Guildford M.E. Support Group
(& West Surrey)

Newsletter

Summer 2009

Future dates

Afternoon meet - Tuesday 8th September 1.30pm

The Seahorse, 52-54, The Street, Shalford, Guildford, Surrey, GU4 8BU
Shalford is about 1½ miles south of Guildford on the A281 (signposted as Horsham).

Morning meet - Monday 21st September 10.30am

Holiday Inn Hotel - Egerton Road, Guildford, GU2 7XZ
The hotel, which has plenty of parking, is near the Royal Surrey County Hospital. At the roundabout before the hospital, turn left into the hotel car park. They have a large foyer area with plenty of comfortable sofas and large coffee tables.

Evening meet - Wednesday 21st October 7.30pm

The Weyside Pub - Millbrook, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 3XJ
The Weyside is just a ten minute walk from the centre of Guildford. Set in a beautiful location right on the riverside overlooking fields and trees this top class food house has a lot to offer.

Afternoon meet - Thursday 19th November – 4pm

Worplesdon Place Hotel, Perry Hill, Worplesdon, Guildford, Surrey, GU3 3RY
There is a wide range of food and drink available (e.g. steak, chicken, fish and lamb grills and salads).

Sample Video/DVDs of Gupta Amygdala Retraining

As introduced on page 10 of the Winter 2008 newsletter - Gupta amygdala retraining™ is a treatment for ME that uses NLP, meditative, mindfulness and yogic techniques to correct an amygdala dysfunction in the brain which Ashok Gupta (well-known ME researcher/therapist based in Harley Street) believes causes ME. Those with internet access can use the links below. Those without can request free DVDs from Ashok Gupta, Director, The Harley Street Stress Management Clinic, No.1 Harley Street, London W1G 9QD

GUPTA amygdala RETRAINING

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fXqok9sYt8
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mr-su8V6Ydc
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IVzKEFeWrw
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxxyxtatXmU
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Naturopathic nutrition lecture

On Thursday 4th June, Judith Reid a Naturopathic Nutritional Practitioner in the Dorking, Surrey area, provided a free lecture for our group at the Guildford Institute. Judith, aside from being friendly and approachable, was highly knowledgeable and shared sympathy with CFS/ME having had it for over 8 years herself. It was Naturopathic Nutrition that brought Judith back to health. Seeing its value she started study and work in the science and now holds the following qualifications, Dip NNP, N.H.F. Clin. Dip.

Kindly, Judith has allowed us to write an overview of the lecture so that those who were unable to attend can gain insights into healthier nutrition.

Introduction

Judith started by telling us about her ME. She suffered with severe headaches which lasted for weeks or months, insomnia, severe fatigue and was unable to think straight. Doctors were dismissive and suggested anti-depressants and just to "get on with life" which Judith tried until everything ground to a halt. At this point she decided to look into alternative medicine. Via homeopathy she made a partial recovery over several years to the point of dancing, travelling and full time employment.

In her early 40s, however, Judith experienced an emotional trauma in her life which sent her travelling the far east. When there, she got serious food poisoning which, combined with the stressful period in her life, led to what doctors called a "mystery virus". She was unable to walk, stand or even sit and was understandably terrified. But it was a major turning point in her life because she turned to Naturopathic Nutrition which has led to her being healthier now than ever before. Judith can now cycle, dance and has worked two jobs for a while. However, despite being able to do all these things, she has learned that everyone needs balance in life and so does not try to be superwoman – something which she would have done prior to developing ME!

Judith went on to explain that the two main parts of her recovery were: a change of diet; and a change in the way she looked at life.

Naturopathic nutrition verses conventional medicine

At this point Judith introduced a different perspective on diet and lifestyle. One of the reasons for this different perspective is that it's increasingly difficult to know what is right or wrong to eat, drink and do these days given the conflicting scientific information that we are given over the internet, newspapers and television. One day something is a super-food, the next it's not to be touched with a bargepole. With ME we often hear that certain things are the silver-bullet for ME, magnesium, dark chocolate... the list goes on, however, after trying such things we are still left with our ME. Such advice comes from people looking at specific areas of biology and ME. The perspective Judith next explains is holistic, it looks at the body as a whole.

Naturopath is an umbrella term that covers a number of natural medicinal methods such as homeopathy, herbs and Bach flower remedies as well as nutrition. In essence it is helping the body to cure itself in a natural way using our understanding of natural laws and providing the body with associated support.

Conventional medicine often solves symptoms rather than the cause of the symptoms. For example, a lot of headaches are caused by constipation. Taking a headache tablet will take away the headache but does not solve the constipation. So it is likely the headache will return, requiring another headache tablet. It's like a house on fire with the fire-alarm going and just turning off the alarm without putting out the fire. In contrast, naturopathic nutrition targets the causes of health problems.

In addition to not solving the cause of symptoms conventional medicine can also cause harm. For example a single paracetamol can damage the liver's performance for several weeks. Because the liver is the most important part of the body's detoxification system the lack of performance causes a strain on the whole body maintaining general health.

Another difference between naturopathic nutrition and conventional medicine is that the latter considers health more in terms of healthy or ill. Two states of being. Whereas naturopathic nutrition considers that to be healthy a number of things must be in balance. For example, a person's biological systems, emotions and spiritual well-being should all be in balance.

As such, naturopathic nutrition aims to leverage biological health to help a person be:

- more at one with themselves and the world; and
- have meaning in their lives.

Before starting the next section of the talk Judith provided a context by asking how well a car would run on coca-cola. Quite a shocking thought but poor quality food is similarly as inappropriate for people and yet a lot of people eat it without a second thought.

How happy are your cells?

We have trillions of cells in our body which each have their individual job to do (e.g. liver cells, brain cells). All cells have common requirements: to eat; to breathe; to drink water; to be cared for. All the cells together are a harmonious community. So it can be said that you are a harmonious community of 50 trillion cells.

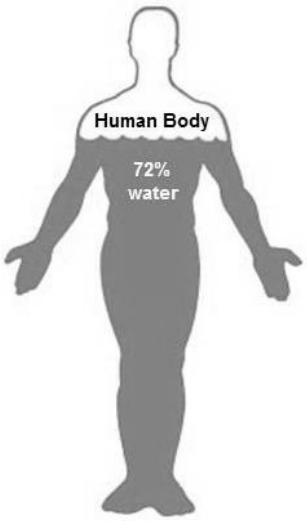
Each of the cells will do the best they can given the environment that you create for it. Their environment is largely dictated by your nutrition, emotions and lifestyle.

For the past few years Judith has been trying to grow tomatoes but it has been a disaster. Plants need a certain type of environment to flourish (e.g. the right soil, sun and water). Over the last few years we have been deluged with rain with very little sunshine and the tomato plants didn't flourish at all because the environment was wrong. It is similar with cells, without the correct environment they will not flourish. If your cells don't flourish neither will you because, as mentioned earlier, you are a harmonious community of 50 trillion cells.

So how can we help our cells flourish? Well, the first thing that helps, is water.

