



HIGHLIGHTS

Preparing for Covid-19

If you are over 50 years of age, you should consider doing everything you can to protect yourself. Here are some suggestions.
PAGE 2

Caring for the world we live in

Dr Jean Monro shares some thoughts and tips of how to help everyone's environment.
PAGE 4

Life before, during & after lockdown

Psychological counsellor Daniel Segal is offering his services via Skype.
PAGE 8

Regaining health to experience a

Journey of a lifetime

Dafila Scott came to Breakspear Medical a few years ago for help with pain, fatigue and brain fog, which her GP and other doctors were unable to diagnose and treat. Three years later, she was able to travel to the Antarctic to discover more about her famous grandfather's South Pole expedition. Dafila shares her story of a journey of a lifetime.

I am a zoologist and artist and, for the greater part of my life, I have been fit and healthy, and used to walking quite long distances. However, three weeks after a hip replacement operation in the autumn of 2015, I suddenly developed pain and weakness in both hips, in my gluteal muscles and down the back of my legs, as well as fatigue and brain fog. By Christmas Day, I could hardly walk. My GP sent me to a

number of specialists but none of them could find out what was wrong.

It wasn't until January 2017 that a friend recommended I see Dr Jean Monro at Breakspear Medical and my condition was properly investigated.

Since then I have begun a programme involving low-dose immunotherapy (LDI), detoxification and treatment for

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

Preparing for Covid-19

From the beginning of the pandemic, it was clear that people over the age of 70 were most at risk of dying after contracting Covid-19. Within a few months, people at the middle age of 50 were considered at increased risk. While reducing the risk of infection by adhering to government guidelines, older people should do more to help fight Covid-19.

Globally, work continues to develop a vaccination, however, there is not one available as winter approaches, which is the season for colds, viruses and coronaviruses to thrive. What more can we do to protect ourselves?

Protect yourself & others

In order to avoid contracting or spreading Covid-19, everyone should:

- distance oneself at least two metres away from other people whenever possible
- wear a suitable mask, if possible
- wash hands and/or use a hand sanitiser frequently
- avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
- be aware of the symptoms in oneself and others

Opt for flu vaccine

The Department of Health & Social Care and Public Health England announced, "In light of the risk of flu and Covid-19 co-circulating this winter, the national flu immunisation programme will be absolutely essential to protecting vulnerable people and supporting the resilience of the health and care system."

If you are at higher risk from coronavirus, you are also more at risk of problems from flu. If you get both coronavirus and flu at the same time, you may be more seriously ill.

With the NHS annual flu vaccinations, priority will be given to NHS shielded patients, frontline health and social care workers and children of school Year 7 age. While the flu vaccine is given to people who are 65 years or over, this year it is planned to extend the vaccine programme to include those 50-64-years-old, subject to vaccine supply. At the

moment, flu vaccines are in short supply for private organisations.

Boost immune system

In addition to the various social distancing measures and getting a flu vaccination, one should consider boosting one's immune system to be able to cope better with any winter infection. It would be wise to improve one's nutrition and supplement vitamins that are known to help fight off infections.

The Breakspear Medical Upper Respiratory Tract Infection (URTI) regime includes many supplements that help with infections. The key vitamins to boost the immune system are:

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| • vitamin A | • vitamin B12 |
| • vitamin C | • folic acid |
| • vitamin D | • flavonoids |
| • vitamin E | |

These vitamins are available over the counter and from Breakspear Medical's Pharmacy without a prescription. (More detail on the benefits of these vitamins and references are presented in the Breakspear Medical URTI paper, which is available upon request).

If overweight, lose weight

For some time, it has been publicised that those with pre-existing health conditions, including obesity, heart disease and diabetes, have increased risk of being hospitalised for Covid-19 and a higher fatality rate.

According to an article published by mercola.com, "Research shows that among 18 - to 49-year olds hospitalised due to Covid-19, obesity is the most prevalent underlying condition."

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While weight loss does not happen overnight, making better food choices, eliminating processed foods, junk foods and soft drinks, and reducing alcohol consumption are always wise choices. It is best to plan meals and eat plenty of protein, fruits and vegetables, and drink plenty of water. As well as eating wisely, becoming more active is key to staying healthy and it can help burn off calories.

If one is severely overweight, any weight loss may help the body recover from infection faster.

In studies of obese people, Washington University researchers followed patients in a weight-loss programme and demonstrated that four key measures of heart and vascular health improved in those who lost weight.

