

Lloyd's Wellbeing Centre

Helping you stay healthy, focused and motivated in these unprecedented times

The past few weeks have undoubtedly presented many new challenges to all of us, both physically and psychologically.

We want you to stay fit and well, so we've lined up a great panel of Health and Wellbeing experts who will bring practical tips and advice on a weekly basis to help you all the way.

In this issue...

- Are you struggling with healthy **eating habits** during lockdown?
- Top tips for **healthier snacking**
- Getting enough **good-quality sleep**
- Using **hyperimmune plasma** in treating Covid-19 patients



ARE YOU STRUGGLING WITH HEALTHY EATING HABITS DURING LOCKDOWN?



Are you finding that you are adrift with erratic, excessive and muddled patterns of eating?

You are not alone. Lockdown has affected our health and wellbeing in many ways, one of the most obvious is in changes to our eating habits and our relationship with food.

On the positive side, some of us have managed to use lockdown as an opportunity to clean up dietary routines of grab-and-eat breakfasts, on-the-go lunches fitted into busy office schedules, and calorie packing (but enjoyable) pub stops and meals out. Now, constantly bound to the home environment, some of us are experimenting with healthier recipes. We have been more

mindful of not wasting fresh fruit and veg which has led to us eating more of it; and reaping the benefits of these healthy changes by experiencing more energy and excess weight loss. However, there are many of us who are struggling with the whole lockdown experience.

A [recent survey](#) by King's College London (KCL) carried out earlier this month across 2,250 UK residents found that the threat from the virus and the restrictions on behaviour are having an impact on various aspects of our wellbeing. One of the most notable effects is that 35% of respondents to the survey say they are either eating more food or less healthy food during lockdown than they normally would, and no surprises on the next statistic - very nearly a fifth of us (19%) - are drinking more alcohol than normal.

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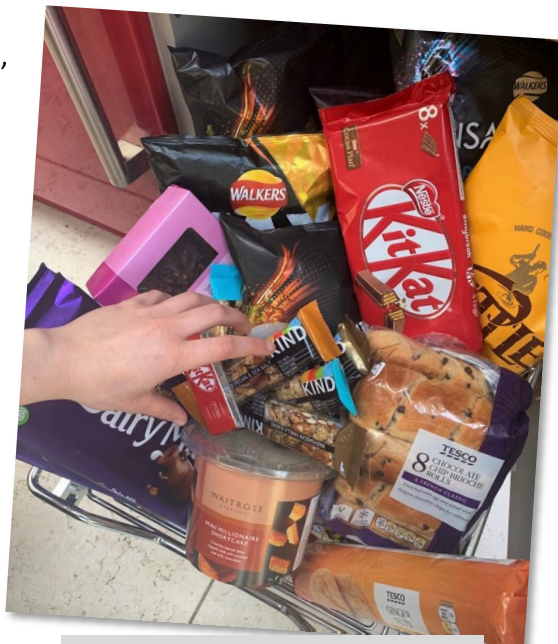
So, why are so many of us struggling with healthy eating?

Firstly, lockdown has changed the way many of us shop. For some of us, a fear of being caught short or concerns that shop supplies might run out, has pushed us into a sort of primeval survival 'stock mode' and this inevitably includes throwing in our shopping baskets some of those quick fix chocolate bars, sugary snacks, treats, and deserts that may never have featured in the pre-lockdown shop.

With their high metabolic rates, snacking is a way of life for many kids and young adults, so if you are catering to keep the family happy in the lockdown environment, this urge to stockpile is just compounded. So, by our own making, we are putting temptation in our way.

Away from nicely stocked cupboards there is far more going on to influence us. One of the key drivers that controls what we eat, is the importance of having fixed routines around food and eating. Lockdown has for many of us turned our world upside down.

Before lockdown, our eating would have for the most part been designed round the pressures and commitments of our working day using familiar favourite down time go-to 'watering-holes' for lunch and tea breaks and drinks. We've had these familiar comfort zones snatched from us and been forced to adapt instantly to a new, continuously bland landscape of home. For most of us, it's been all very challenging.



Does your snack cupboard contain several of these naughty temptations?

Looking further than the disruption of habits, there are psychological elements at play. The coronavirus crisis has brought disruption and anxiety to many of our lives. Stresses unfolded in a kaleidoscope of different ways and we are constantly having to deal with the ever-changing landscape of our emotions. The King's College London survey found that almost half of us (49%) are feeling more anxious or depressed than normal as a result of coronavirus. Emotional eating is a way that many people deal with stress, anxiety, loneliness or just being plain bored.