Water

We are approximately 70% water, although the brain is approximately 80% water. The brain is greedier for resources than the rest of our body. Fluidity gives us the ability to change our mode on a number of levels. If you think of a fast moving river compared with a small pond, the river is alive and vibrant whereas the pond tends to stagnate. It is similar within us, with enough water things flow and change but without enough things stagnate.



If we stagnate illness tends to set in. It is a form of being stuck. We can get stuck in a number of ways:

- illness such as ME and arthritis; or
- emotionally (e.g. stuck in grief or anger... see ▲sidebar, overleaf); or
- stuck in a way of thinking:
  - by not entertaining another person's opinion; or
  - being unable to make decisions.

Every system in the body needs water. If it doesn't have enough it doesn't work properly or at all.

For example digestion requires a lot of water. It's a bit like a car wash. If there is not enough water it can cause constipation.

Ideally, you should have ½ or 1 pint of warm water one half hour before eating to prepare the digestive system. Each day you should have 2 litres of water – preferably spread throughout the day and before each meal.

Sometimes when feeling tired or not thinking straight, some water will actually solve the issue.

Nowadays we unfortunately have a lot of diuretics (e.g. coffee, tea, chocolate, alcohol) which cause our bodies to expel water. For example a cup of tea takes the same amount of volume in water out of the body. A cup of coffee ranges from twice (e.g. weak Nescafe) to 32 times (e.g. strong high street cafe-coffee) its volume in water out of the body. Coca-cola is 32 times.

As the cells are made up of 70% water, forcing water out of the body is like taking away their life force and results in them being frightened/stressed. And then they stop functioning properly.

▲

If you think of a baby crying one minute and happy the next it is an extreme example of how we should be, flowing from one emotion to the next.

In terms of ME and being stuck... Judith felt frustrated and stuck with physically only being able to go around the block with a gentle walk, mentally stuck by not being able to think straight and emotionally stuck with being frightened and lonely. Judith goes on to say that ME does not have to be a life sentence and that it can be cured. One suggestion is to not identify yourself as having ME. It sounds difficult but continuing to have others and yourself identify you as an ME person is yet another factor that makes the ME stick. Judith introduced a quote from Deepak Chopra (an Indian-American medical doctor who has written extensively on spirituality and in mind-body medicine)...

"the cells are constantly eavesdropping on our thoughts and what we say"

If you think of yourself as having ME the cells are more encouraged to continue in an ME behaviour. Judith believes that one of the things that really helped her recover from ME was her determination in believing that she could get better.

Stress

Stress is a fight or flight, survival mechanism that comes from the days when we lived in caves with sabre-tooth tigers around. So when encountering a threat we either stayed to fight the threat or legged it!

Stress is extremely dehydrating because the body has to mobilise it's resources which in doing so uses water. For example: water is used to move and break things down for energy; and extra blood and water is put into the arms and legs so that they can perform well.

If you're eating a sandwich at the time the tiger attacks, your body is going to divert blood away from the function of digesting the sandwich to the arms and legs. As such, the sandwich will just fester in the digestive system causing bloating and wind etc... and when the body finally gets around to digesting the sandwich it has turned into something far less nutritious.

The body's stress mechanism doesn't know the difference between a tiger threat and any other stress. So eating during any type of stress will have the same result. We live in stressful times but we can also add to the damage of stress by what we eat. For example, eating sugar or caffeine can increase the effect of stress by 4 times, making the stress 4 times as dehydrating. So instead of reaching out for coffee or chocolate when stressed we should have some warm water because that is what the body needs.

Stress also makes temporary changes in the brain. The front of the brain is the frontal cortex which is where we do our mindful thinking (e.g. what we will do with the day and our life). The back of the brain is the basic instinct brain. During stress blood is diverted from the front to the back of the brain because decisions need to be quick, instinctual movements rather than considered, abstract ones. Its fine if the stress is for a short spell but it's been proved that after two weeks the brain's cells of the frontal cortex start shrinking leading to less effective thinking.

We all know how stressful ME is. It is good to try to do whatever works for you to counter the stress. For some it might be: television; music; meditation; deep breathing; tai chi or yoga; or going for a walk in fresh air. Be gentle on yourself, nurture yourself and if needs be, be a little selfish. And don't forget to drink water.

Fats

Fat is a topic that society is confused about. We have been told by the food industry that fats are bad for us but that a low fat spread is good. Both of which are untrue. Food companies have covered up a lot of information about fats because it's in all their products.

Coming back to thinking about cells again. Cells, like us, eat and drink water and do their task, then excrete their waste. For water to flow in and the waste to flow out, the cell's wall needs to be as thin as possible. The problem today is that people's cell walls are thick like leather. As such, the flow in and out of the cell is difficult so the cell is effectively constipated and not functioning properly.

Cells like to make 50% of their cell wall out of essential fatty acids (EFAs). EFAs are found in oily fish, flax seed oil and linseed oil. EFAs are a wonder food and are termed "essential" because the body cannot make them and therefore must be included in the diet. They do many good things in the body. They help with: regulating blood pressure; brain function; heart function; nerve function; and reducing inflammation.

> Although not EFAs, other organic cold pressed raw oils are generally good for health. Any oils that have been processed have been denatured and so then are not good for the body.
>
> Saturated fats are good in moderation; we do need a small amount of them. When we used to have more active lifestyles we could eat more saturated fat without consequence.

Today we don't eat as many EFA type foods as we should. Further, the EFA type foods don't contain as much EFA as they used to. However, our cells still need to make their cell walls. As such, they start using materials that are not as ideal and so the wall is less functional. Examples include cholesterol and worse still trans-fats (or hydrogenated fats).

A prime example of trans fats is margarine. A tub of margarine can be left open for months or even years and nothing will go near it (e.g. flies) because it's only a few steps away from being plastic. So get any margarine/spreads out of your diet straight away. Trans-fats are a major contributory factor in illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer and infertility.

For non-health reasons Palm oil is also one to avoid because eating it contributes towards rainforest destruction, in particular where orangutan apes live.

Ideally you shouldn't cook with olive oil. Although it is said to be stable at high temperatures, it's probably not a healthy idea to fry or roast with olive oil because it denatures the oil.

Frying is best done with butter or coconut oil. Some fat/oil in each meal is recommended to help digestion. If fat hasn't been used in the preparation, one recommendation is to drizzle a little olive oil on our food after it is cooked.

Acid and alkaline

Everything liquid has a level of acidity or alkalinity. Because you, as a human, are 70% water so have you. Acid and alkaline is measured from 0 to 14. From 0 to 7 is acid and from 7 to 14 is alkaline. For cells to be happy and healthy they need to be just slightly alkaline, for example 7.5.

As part of being alive, cells will always produce toxins. The cells effectively park the toxins outside their wall for it to be cleared away, similar to people with their rubbish on collection day.

Imagine if the rubbish men didn't take the rubbish away; it would fester, smell and attract rodents. This is what happens with our cells. When the rubbish/toxins build up we start to get symptoms and then finally illness.

Imagine if you had a rucksack on your back and every-time you expelled toxin it went in the rucksack making it heavier. Anyone that has been travelling will tell you that you want the rucksack as light as possible so that you can do the things you need to such as walking miles and running for a bus. The heavier the rucksack gets the harder it is to do normal things.

