday

I know that those of us with multiple chemical sensitivities have a constant fear inside. With the current Covid-19 pandemic, I think more people can imagine this fear. The fear that everyone feels today of being infected while just doing normal things, like walking through a busy park or going into a shop, is not too different from the fear a person with MCS has every day when facing car fumes, perfumes and other chemicals.

For me and others with MCS, the cause of our reactions surrounds us every day of every month of every year, with no end in sight. For many MCS sufferers, it is not an option to leave home without a mask on. It is not easy to face all the time.

-Francesco Cenci

Environmental Medicine Foundation

Educating the world about Environmental Medicine

In the previous edition of the Breakspear Medical Bulletin (No.47), we asked our readers to complete an online survey that was created to help guide the Environmental Medicine Foundation (EMF) with its new initiative, which is to create educational videos.

The EMF's short survey asked questions about people's knowledge of environmental medicine, the topics that people wanted more information on and various questions about the quality of the production that people expected and the devices on which they would view educational videos.

From the survey results, it is clear that most of the respondents have already learned a lot about environmental medicine, however, do not consider themselves experts and are always trying to learn more.

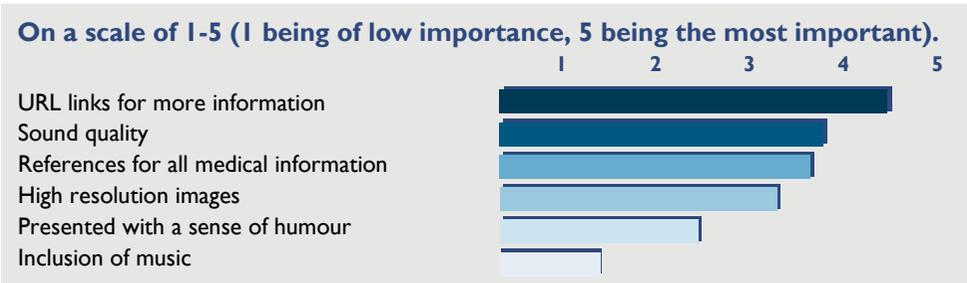
From other video surveys done by other parties, it is generally thought that most people like short, concise videos. However, the

Top rated topics for informational videos:

- causes of weakness in the immune system
- how to build immunity
- mould
- allergy/sensitivity
- low-dose immunotherapy (LDI)
- electrical sensitivity
- multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS)

majority of our respondents indicated that they would watch a good video of ten minutes or more.

All the information collected will help in the development of this initiative and we thank all the participants for their time and input. As soon as it is possible, the EMF volunteers will be reviewing the responses and devising a plan on how o help educate the world about Environmental Medicine.



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