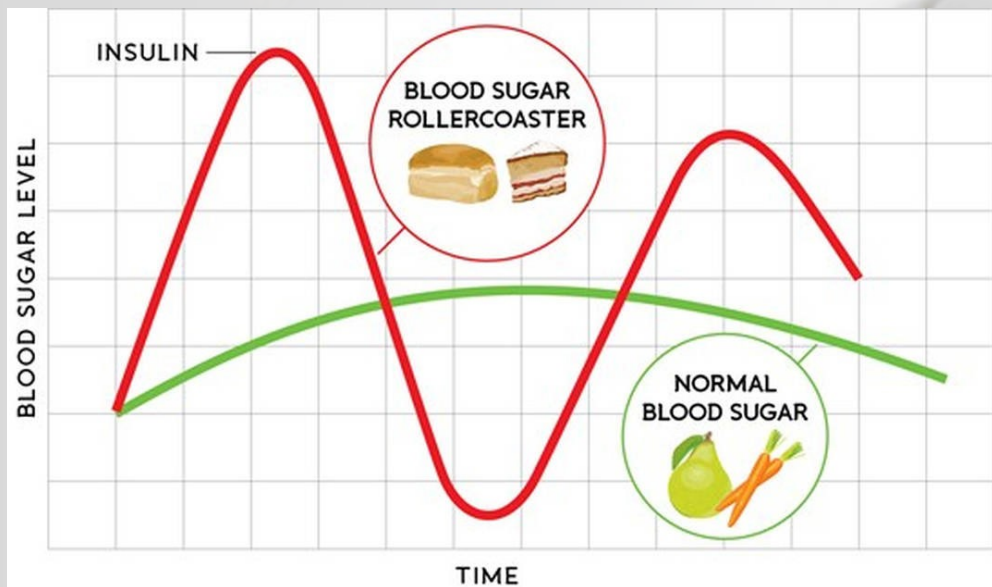
Many of us are turning to snacking or comfort foods in lockdown when we want to soothe or distract ourselves from these uncomfortable feelings. So why do we do this? Eating more carbohydrates, especially sugar, generates a pleasure response in the form of dopamine; but it's a short-term fix. As the dopamine signal gets weaker we crave more sugar to get the same happy fix, which drives us into a vicious cycle of more consumption.



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A King's College London [report](#) also indicates that 38% of us are sleeping less during the lockdown. Lack of sleep messes with our hormones. Firstly, poor sleep stimulates an appetite hormone ghrelin which makes us eat more. Sleep deprivation also leads to a poor ability to cope with stress which then feeds emotional eating.

Snacking, picking or grazing on food means that we are never really hungry when we sit down for proper designated mealtimes. High sugar snacks pay havoc with your blood sugar levels sending us on a rollercoaster of sugar highs and lows as your insulin struggles to control your blood sugar, leading to us craving more of the same.



Nutritional experts are concerned that as lockdown extends onward, we really must make all efforts to get back on an even keel, else there will be a price to pay in terms of our overall health and wellbeing.

Author: Janice Kaye - Managing Director, Thrive4Life



TOP TIPS FOR HEALTHY SNACKING HABITS DURING LOCKDOWN AND BEYOND!

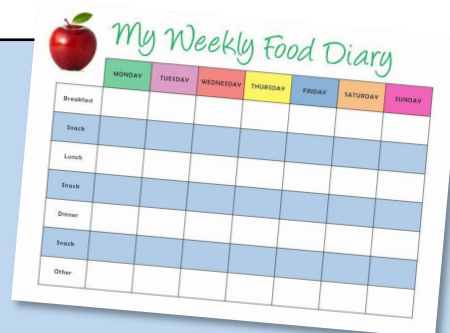
Are you finding yourself constantly grazing and making more trips to the fridge? Are you finding grocery shopping challenging, and is your comfort and boredom eating on the increase? Perhaps *wine o'clock* is becoming a daily occurrence and starting earlier and earlier?

Following on from the previous article where we looked at why some of us are struggling with good eating habits during Lockdown, here we are talking about ways to support your energy, mood and immune system. You can do this by choosing healthier snack alternatives, being more mindful around eating, and focusing on other factors that support you in eating healthily.



1. Keep a food/drink diary

You may find it helpful to keep an honest food and drink diary over 4 days. This will identify how much caffeine, alcohol and sugary treats you consume (include everything that passes your lips).



2. Only use snacks for energy when you are genuinely hungry

Get the pleasure back in eating by cutting down your eating and reminding yourself what an appetite feels like! When you feel hungry you will enjoy and appreciate eating so much more!