For the purposes of the following explanation acidity and toxicity are the same thing. We are all born with an individual level of acidity. As we live in a healthy or unhealthy way we either add to or counter our natural acidity level. The primary factor of a healthy or unhealthy lifestyle is our diet because everything we eat either has an acid or alkalising effect on the body.

100 or so years ago we had an 80% alkaline diet, now we have an 80% acid diet. As such, there is a lot of illness today. Our bodies want the 80% alkaline diet.

As illustrated in Diagram 1 overleaf, on the acid creating side of food there are proteins and grains. On the alkaline side there are fruit and vegetables. Water should be neutral but unfortunately today there is so much un-natural content in it that it's likely to be acidic. Even a vegetable curry is probably acidic because it's processed.

Sugar comes from sugar-cane which is brimming with nutrients (chromium, magnesium, zinc, vitamins, etc...). Processed sugar-cane is stripped down with the white sugar removed and all the nutritious remains given to pigs to eat. Nature's food is packaged in a nutritious way suitable for us to digest and use, so in the case of sugar-cane we need the chromium, magnesium, zinc and vitamins so that we can digest the sugar. By eating the refined sugar we cause our bodies to use its own reserves of nutrients to digest the sugar.

A typical modern day diet might start with cereal and toast, so we have already started with two of the most acidic foods - wheat and dairy. At lunchtime, a cheese and ham sandwich with a dash of lettuce in, is a triple dose of acid forming food - wheat, diary and red meat. Mid afternoon perhaps an apple but then after work you have a pizza, again a triple dose of acid forming food - wheat, diary and red meat.

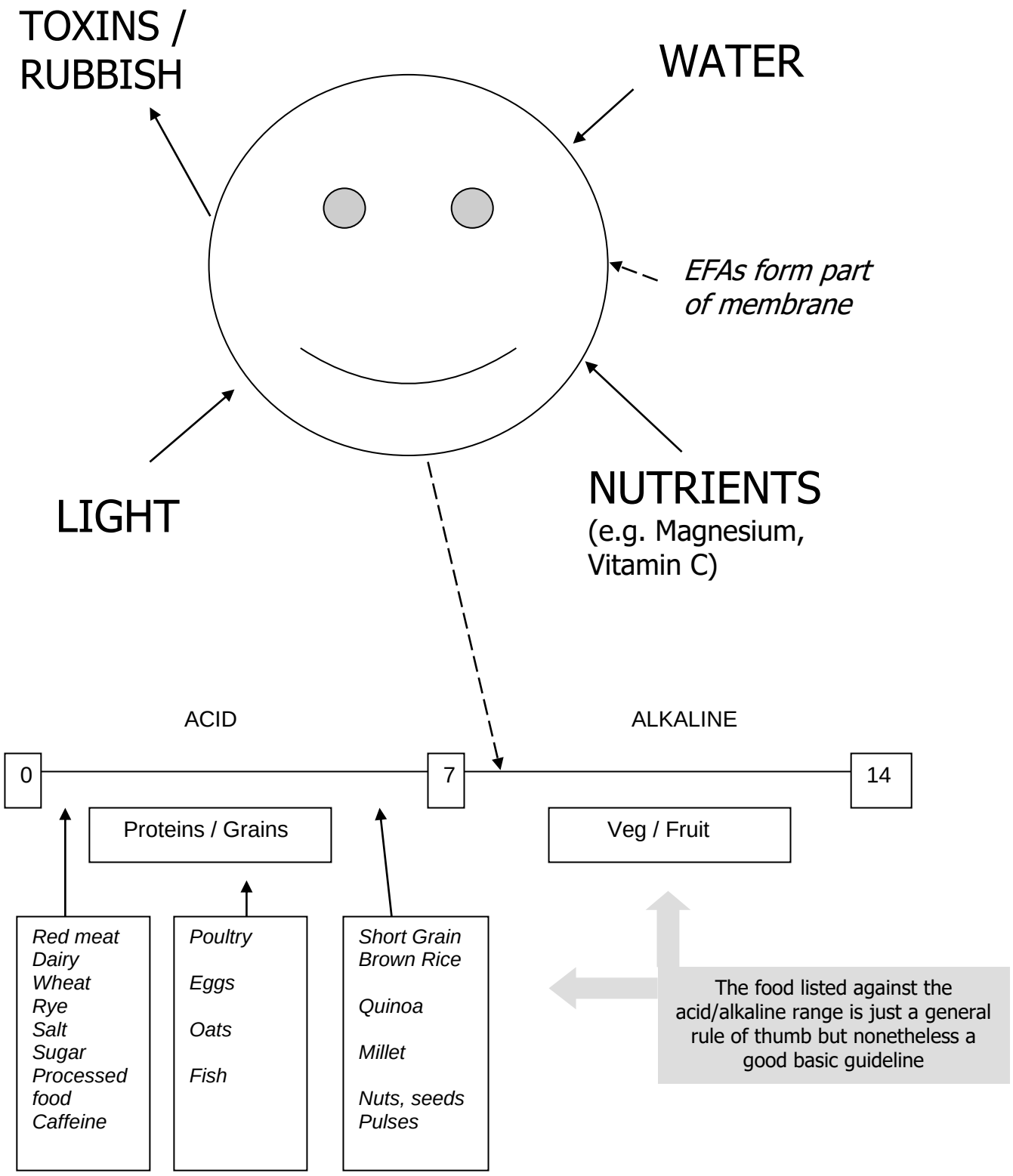
The recommendation is not to take proteins and grains out of the diet because we do need them but instead balance these out with alkaline forming food – fruit and vegetables. Conservatively, we should be eating 6 to 8 different portions of fruit and vegetables a day. 10 would be more ideal. It is important to have different fruit and vegetables each day so that you get a wide variety of different nutrients. Most of the portions should be vegetables because they are more mineral rich but also because fruit contains a lot of sugar which tends to upset blood sugar levels. The best vegetables are the green ones. Try to have the vegetables evenly throughout the day to maintain alkalinity in the body. Try to not have fruit after a meal because in the digestive system it sits on the meal and ferments and can cause bloating and indigestion.

Typically Judith recommends reducing intake of wheat but for ME people it should be removed altogether because, aside from being acid forming, today's wheat is very glutinous which tends to glue up the digestive system and takes a lot of water to digest it. Wheat also blocks the absorption of minerals such as magnesium, zinc, iron and calcium.

Further, Judith recommends removing dairy from an ME persons diet. It's acid forming but also contains a lot of un-natural junk today which makes it particularly unhealthy (e.g. hormones, anti-biotics etc...). If you must have milk from an animal, choose goats because they are a cleaner animal. Rice milk, oat milk or almond milk are the most healthy although it's best if you make these yourself because when bought from the shops it tends to have sugar in it.

Red meat should also be removed from an ME persons diet because it's acid forming and hard to digest.

Diagram 1
By Judith Reid



AVOID *Trans Fats / Hydrogenated Fats / Margarines*

Summary

Cells are a miniature version of you. You are a harmonious community of 50 trillion cells. Try to eat and live with compassion for your cells.