If you would like some professional advice on modifying your diet, set up an appointment with one of our nutritional therapists.

Plan for the long-term

The head of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has been quoted as saying that the coronavirus pandemic could be over within two years. However, it will likely be with us in some form or another indefinitely.

It is important to think of one's own safety and of others', which will save lives.

Breakspear Medical can help

If you feel that you, a family member or friend need help achieving any of these suggestions, Breakspear Medical offers new patient doctor consultations at the clinic or remote video doctor consultations for existing patients, as well as the services of nutritional therapists, who can help devise a diet plan with your lifestyle and sensitivities in mind.

All the recommended nutritional supplements are available at Breakspear Medical Pharmacy, which are specially selected for our sensitive patients.

We also offer the remote video consultations with our psychological counsellor, who can help devise your action plan for the future or help you deal with stress, relationship issues or any other problems. (See page 8 for more information.)

Caring for the world we live in



by Dr Jean Monro

Currently, we all have to take precautions to help save lives, which makes us realise just how important small actions are. Continual 'cause & effect' is happening all around us; how we impact our world with the smallest of actions and, in turn, how it affects us. Dr Jean Monro recently spent some time reflecting and shares some of her easy tips to help our environment.

RECOMMENDED READING

Silent Spring

By Rachel Carson

In 1962, the environmental science book, *Silent Spring* was published to bring environmental concerns to the public regarding the use of pesticides and the harm they cause.

In 2006, the book was named one of the 25 greatest science books of all time by *Discover* magazine.

I referred to the following excerpt from the book *Silent Spring* in one of my recent talks for Winchester University:

The 'control of nature' is a phrase conceived in arrogance born of the Neanderthal age of biology and philosophy, when it was supposed that nature exists for the convenience of man....[I]t is our alarming misfortune that so primitive a science has armed itself with the most modern and terrible weapons, and that in turning them against the insects, it had also turned them against the earth.

I highly recommend everyone reads this book. It helped launch the environmental movement, which helped change the laws regarding DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane), the first of the modern synthetic insecticides, and stands against indiscriminate use of pesticides.

While insecticides may help to produce high yield crops by killing the insects that may

harm them, insecticides do not discern between crop-harming insects and the insects, such as bees, that are vital to pollinate the food we need to survive and pollinate the trees and flowers that provide habitats for wildlife.

I think Doug Cross's paper, *The Killing of the Countryside*, is very important for people to read, too. (It can be found online: [researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net)) He describes changes in the countryside from when he was a child to now, and then explains the sense of something now missing. He also tells how local laws were passed to destroy non-native plants with herbicide (glyphosate), in order to save the native varieties, and how this led to wild rabbits dying an unpleasant death on his lawn as a consequence.

I am fortunate and live in a lovely semi-detached cottage with a small walled garden that I have filled with flowers, herbs, vegetable plants, bushes and trees, which all provide homes and food for insects, birds, hedgehogs and many other creatures.

I've been a long-time member of Garden Organic (previously known as the Henry Doubleday Research Association), which is a charity that has been at the forefront of organic gardening for over half a century. They provide guidelines for organic gardening, which I follow. As commercially-grown seeds and bulbs may be coated with pesticides, which are harmful to both pests and beneficial insects, and will

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travel into the plant, I never put any plants into my garden now except those grown from seed, and the seed has to come from an organic horticultural source or from seeds or cuttings collected from my own plants the year before. As you may already know, I recommend to my patients that they eat organic food, to reduce exposure to the various chemicals in pesticides. I save the seeds from some of the organic vegetables I eat, such as butternut squash and pumpkin, to plant the following year.

As my garden is a source of food for all the wildlife and for me and my family, I do not use pesticides to clear weeds from the paths. I use a homemade mixture, which will kill unwanted weeds, but will not harm the insect population.

Insect-friendly weed killer:

- 1 squirt of detergent
- 4.5L of vinegar
- 450g of salt

Simply mix together and spray on the unwanted weeds.

There are often biological solutions to deal with garden problems. For example, aphids on roses can be eaten by ladybirds, as ladybirds prey on aphids, spider mites and mealy bugs. While you can take steps to encourage ladybirds to move

into your garden, you can also order ladybirds online and have them delivered to your home.