3. Be aware of your feelings when you eat

If you are feeling stressed, anxious or bored, what can you do to release these feelings? Try moving your body instead of eating... jumping jacks, dancing to music, wall push ups... distract yourself!! Read something relaxing? Listen to some music or a podcast?

If it's loneliness that's making you reach for food, recognise this feeling and contact someone for a chat.

4. Keep your blood sugar balanced by choosing low-sugar foods

For balancing blood sugar and steady energy throughout the day, choose low-sugar foods and combine with protein. Avoid refined pastries and white breads as they release sugar fast. Wholegrain bread and crackers are a better choice for steady energy. Keep snack portion size to one handful.

5. Be mindful of the enjoyment of eating in that moment

Whenever you are eating, whether it be a proper meal or a healthy snack, be mindful of the enjoyment of eating in that moment and put all other distractions aside. Don't eat whilst chatting on the phone, reading or watching TV, as these distractions lead to you only half registering your enjoyment and this habit inevitably will lead to more eating!

6. Ensure you are getting enough sleep

Sleep influences eating habits so it's important to get sleep back in shape – so read our top tips guide on how to improve sleep in this issue.

TOP TIPS FOR HEALTHY SNACKING HABITS DURING LOCKDOWN AND BEYOND!

Time to revamp your snack options to support your energy, mood and immune system

Start phasing out any remaining chocolate eggs left over from Easter and plan your alternative healthy and tasty snacks. Use the guide below to help you.



Crudities

Simple, healthy and tasty! Use any vegetables that suit your taste; carrots, peppers, celery sticks, cucumber, cauliflower florets, mushrooms. Serve with hummus, taramasalata, guacamole or simply add spices and seasonings to natural yoghurt.

Also try celery sticks filled with nut butter, or cucumber wheels with a protein topping.



Wholegrain crackers

Choose wholegrain crackers over bread.

Why not try two wholegrain crackers with a nut butter (no added sugar), or two wholegrain crackers with smoked salmon.

Olives

Love them or hate them - olives are a healthy snack alternative. They are relatively low calorie and contain healthy fats and antioxidants.



Mixed nuts and seeds

Mixed nuts and seeds are easy to get hold of and easy to store, so ideal for lockdown times. Be careful on the amount you eat as they are relatively high calorie, so think of just a handful as a snack. They contain healthy fats, fibre and antioxidants, high levels of vitamins E, B and magnesium and are great for supporting the immune system.



Sweet snack

A small pot or bowl of plain or Greek yoghurt served with strawberries, blueberries or raspberries and topped with a sprinkle of crushed hazelnuts. *If you are struggling to find fresh fruit - frozen fruit is just as nutritious, lasts longer and seems to be readily available.*



Other snacks

- 1 boiled egg
- ½ wholegrain wrap with chicken salad
- Apple / pear / mandarin with 1 tablespoon of pumpkin seeds or small spoon of nut butter
- Mug of miso soup



ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH GOOD-QUALITY SLEEP?

It's a common issue to us all, but at the same time intensely personal

Many of us are currently confined to our four walls for most of the day, but there are also those that work in the NHS, logistics and other industries that are going out to work in this strange new world we are forced to live in.

This new way of living has created multiple challenges for us, and one of the biggest complaints has been that it has completely messed with our ability to sleep well.

Sleep is one of humanity's great unifiers. No matter who we are or where we are in the world and in our lives, we share a common need for sleep.

Before lockdown, getting a good night's sleep was a problem for many of us with 10% suffering from chronic insomnia. A survey carried out in the early days of lockdown found that 38% of us are reporting that we are either sleeping less or the quality of our sleep is being disturbed.

But it's not surprising is it? As the coronavirus pandemic rips across the world, changing how we spend our day, socialising, exercising, interacting with our partners and families, eating, and more; it is understandable that the importance of ensuring good sleep has slipped from many of our agendas as a highlighted priority.



ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH GOOD-QUALITY SLEEP?

It was originally thought that the process of sleep was a bit like putting the car in the garage and turning the ignition off – no activity, no energy. A better analogy is that sleep is like a car becoming self-driving and running all sorts of essential errands for us to maintain our overall physical and mental health.

Sleep is a critical physiological process that influences a wide range of important physiological functions.

Now we are all pressured to the extreme by the disruptions brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, there is never a better time to make sleep a priority; because getting good sleep will support you both mentally and physically in this time of heightened need.