The main things to do:

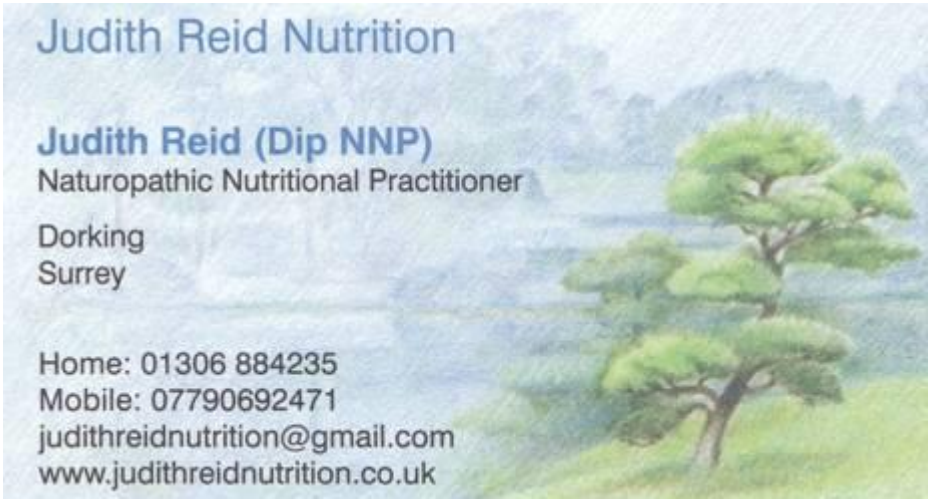
- 2 litres of still warm water spread throughout the day;
- At least 6 to 8 portions of fruit and vegetables daily, especially green vegetables;
- Oily fish 2 to 3 times a week;
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, red meat, dairy, wheat, salt, sugar and processed food.
- Avoid coca-cola and other fizzy drinks like the plague. They are full of sugar and chemicals. They are a diuretic to 32 times their volume and also turn 1/3 of the immune system off. Three cans will switch the immune system off for the day. They also contain phosphorous which disturbs the chemistry of the bones causing things like osteoporosis.
- Avoid, like the plague, spreads containing trans-fats and hydrogenated fats.
- Don't change your diet radically overnight because your cells are likely to go into shock. You might get a rash, feel even more tired than usual and spend a lot of time on the toilet. Change things gently, especially when you have ME.

ME is not a life sentence, you can get better. It might be a long hard road but you can get there. One of the key things is to take personal responsibility for getting better by applying a healthy diet.

Judith mentioned that she offers a free monthly newsletter by email. People can see Judith for nutrition advice. Typically, Judith charges £50 for the first 2 hours and £30 for following sessions but for ME patients Judith is offering a £20 reduction in the price of the first session.

Judith is happy to make home visits for those who are unable to visit her in Dorking (a small fee will be added on to cover petrol).

Judith's business card which includes contact details is included below.



The following pages are a write-up of the 'question & answer' session that followed the talk.

Questions and answers

When I first heard about acid and alkaline forming foods I was confused because I know all food passes through the intense acid of the stomach, however, now I understand that it's a complicated process that involves the whole digestive process and even some acidic foods can have an alkalising effect on the body, is that true?

Yes, lemon is a classic example. When you put lemon in your mouth it's acidic but it has an alkalising effect on the body. A hot lemon drink is a nice way to start the day.

What about herbal teas? What about Red Bush tea?

Herbal teas are generally healthy. Red Bush tea is good because it doesn't have caffeine in it. It does have some tannin in it but its a pretty low amount of it. Green tea is pretty healthy and includes antioxidants but it still has some caffeine in it so go easy with it.

I recommend taking coffee out of the diet because it's such a nerve stimulant and really puts the body into a flight or fight state.

Although there are healthier alternatives, a maximum of two cups of tea a day can be drunk. I would, however, recommend trying to cut it out completely long term.

I've heard that pure apple juice is good to clear the liver and gallbladder, does that makes sense?

The malic acid in apples can help break down gall stones and the pectin in the apples combines with cholesterol and toxins and can help take it out of the body.

How about benecol for lowering cholesterol?

Well things like benecol and flora-pro active are spreads and not good to have. They start as being food oils but are turned into a solid mass during the manufacturing. For that to happen there must be a lot of processing and high temperatures. The oils are denatured during this process and a lot of carcinogenic solvents are added. The end product is actually grey but as that would not be very appetising a lot of colourings are added to make it bright yellow.

If you're taking a lot of bread out of the diet, spreads will tend to follow anyway.

I've been eating pork is it a healthy choice of meat?

Pork is a red meat and one of the most toxic ones because pigs are generally very diseased animals. It's probably better to chose beef instead of pork but i'm not recommending beef either. A predominantly vegetarian diet is the most healthy. Treat meat more like a garnish and only have small amounts of it.

I find I have trouble maintaining weight if I eat a vegetarian diet.

For some having some meat in the diet is the best thing for them. If you eat a clean diet the body tends to find its own weight.

We don't actually need too much protein. If you eat sufficient grains, vegetables and pulses, you will be getting sufficient protein. Note however, that some ME sufferers do not fair very well on grains , so at least initially, animal protein could be used in the diet until such time that grains could be introduced.

Would you recommend brown rice and potatoes?

Yes. From a Chinese point of view short grain brown rice has an affinity with the colon which is an area that a lot of people have a problem with. The brown rice should be prepared properly by soaking it first for 12 to 24 hours in water. This breaks down chemicals in the grains that block absorption of various nutrients and block digestive enzymes from working. Even soaking the rice for a couple of hours is better than not at all.

The short grain rice in the colon has a sort of blotting paper effect, picking up toxins as it goes. Having short grain brown rice each day is a good idea.

I'm not saying don't have potatoes but as a preference I would choose the short grain brown rice. Potatoes belong to the deadly-nightshade family and so if you have arthritis or inflammation you do have to be a bit careful with potatoes, peppers, aubergines and tomatoes.

I understand that European wheat is different to American wheat. Our bodies are used to European wheat but in England we have American wheat. Is it better to have the French variety of wheat?

Yes. I've been on holiday in Europe and felt better eating bread there than at home and I've heard a lot of people have the same experience. European wheat is less glutinous but also contains fewer chemicals due to stronger restrictions in European countries.

In North Street in Guildford there is a shop called 'Maison Blanc' that sells bread that uses French wheat.

For me removing wheat was a major first step in improving my health. It was from there that I continued to make improvements.

In the break you said soya milk was not good.

Soya is not a good thing to have. The Chinese used to use it in crop rotation to fix nitrogen into the soil. They started to eat it only once they had learned to ferment it. They don't eat a lot of it and it's fermented.

The soya that we have in England was first introduced as a food stuff when industry was trying to find a use for the left-over's of producing soya oil. The left-over's are put through acid and alkaline washes and have solvents added to them to create end-products such as tofu and soya milk. Soya can disrupt our hormones dramatically and contains a lot of chemicals that block absorption of nutrients.

Rice milk or oat milk is the best to have. If you're desperate to have milk from an animal then choose goats milk.