It is also important to not use harmful chemicals in your garden or in your home, even if you have unwanted intruders, as there are alternative solutions. For example, if you have dust mites, don't use hideous cleaning agents to kill them. To start with, if you can, use a proper house dust mite mattress cover. This forms an impenetrable barrier between the mattress and the bedding on top so that if there are dust mites present, they cannot travel from the mattress through the bedding to feed on you. Be sure to vacuum the mattress each time you change the bedding, which should be at least once per week. Make sure to wash the bedding at a high temperature in order to kill any mites. You can also use ultraviolet light on the bedding to help sanitise it.

During the pandemic, the use of facemasks is necessary but this has led to the disposable ones being left behind on pavements, in parks and other places. Dispose of them appropriately, after cutting the ear strings to ensure that they don't accidentally tangle up in a bird or other creature, or use multilayer fabric ones, which can be washed and reused.

Just a few small actions can help nourish the environment.



Increasing immunity with Coriolus mushrooms

Natural killer (NK) cells are critical to the immune system. They provide rapid responses to viruses, bacteria and protozoa (single cell organisms, which can transmit fatal infectious diseases). Studies have shown that Coriolus mushroom supplements can increase NK cell activity and increase white blood cells.

Natural killer (NK) cells' specific function is to kill infected and cancerous cells. Viruses lack the apparatus for self-renewal so it is essential for them to penetrate the cells of the infected host in order to take over its replicative machinery. It is clearly in the interest of the host to find a way to kill such infected cells before the virus has had a chance to reproduce. NK cells appear to do just that when studied in vitro.

The connection between mushroom nutrition and the immune system is developing and several studies have been published. Mushrooms contain immunostimulants (β -glucans, lipopolysaccharide, and polyinosinic: polycytidylic acid) that can strengthen and increase immune system activity.

In 2014, Dr Jean Monro conducted a published

trial that demonstrated that Coriolus-MRL increases NK cell activity by 35% over six weeks in patients with myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS).

In 2013, John Tindall, Grazia Rotolo and Marikje Pfeiffer published a small study which showed that they were able to increase white blood cell count in HIV-positive patients with supplementation of Coriolus-MRL. White blood cells are the cells of the immune system that help to protect the body against infectious diseases and foreign invaders.

Covid-19-infected patients are characterised as having low levels of NK cell activity and white blood cells, however, at the moment, no clinical trials on the use of Coriolus to treat Covid-19 have been completed.

RECOMMENDED RECIPE:

Asian mushroom noodle soup

This gluten-, dairy-, egg-free dish features delicious, nutritious mushrooms & can help warm you up inside.

**INGREDIENTS:**

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 portion size of brown rice noodles, buckwheat or any other noodles | 1 tablespoon of miso paste |
| 1 container of Shiitake and button mushrooms (the more the better) | 1 pak choi (sliced) |
| 1 teaspoon sesame oil | ¼ cabbage finely sliced |
| 1 tablespoon olive oil | ½ red pepper finely sliced |
| | Large handful of chopped coriander |

METHOD:

1. Pour boiling water over the rice noodles in a pot and let them absorb the water or follow the instructions on the package to cook other kinds of noodles.
2. In a frying pan, sauté the mushrooms in the olive and sesame oils and cook until soft.
3. Add the miso paste and 500ml of water and simmer for a minute or two.
4. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Add the chopped pak choi, cabbage and red pepper and simmer for another 2 minutes until wilted.
6. Drain the noodles, add to mushroom mixture and mix together.
7. When you are ready to serve, add a large handful of chopped coriander leaves.

Life before, during & after lockdown

by Daniel Segal

On 23 March 2020, the UK's unprecedented Covid-19 lockdown measures were announced to prevent the rapid spread of this new coronavirus, which would have certainly exceeded the capabilities of the NHS. Restrictions were being lifted, contagion rates rose, a new national three-tier alert system implemented and then another lockdown, which resulted in many people feeling uncertain. Daniel Segal, Psychological Counsellor, shares some ways to help deal with life during and after lockdown.

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, we are in very uncertain times and yet we have reached a point where we must cautiously try to piece together our personal worlds and our shared world. There are still risks and unknowns, but we must rise to these challenges, learn from our experiences and take lessons in learning how to build things better.

We are not at all in normal times, with some people back at work while others work from home, some people are still shielding whilst others went abroad on packaged holidays, and most people are wearing masks while others are not. With all the changes and unknowns, it is important to keep focus on yourself and your close-knit environment, as well as making

choices that suit you as best as possible. At the same time, each of us must try to have the community at large in mind as well. It is your choices that will help you create your new "normal", which is part of the key to getting life heading in the right direction.