How about Quorn?

Quorn is processed food that is made from mushrooms. Because it's fungal, try to avoid it if you have bowel or Candida issues.

Where do you get your calcium from?

Dairy does not provide calcium, in fact it draws calcium out of the bones. The best sources of Calcium are green leafy vegetables, hummus, nuts such as almonds, pulses, sesame seeds and seaweed.

A typical diet provides enough calcium. However, a typical diet lacks the magnesium required for the body to put the calcium into the bones.

Avoid calcium carbonate as a supplement because it's essentially chalk and gets stuck in many parts of the body (e.g. arteries, gallstones).

Do you get calcium in water?

Not entirely sure but as far as tap water goes it probably depends on where you live. Different brands of bottled water contain different minerals.

The thing about bottled water, however, is that it comes in plastic bottles. The water may have sat in the plastic bottle for years before you use it and chemicals can leak from the plastic into the water. Probably the best water is water from the tap that is then filtered. However, I'm not sure that filters that use reverse-osmosis are ideal because of what they remove from the water.

You mentioned earlier about cell walls becoming leathery, what is the effect of that on the body and does taking EFAs with a good diet correct this?
Each cell in the body can create cholesterol. If the cell does not get a good supply of water then the cell will use cholesterol to make it's wall retain water better so that it does not lose it. This also prevents fresh water entering the cell so well and causes stagnation, in turn causing illness in the body.

Are you against supplements?
I'm a great believer in supplements, they are part of what I deal with as my job as a nutritionist. If you eat a truly natural diet you might be ok without them, however, studies have been done on the mineral content of fruit and vegetables and have shown that since the 1940s the mineral content has dramatically reduced.

Organic food contains more nutrients. For example, a vegetable with pesticide on it does not need to produce the plant chemicals which would naturally protect the plant from insects, bacteria or the sun's rays. In an organic vegetable, the benefits of these plant chemicals are transferred to us when we eat them.

Our environment today is so toxic and stressful that we need more minerals to combat the problems that we are exposed to.

Which supplements do you take?
Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs). I do eat fish but I don't think it contains the EFA content that it used to.

Also a strong Antioxidant, Vitamin C, B vitamins and a good multi-mineral and vitamin. Vitamin C is used, amongst other things, to strengthen blood vessels. Without enough of it the body will create cholesterol and use it as an elastoplast to strengthen the blood vessels.

Pro-biotics are a good supplement. Even chlorine in water will destroy the good bacteria in our digestive system.

You've mentioned keeping dairy products out of the diet. What do you think of yogurts?
A bit of live natural yogurt is not too bad. It has been partially digested by the bacteria it contains. Any pro-biotics in the yogurt won't stay in the body but will do some good on the way through. I would use Saint Helens live goat's yogurt (available at Waitrose) rather than cow yogurt.

I've heard that pro-biotics help clear the build-up of sludge on the intestinal wall.
A great way to clean the digestive tract is with fibre.
The liver is the body's main detoxifying organ but it also creates bile. The bile goes into the gall bladder for storage until required by the intestines for breaking down food. However, the bile contains toxins and can be reabsorbed by the body. To ensure the bile and the toxins are removed from the body, eat fibre. The toxins bind with the fibre and are taken out of the body.

Good fibre sources are fruit and vegetables, short grain brown rice, millet, quinoa, soaked linseed and pulses. Bran is very scratchy for the digestive system and so not ideal. Porridge is good but should be soaked the night before. As mentioned earlier for the short grain brown rice, put hot water on it and maybe some lemon juice, leave it overnight, then throw the water away and boil it in fresh water.

What about breakfast cereals and porridge? Are they good to have?
Generally, breakfast cereals are not good. Porridge is good but because it's a grain it's best to soak it the day before. The soaking breaks down the enzyme inhibitors and phytates that block absorption. For example, Muesli was originally intended to be soaked before it was eaten but in today's fast lane we simply have it straight away with milk.
For oats, starting the soaking the night before is sufficient but for short grain brown rice it's best to soak it for 12-24 hours. But even if the rice is only soaked the night before it's better than not soaking it at all.

To soak just use hot water, perhaps with a bit of lemon juice which helps it break down. When ready to cook, throw the soaking water away and boil in new water. The cooking should take less time than normal after the soaking.

What do you think of raw food?

Raw food is good if you live in a very hot climate (e.g. California). If you're eating raw food, let's say lettuce and cucumber, on a cold day you're likely to feel cold yourself. You'd prefer to be having warm foods in the cold.

A lot of raw food can actually slow down the digestion. Chinese medicine, for example, advises against having raw food because of this reason. I find that if I have too much raw food in autumn or winter that I have very little energy. Because of the heat of spring and summer we tend to have more energy so eating raw food is more appropriate.

With ME, the digestive system is already very weak, so eating too much raw food will put too much strain on it. Raw food also creates a cleanse in the body so would very likely cause a relapse in an ME patient if not managed properly.

I've heard that having digestive enzymes as a supplement is recommended for ME because it saves the ME sufferer from using their own energy to create the enzymes.

From a perspective, everything that happens in the body starts from the digestion. If your digestion is poor then your health is also likely to be because you're not going to get what you should from your food.

In certain cases, a supplement of digestive enzymes is advisable if it looks like someone isn't processing proteins or other parts of their food. It is, however, not for everybody and somewhat of a last resort. I would first change the diet to see if that resolves in-digestion before resorting to digestive enzyme supplements.

Are there particular types of porridge oats that are recommended?

I've read a number of recommendations, for example, that oats are rolled in a particular way. Personally, however, I simply buy organic oats. I wouldn't worry too much about any further detail about which oats.

You have recommended avoiding sugar. What about honey?

Honey is still a sugar but better than typical sugar. If you want a sweetener, I would recommend having a look at blackstrap molasses which is essentially what is thrown away from the sugarcane when sugar is extracted. Blackstrap molasses contains lots of minerals. Manuka Honey is also quite good.

What about dried fruit?

Dried fruit is good but only in moderation because of the sugar content. I actually re-hydrate the dried fruit by dropping it in water before eating it. By hydrating the fruit it prevents the fruit from taking water out of the digestive system.

You mentioned earlier that stress affects digestion. If feeling stressed should we not eat? If we do eat what should we have?

When stressed we tend to breathe and sweat out more water than usual. In addition, water is moved by the body to the muscles rather than to the digestive system. As such, when stressed start by having warm water which helps to relax you. Do not starve yourself but eat more digestible foods. So, avoid dry food such as bread or crackers. Eat instead hydrated food (things like soup or short grain brown rice soaked and cooked well); eat slowly and chew well. If stressed, eating little and often is recommended.

Is ME/CFS caused by hydrogen sulphide? And is there is a new diagnostic test for ME/CFS?

Source: http://www.meassociation.org.uk/content/view/875/193/

Following a press conference at the Ritz Hotel in London on Thursday May 28, a number of UK newspapers have been reporting that the cause of ME/CFS has been identified and that a simple home-based diagnostic test for ME/CFS is now commercially available to the general public.

Daily Telegraph story

The urine test is based on the new scientific hypothesis that people with ME/CFS are producing excessive amounts of a chemical called hydrogen sulphide (H2S) and that this abnormality can be measured by a specific urine test (that measures an H2S metabolite/by-product).
The production of excessive amounts of this chemical (which can act as a mitochondrial* poison) is claimed to be due to overgrowth of certain lactate-producing bacteria in the gut (including species of enterococcus and streptococcus). This is coupled with the presence of metal (such as mercury and nickel) intoxication in the body. It is also claimed that the problem in the gut can be successfully treated through changes in diet, probiotics ('healthy bacteria') and antibiotics.

The urine test kit, designed for use at home, is only available privately at a basic cost of around £13. This test kit has to be ordered from abroad and is not available on the NHS.

Dr Charles Shepherd, Medical Adviser to the MEA, adds a note of caution:

"I have looked at the scientific information upon which this test is based and heard the presentations from Professor Kenny De Meirleir and Dr Chris Roelant - two of the people involved with this research - at the Invest in ME Conference on Friday 29 May. My conclusion is that while this is an interesting hypothesis, the test itself cannot yet be regarded as a scientifically proven diagnostic test for ME/CFS.

"The urine test needs to be further validated using significant numbers of ME/CFS patients with all degrees of severity and from various other referral centres. The results need to be compared to significant numbers of healthy matched controls, people with other conditions that involve fatigue, and people who are bed-bound or severely affected by other disabling conditions that may affect their nutritional status. The latter point, which was made at the conference on Friday, is particularly important because much of the work so far appears to relate to a severely affected sub-group of ME/CFS patients. The MEA's Ramsay Research Fund would be willing to consider any such research proposal. The results then need to be published in peer-reviewed medical journals.

"There are also going to be problems if people start using this test and then expect their family doctors/GPs to interpret the results and recommend/prescribe specific treatment, including antibiotics, based on the results. This is because the UK medical profession has not yet received any information about either the underlying hypothesis, or the test, or the treatment recommendations, in their scientific journals.

"Until we have further results from several good quality independent studies, it would be premature to conclude that a significant factor in the causation of ME/CFS has been discovered and that a simple urine test is now available for diagnosing ME/CFS. The recommendations regarding treatment are speculative and need to be subjected to equally rigorous clinical trials before any firm conclusions can be drawn about their general efficacy in ME/CFS."

* Mitochondria are the energy-producing parts of cells.

How to order and use the test

Information about ordering and using the test is at the following internet address.
http://www.theoneclickgroup.co.uk/news.php?start=2740&end=2760&view=yes&id=3559

Swine Flu

We are all aware of the ongoing Swine Flu pandemic, however, we are often left with unanswered questions. This article offers information about Swine Flu. The following article is about Swine Flu and CFS/ME.

Source: http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Pandemic-flu/Pages/QA.aspx

What is swine flu?

Swine influenza is a disease in pigs. The virus currently transmitting among people is now generally referred to as swine flu, although the origin of the disease is still under investigation. There is no evidence of this strain of the disease circulating in pigs in the UK.

There are regular outbreaks of swine influenza in pigs worldwide. It does not normally infect humans, although this occasionally does occur - usually in people who have had close contact with pigs.

Swine influenza viruses are usually of the H1N1 subtype. The swine flu that has spread to humans is a version of this virus.

Which people are most vulnerable?

Those who are more at risk from becoming seriously ill with swine flu are:

- people with chronic lung disease, including people who have had drug treatment for their asthma within the past three years,
- people with chronic heart disease,
- people with chronic kidney disease,
- people with chronic liver disease,
- people with chronic neurological disease (neurological disorders include motor neurone disease, Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis),
- people with suppressed immune systems (whether caused by disease or treatment),
- people with diabetes,
- pregnant women,
- people aged 65 years and older, and
- young children under five years old.

How is swine flu infection diagnosed?

There is now a new self-care service, called the National Pandemic Flu Service, which allows people to check their condition online or over the telephone (0800 1 513 100 or text phone 0800 1 513 200) and obtain antiviral medication if swine flu is confirmed.

When you are given your unique access number, you will be told where your nearest antiviral collection point is. You should then ask a flu friend - a healthy friend or relative - to go and pick up the antiviral medication. If you think you have swine flu, do not go out to your GP or A&E.

The following people should call their GP directly for an assessment of their symptoms and a diagnosis:

- those with a serious underlying illness,
- pregnant women,
- those who have a sick child under one year of age,
- those with a condition that **suddenly** gets much worse, or
- those with a condition that is still getting worse after seven days (five for a child).

Is the new swine flu virus contagious?

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) says the new swine flu virus is highly contagious and is spreading from person to person.

Swine flu spreads in the same way as ordinary colds and flu. The virus is spread through the droplets that come out of the nose or mouth when someone coughs or sneezes.

If someone coughs or sneezes and they do not cover it, those droplets can spread about one metre (3ft). If you are very close to the person you might breathe them in.

Or, if someone coughs or sneezes into their hand, those droplets and the virus within them are easily transferred to surfaces that the person touches, such as door handles, hand rails, telephones and keyboards. If you touch these surfaces and touch your face, the virus can enter your system, and you can become infected.

How long does the virus live on surfaces?

The flu virus can live on a hard surface for up to 24 hours, and a soft surface for around 20 minutes.

What is the incubation period for swine flu?

According to the Health Protection Agency, the incubation period for swine flu (time between infection and appearance of symptoms) can be up to seven days, but is most likely to be between two and five days. It is, however, too early to be able to provide details on virus characteristics, including incubation period, with absolute certainty at this time.

When are people most infectious?

People are most infectious to others soon after they develop symptoms, although they continue to shed the virus (for example, in coughs and sneezes) for up to five days (seven days in children). People become less infectious as their symptoms subside, and once their symptoms are gone, they are no longer considered infectious to others.

How quickly is swine flu spreading?

Swine flu is now widespread in the UK and spreading rapidly. The number of new cases in the UK is doubling every seven days. Most of these are because people are catching swine flu in their local community and not as the result of foreign travel.

Should I avoid contact with people suspected of having swine flu?

All suspected cases who have swine flu symptoms will have been asked to self-isolate at home and restrict their contact with people. The vast majority of people should go about their normal activities, including going to school or work. This includes children who attend a school with a confirmed case of swine flu.

There is no need on risk grounds to avoid contact with people who might simply have come into contact with those having the illness, such as the parents of children at schools with a confirmed case but who are not themselves ill.

How dangerous is it?

It is difficult to judge this at the moment. While there have been deaths, symptoms exhibited by most infected people have not been severe.

It appears that early doses of antiviral medicines such as Tamiflu are effective in helping people to recover. In the UK we have enough antivirals to treat half the population if they were to become ill. Also, orders of Tamiflu have been placed to increase UK supplies to 50m doses, enough to treat 80% of the population.

What are the symptoms of swine flu?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are expected to be similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal flu and include fever (a high body temperature of 38C/100.4F or over), fatigue, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with swine flu have also reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

How long are symptoms expected to last?