Some people may have anxiety over what is going to happen next, such as finances and job stability. Others may be feeling depressed or lonely because they found it hard to cope with lockdown or because they were in complete isolation. Some may be feeling scared if suffering with a chronic illness, and/or are vulnerable or older. All these feelings are a natural reaction to a very unnatural situation. Fortunately, we can do things to help ourselves.

Make decisions & choices

Some decisions are harder than others, but we always want to make a decision that has our short- and long-term benefits to heart and helps us feel "normal". Making a good decision is what can help us feel in control of our lives and our close environments.

Ease back into things

When possible, we must allow ourselves time to ease back into things while adhering to the government guidelines. In the spring, it was a stressful few months for many people; being in lockdown, being off work, cancelling holidays and weddings, missing hospital treatments and with a new norm that has been based around avoiding other people. The autumn and winter are predicted to bring higher infection rates and new restrictions and this can cause even more stress. We should aim to take small steps forward, when we are able.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)



About Daniel Segal, BA, MSc

Daniel is a fully qualified and experienced psychological counsellor who can help build a programme for each individual person's needs.

Daniel completed his BA in Psychology and a MSc in Mental Health Counseling in New York, USA and has an Auxiliary Medication Administration Personnel (NY only). He is a member of the BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) and has a BACP Certificate of Proficiency.



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Set attainable goals

Setting goals one intends to accomplish is challenging, but certainly not impossible. As humans, we want to be challenged and we do not want to be set up for failure. Setting attainable goals will help feelings of self-worth and self-esteem return. Getting back what was lost during the first lockdown is a good place to start, if possible, and if not, start afresh with something new.

Speak to a professional

A professional therapist should be qualified to a high standard and also experienced. In these extreme situations, one needs someone that has the wealth of experience. When choosing a professional, do not be afraid to ask what experience they have.

Learn to appreciate

We have all come to realise quite quickly that life is fragile and that all the things we used to fill our lives with, such as restaurants, cinema, bowling and more, are not actually needed to make us happier. We must find a purpose and meaning. It is important to learn to appreciate the things that we have.

Keep learning & sharing

For many of us, there are benefits to the lockdown period. It can be a period of learning new skills and getting closer to families. During the first lockdown, many people learned new skills, such as how to sew or play a musical instrument. Some treasured the bonding time, enjoying meals at the table or at-home movie time together, engaging in more conversations and long walks. Taking the time to learn new things, teaching others new skills and nurturing communication may, in the long term, lead to happier marriages, happier children and better friendships.

Stay safe

For all of us, it is not a time to be complacent. In all our decision making, goal setting and work life, we must remember that the pandemic is not over yet. The R rates (the number of people to whom one infected person will pass on the virus, on average) have sadly increased, many countries have seen second Covid-19 spikes and therefore our focus should be on getting things correct in order to protect ourselves, our family and the people around us. If we each protect our unit then the country becomes protected.

Journey of a lifetime

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Dafila Scott on the ship the Ortelius, just off the coast of Ushuaia, Argentina on the journey home.

Lyme disease. Slowly, over the last three years, I have recovered strength and the ability to walk for a couple of hours at a time. So, when the opportunity to go on an exciting trip to the Antarctic arose, I was able to take it in February 2020.

Oceanwide Expeditions, which specialise in ship-based expedition cruises, were taking a small cruise ship with 100 passengers to the Ross Sea and then round the coast of the Antarctic continent to the east towards the Antarctica Peninsula. The cruise was celebrating the centenary of the founding of the Scott Polar Research Institute, a research institute, archive library and museum in Cambridge, UK dedicated to polar work.

My grandfather was Captain Robert Falcon Scott, who led two expeditions to the Antarctic. The first expedition was in the RRS Discovery to Hut Point in the Ross Sea in 1901-04, on which they carried out research and exploration and made a brief foray towards the South Pole, and the second on the MV Terra Nova to Cape Evans in 1911-1913 on which they reached the South Pole only to find that the Norwegian,

Roald Amundsen, had got there first.

Sadly, they didn't make it back to base, partly due to unusually bad weather. Their story is well described in my grandfather's journal, which you can now read in paperback.

I never knew my grandfather, though I was told his story when I was very young. I had visited the hut at Cape Evans (from which he set out for the Pole) once before with my parents in 1971, but the chance to visit the hut again was very exciting.

We set off south from New Zealand in mid-February and visited some of the sub-Antarctic islands, the Auckland Islands and Campbell Island on the way. These islands are fascinating for the array of species that live only there and nowhere else, and we saw lots of bird species, as well as sea lions and elephant seals.