As with any sort of influenza, the severity and duration of symptoms will vary depending on treatment and individual circumstances. Most cases reported in the UK to date have been relatively mild, with those affected starting to recover within a week.

How does swine flu cause death?

Like any other type of flu, people can die from swine flu if they develop complications, like pneumonia.

Should we expect a more severe second wave of the pandemic in the winter?

Features of previous flu pandemics suggest that the current viral strain will become even more widespread in the autumn or winter, causing more illness and death. It is possible that the virus will mutate (change) into a more potent strain.

Is it possible to catch swine flu twice?

Yes, because the virus can mutate (change). If you become infected with the swine flu virus, your body produces antibodies against it, which will recognise and fight off the virus if the body ever encounters it again. However, if the virus mutates, your immune system may not recognise this different strain and you may become ill again, although you may have some 'cross protection' due to encountering a similar virus previously.

What documents are needed to be able to collect the antivirals?

The flu friend must show their own ID as well as that of the patient. The authorisation number and ID information will be checked to ensure it matches the information provided when the assessment of symptoms was completed.
The ID includes:

- a utility bill,
- passport,
- a credit or debit card,
- driving licence, or
- NHS card.

What can I do?

You can reduce, but not eliminate, the risk of catching or spreading swine flu by:

- Always covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully.
- Maintaining good basic hygiene, for example washing hands frequently with soap and warm water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to face, or to other people.
- Cleaning hard surfaces, such as door handles, frequently using a normal cleaning product.
- You should also prepare now by:
- **Confirming a network of 'flu friends'** – friends and relatives – who could help you if you fall ill. They could collect medicines and other supplies for you so you do not have to leave home and possibly spread the virus.
- **Knowing your NHS number and those of other family members** and keeping them in a safe place. It is not essential to have your NHS number in order to receive treatment, but it can help NHS staff to find your health records. You will be able to find your NHS Number on your medical card or other items such as prescribed medication, GP letter or hospital appointment card/letter.
- **Making sure you have a thermometer and adequate quantities of cold and cough remedies** in your medicine cupboard in case you or your family are affected by swine flu.

What should I do if I think I'm infected?

If you have flu-like symptoms and are concerned that you may have swine flu:

- Stay at home, read up on swine flu symptoms and check your condition using the National Pandemic Flu Service.
- Call your GP directly if:
  - you have a serious underlying illness,
  - you are pregnant,
  - you have a sick child under one year old,
  - your condition suddenly gets much worse, or
  - your condition is still getting worse after seven days (five for a child).

The National Pandemic Flu Service is a new online service that will assess your symptoms and, if required, provide an authorisation number which can be used to collect antiviral medication from a local collection point. For those who do not have internet access, the same service can be accessed by telephone on:

- Telephone: 0800 1 513 100
- Minicom: 0800 1 513 200

If swine flu is confirmed, ask a healthy relative or friend to pick up your antiviral medication for you.
In the meantime, take paracetamol-based cold remedies to reduce fever and other symptoms, drink plenty of fluids and get lots of rest.
Do not go into your GP surgery, or to a hospital, as you may spread the disease to others.

Is swine flu treatable?

Testing has shown that the swine flu can be treated with the antiviral medicines oseltamavir (brand name Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza). However, the drugs must be administered at an early stage to be effective. See Treatment for more information.
The UK already has a stockpile of antivirals sufficient to treat half the population. Also, orders of Tamiflu have been placed to increase UK supplies to 50m doses, enough to treat 80% of the population.

What do antivirals do?

Antivirals are not a cure, but they help you to recover by:

- relieving some of the symptoms,
- reducing the length of time you are ill by around one day, and
- reducing the potential for serious complications, such as pneumonia.

When will there be a vaccine?

Vaccines are complex and difficult to manufacture in large numbers. However, the Government has already signed contracts to get enough vaccine for the entire country as soon as it is available.
While the first batches of vaccine will start to arrive in the autumn it will take several months to get enough vaccine for everyone. It will also take time to fully test the vaccine and to organise the vaccination of everyone in the country.
To reduce the impact of swine flu, the NHS is focusing on those at the greatest risk first.

Who will be a priority for vaccination with the H1N1 swine flu vaccine?

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has previously advised that the priority groups in relation to H5N1 (the bird flu vaccine) should be assumed to be:

- frontline health and social care workers (to help ensure the NHS functions well),
- older people and those in clinical risk groups, as flu can be more serious in these groups, and
- under-16s, as protecting children can slow the spread of the virus in the population.

The priority groups would be reviewed in light of evidence on the virulence and severity of the new virus in different groups.
The government will still aim to achieve universal vaccination, but because the vaccine will have to be delivered over time, it is right that we start thinking now about groups to be prioritised.

Swine Flu and CFS/ME

The following information was sourced from the ME association website.

Are people with ME/CFS more at risk of catching swine flu?

Overall, the answer is probably no. However, if you belong to a sub-group who easily pick up infections, especially coughs, colds and flu-like infections, then the risk of catching swine flu may well be slightly higher than for normal healthy people.

Are people with ME/CFS more at risk of developing complications from swine flu?

Overall, there is no evidence to indicate that people with ME/CFS are more at risk from developing the serious complications that can occasionally occur with swine flu. However, those who are more severely affected, especially anyone who is bed-bound or prone to chest infections, may be more at risk from respiratory complications. And as many people with ME/CFS experience a relapse or exacerbation in symptoms whenever they catch a viral infection, an episode of swine flu is highly likely to make ME/CFS worse.

Feedback from people with ME/CFS who have had swine flu

Feedback so far is from four people with ME/CFS who have had swine flu. All four have had several swine flu symptoms and three have been quite poorly but without any serious complications. One has had a relatively mild illness. They are all recovering slowly. Two have taken Tamiflu with nausea being reported by both as a side effect.

Should people with ME/CFS take Tamiflu?

The simple answer at present is probably yes - but this is clearly a decision that has to be made in relation to individual circumstances. Tamiflu appears to be a generally safe and effective treatment with a low level of side-effects. So Tamiflu is a drug that should be seriously considered when a person with ME/CFS develops swine flu, or has symptoms suggestive of swine flu - the main reason for use being that the swine flu infection could well cause an exacerbation of ME/CFS.

The following information was sourced from Sarah Myhill (a specialist in fatigue related illnesses whom has worked in healthcare for over 20 years). Please consult with your doctor before following any medical advice.

The interesting thing about all flu pandemics is that only about half of the population actually get flu. The question we should be asking is what is it about this half that stops them from getting flu because they are undoubtedly exposed to the flu virus? Clearly their defences against infection are good, so what is it about those people that make the difference.

Vitamin D

Flu pandemics are much more virulent during the winter months than the summer months. Indeed it is already being predicted that swine flu will flare up in the Autumn. The reason for this is vitamin D. Vitamin D is the sunshine vitamin and so the more sunshine you can get without actually burning, the better your vitamin D levels. Indeed a recent paper in the Lancet confirmed that vitamin D is indeed highly protective against viral infection. Roughly speaking one hour of Mediterranean sunshine will produce 10,000iu of vitamin D. Most pills in shops provide only 400iu of vitamin D – furthermore, this is often as the inactive vitamin D2 rather than the active D3. I like people to have at least 2,000iu of vitamin D3 daily and for people who may be particularly susceptible, I recommend a once weekly dose of 50,000iu of vitamin D3.

Continued overleaf...

Hypochlorhydria – low stomach acid

Swine flu is an enterovirus – that is to say it infects the gut. All viruses get into the body through the mouth. Those that are inhaled get stuck onto the sticky mucous lining the respiratory tract, coughed up and swallowed. That is to say all these bugs end up in the stomach and the stomach is the first line of defence against infection. The stomach should be an acid bath – those people with good acid stomachs therefore will kill the virus, or at least substantially reduce their numbers. This means that people with low stomach acid, either because they are naturally like that, or because they are taking acid blockers (such as proton pump inhibitors, H2 blockers, or antacids) will be more susceptible to infection with swine flu. A test that will give you some idea if you have low stomach acid is to swallow half a teaspoon of sodium bicarbonate in a glass of water. If you have an acid stomach the sodium bicarbonate will react with this, produce carbon dioxide and you will burp. If you suspect hypochlorhydria then this could be tested for by doing a salivary test, namely a salivary vascular endothelial growth factor - (see HYPOCHLORHYDRIA on website).

If you are hypochlorhydric, you can either acidify the stomach at mealtimes using betaine hydrochloride or, in these circumstances, use ascorbic acid. Ascorbic acid is vitamin C. It kills viruses very effectively because it is an acid and also because it is an ascorbate – see below.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C kills all bacteria and viruses, but is remarkably non-toxic to human cells. Ascorbic acid is the best form because it acidifies the stomach and the ascorbate is also directly toxic. At the first sign of any cold or flu, I suggest taking 10 grammes (10,000mg) initially and then adjust the dose according to symptoms. The aim is to cause mild diarrhoea – the reason it causes diarrhoea is because it kills the friendly bacteria in the gut – that is to say once you get the diarrhoea, you know you have got a therapeutic dose. You can then replace the bacteria in the gut using probiotics – (see PROBIOTICS and KEFIR on website).

Take reasonable hygienic precautions

Not because this will stop you from getting an exposure, but because it will help reduce the initial viral load. This gives the immune system a bit more time to get up and running. My guess is that masks will be pretty useless and detract from the more important measure of hand washing. The virus is spread from the respiratory tract by runny noses, coughing and sneezing, the droplets stick onto furniture and fittings and are picked up by touching.

Allow inflammation.. The body reacts against viruses with inflammation and the result of inflammation is either directly toxic to the virus, or helps to physically expel virus from the body. For example, viruses are very temperature sensitive – for the body to run a fever is a good thing – fever kills viruses (and bacteria). A good snotty nose helps to wash out virus from the nose and a hacking cough blasts the bugs from the lungs. Symptoms may be uncomfortable but should be welcomed as an appropriate way to get rid of virus. This is why I hate to see symptom-suppressing cold remedies such as paracetamol, antihistamines, alcohol, decongestants, cough mixtures which interfere with the body's natural mechanisms of killing and expelling virus. **SO DO NOT SUPPRESS SYMPTOMS – THEY ARE NATURE'S WAY OF EXPELLING INFECTIONS.**

Run a temperature – there is no doubt that people who tend to run cold all the time are more prone to picking up infections and indeed this is the basis of the age old adage to "wrap up well in cold weather or you will catch a chill". It would be interesting to measure your basal temperature. Low temperature can be indicative of borderline hypothyroidism and this can certainly present with recurrent infections. Children are very good at running a temperature at the first sign of virus, but adults less good. At one stage Boots used to market a product called rhinotherm which blasted hot air into the nose – the idea is that you inhaled this at the first sign of a cold and for some people it got rid of the virus. I know some patients can get rid of a virus by giving themselves a temperature – i.e. using a hot bath to get themselves as hot as possible and then wrapping up in blankets with a hot water bottle to make themselves sweat it out. I know some athletes deliberately go running in order to induce a temperature, sweat out a virus, but I have to say this is extremely risky and not something I would recommend as it could trigger a flare of chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS)! The only exception to using paracetamol for fevers is in some children who tend to get fits if their

temperature goes up too high. In this event paracetamol and tepid (have you ever had a fever and cold water splashed on you?) sponging should be used to prevent this happening. It is therefore doubly important in these children that micronutrients are used to improve the immune response.

Rest and warmth sound like common sense but are ignored by many. Rest allows the immune system to work unhampered whilst warmth kills bugs. Some people find a hot bath or a sauna produces an artificial fever and helps get rid of infection. So much CFS is triggered by the workaholic who continues to strive even when they are ill.

Zinc - 10mgs four times daily into the mouth kills microbes. Zinc is probably the most common deficiency resulting in poor immunity.

Consider a detox regime. There is no doubt that chemicals have immuno-suppressive effects – they also depress the bone marrow and this could explain borderline anaemia and low white cell counts. I often do fat biopsies on patients and invariably find raised levels of pesticides or volatile organic compounds – indeed I have yet to see a normal result – and all these chemicals cause immune suppression. Increasingly I am coming to the view that we should all do detox regimes. First of all we should avoid chemicals as much as we possibly can, secondly take good micronutrients to improve the liver detoxification of chemicals and thirdly sweating regimes. Obviously the most physiological sweating regime is to take exercise, but impossible in CFS patients. Far infra red saunas are effective in reducing chemical loads, as demonstrated by doing fat biopsies before and after sweating regimes.

What about a vaccine?
A previous vaccine against swine flu turned out to be worse than the disease. An outbreak in the US in 1976 infected 200 soldiers at a military camp in New Jersey, of whom 12 were hospitalised and one died. But before it was over 40 million people had been vaccinated, 25 of whom died and 500 of whom developed Guillain-Barre syndrome, an inflammation of the nervous system which can cause paralysis and be fatal.

At this point I would not advise people to have a vaccination from swine flu for the following reasons:

* No trials have been done to see if the vaccine is effective

* We have no idea about side effects – at present the virus appears to be producing mild symptoms and my educated guess is that if all the above precautions are observed, then the illness will stay mild. Indeed the manufacturers are refusing to provide any guarantees or indemnity in the event of side effects.

* Vaccinations are always a two edged sword – they have the ability to switch on the immune system. Ideally of course this should be against the virus, but vaccinations can certainly switch on chronic fatigue syndromes, allergies and probably autoimmunity.

Sit on the fence whilst the virus is relatively mild. The ideal scenario would be to get your nutritional status perfect, get a dose of swine flu now, have a mild infection and then be immune for decades to come! That is the best possible form of vaccination! It is possible that in future epidemics the virus will mutate into something more virulent.

What about Tamiflu?
Again there is no evidence that this protects against death – it would be useful if it helped reduce viral load but this is also unproven. Side effects are also an unknown quantity. It only has a chance to be effective if given within 48 hours of the first symptom. Since it is now almost impossible to get without a doctor's prescription and instant access to doctors is difficult, one would not like to rely on Tamiflu! Again my educated guess is that all the above nutritional interventions will be highly protective and Tamiflu will be irrelevant.