On Campbell Island, we walked up the hill for three hours (it seemed more like a mountain!) and came to a place where albatrosses were dotted across the hillside, sitting patiently on their nests. It was lovely to see and I was so pleased that I could actually do this walk with no ill effects afterwards.

Further south, winter seemed to be coming early. The weather was ferocious and on the day we visited my grandfather's hut at Cape Evans, the temperature -12°C and the wind was 20 knots, so it was bitterly cold.

Inside the hut, the cold preserves everything, so it is like going into a time warp. Everything is just as the explorers left it and you feel as if they might walk in through the door at any moment. It was a great feeling to be there once again.

We even saw the sea freezing. It went from being a rough sea with white horses one moment to (just 20 minutes later) a smooth surface with muted waves and tiny ice pancakes which gradually increased in size and then coalesced to make bigger pancakes until the surface of the sea was more or less completely frozen.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)



Captain Robert Falcon Scott's hut at Cape Evans, Ross Island in Antarctica.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

The landscape of the Antarctic continent on the west side of the Ross Sea is stunningly beautiful with jagged mountain peaks which throw blue shadows in evening light. We nearly got stuck in the pack ice to the east of the Ross Sea in the Amundsen Sea, and spent two days backtracking and then going north to get around it. We saw penguins mostly from the ship or from zodiacs, as the sea was too rough for us to land. The best view was of emperor penguins on ice floes very close to the ship, in small groups and calling to each other. We also saw numerous whales, including blue, humpback, minke and orca, and also albatrosses gliding seemingly effortlessly over the stormy seas. When we left the UK, coronavirus seemed

like a Chinese problem and on our ship, everyone was healthy. By the time we reached South America, Argentina had closed its borders so we sailed north and eventually disembarked at Montevideo in Uruguay and flew home from there.

We saw wonderful wildlife, spectacular landscapes, amazing icescapes and much more. Since then I have been painting images inspired by Antarctica (visit dafilascott.co.uk to view). I hope to have an exhibition of these paintings next year at the Scott Polar Research Institute.

I am so grateful to Dr Monro and all at Breakspear Medical for restoring my health to a point where I could go on this fabulous trip.



Breakspear Medical's **Online shop opening soon!**

We've redesigned the online shop, which will be going live by early next year. Visit our home page and sign up to be notified of when you can purchase all your nutritional supplements online: breakspearmedical.com

Celebrating the achievements of The Countess of Mar

Earlier this year, the UK's last female hereditary peer in the House of Lords, former chairman of the Environmental Medicine Foundation & friend of Breakspear Medical, the Countess of Mar, retired.

From 1975 to 2020, the Countess of Mar—or Margaret, as all of our patients and staff know her—held the oldest peerage title in Britain, which dates back to 1115.

Margaret has had a remarkable life. At the time she entered the House, she had a career at British Telecom, was a mother to a 12-year-old daughter and about to enter divorce proceedings from her first husband.

Over the years, she was deputy speaker three times and continued after the House of Lords Act of 1999, after which just 92 hereditary peers remained. Margaret was part of many ground-breaking changes in the House, including overcoming many sexist traditions. For example, she persuaded the chief whip to allow her daughter to sit on the steps of the Throne, which was a privilege reserved for elder sons of male peers.

In 1989, in addition to sitting in the House, she and her remarkable husband, John, ran a farm and produced specialist cheeses. It is at this time that she was exposed to organophosphates while sheep dipping (a common practice to treat sheep for ticks, lice, blowfly and sheep scab).



"I don't want to be there past my best before date," Margaret declared at the age of 79.

Within three weeks of the exposure, she became very ill with myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), which affected her memory and speech. At the time, ME/CFS was known as "yuppie flu". It took nearly 30 years for the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to agree to rewrite the guidelines for ME/CFS.

Since this illness, Margaret has pressed the government to address misunderstood medical conditions, such as ME/CFS and Lyme disease, and was an integral part of developing regulations for the environment and agriculture, including being part of European Union select committees addressing the environment, agriculture, public health and consumer protection.

Margaret has been a friend and supporter for many people with ME/CFS and Lyme disease and helped with their charities as well.



Breakspear Medical will be closing for the Christmas holidays in the afternoon of Thursday 24 December 2020 and re-open at 9:00am on Monday 4 January 2021. Our very best wishes for Christmas & the New Year!

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