Benefits of good quality sleep

Enhanced Immunity and better health generally

Easier weight management/ healthier metabolism

Better hormonal balance

Healthy heart

Anti-aging

Improved all-round cognitive ability

Improved memory/ better decision making

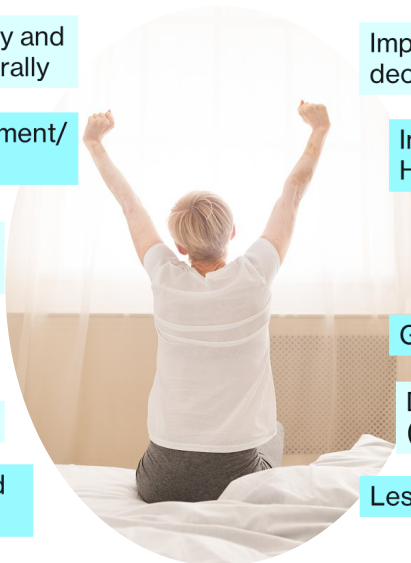
Improved overall feeling of Health and Wellbeing

More energy and engagement with others

Greater resilience to stress

Decreased mental illness (anxiety / depression)

Less prone to accidents



Author: Janice Kaye - Managing Director, Thrive4Life

How can getting good sleep support you during this pandemic?

There has been a plethora of research in recent years that has begun to unravel the mysteries of the importance of sleep and its critical role in all aspects of our overall health and wellbeing. Here are just some of the ways a good night's sleep can help you.

It's widely appreciated that if you've been able to have a good night's sleep, you'll wake up with **more energy and an overall feeling of good health and wellbeing**. Sleep enhances your immune system, leading to better health generally. Several studies have shown that being sleep deprived lowers your immunity to cold viruses and lowers recovery rates.

Both adults and children are needing to stay sharp as they quickly adapt to the new demands of home-working and home-schooling. **Sleep improves all round cognitive ability, memory, better decision making, enhances complex thinking, learning and our ability to engage with others.**

Getting a good night's sleep has been shown to **enhance our mood**, give us a **greater resilience to stress**, and can help **alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety** if you suffer with these.

Levels of key hormones that **help control your appetite** are regulated during sleep called Ghrelin and Leptin. Getting good sleep will help these important hormones stay in check and support you in maintaining (rather than gaining) weight and **maintaining a healthy metabolism**. Further scientifically proven benefits of sleep include supporting heart health, anti-aging and making us far less accident-prone.

With these all-round benefits, all of us need to try and prioritise getting consistent high-quality sleep during the Coronavirus pandemic. *In next week's issue you will find comprehensive guidance on top tips and advice to help you do just that.*

USING HYPERIMMUNE PLASMA THERAPY IN TREATING COVID-19 PATIENTS



Dr Colin Hamilton-Davies is the Clinical Lead for the Acute Cardiac Critical Care at St Bartholomew's Hospital Heart Centre, with 30 years of experience of working in intensive care.

His research focus for his entire medical career has involved the clinical study of mechanisms to boost the immune systems of critical patients who are struggling to recover. He is an expert in hyperimmune plasma therapy.

In this article Dr Colin Hamilton-Davies talks about the exciting new trials that have just been announced being set up across the UK relating to hyperimmune plasma therapy treatment that could help save lives in the Coronavirus crisis.



The UK and indeed the world, are currently in the grips of a global pandemic due to the Coronavirus. Whilst much attention and money have been spent on the development of a Coronavirus vaccine, the WHO confirms this will likely take many months – and, of course, offers nothing to patients who contract and suffer with the virus now. Trials of several antiviral drugs, steroids and various treatments seem, so far, to have offered only marginal benefits.

But there is a potential treatment called convalescent hyperimmune plasma therapy which thankfully the UK is now rapidly preparing to deploy: using plasma from the blood of patients who have successfully recovered from the Coronavirus infection.

The treatment

Hyperimmune plasma therapy helps boost the immune system of patients that struggle to recover from Coronavirus using blood donated from patients that have recovered successfully.

When fighting Coronavirus infection, one's immune system is needed to develop antibodies to overcome the virus. People succumb to this disease when their immune system fails to mount a sufficient response to kill the virus.

The plasma from the blood of recovering 'convalescent' patients contain high levels of Covid-19 fighting antibodies, generated by their immune system. Plasma can be taken from these recovered patients (a similar procedure to donating blood) and be given to critically ill patients to boost their immune system and help them back to health. Using hyperimmune plasma antibody administration is the only means of providing immediate immunity to seriously ill patients.

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What needs to happen urgently

NHS Blood and Transplant are now gearing up to harvest plasma from patients that have recovered from Coronavirus. This system of harvesting plasma from recovering patients, testing, storing, distribution and guidance on treatment administration to ITU departments is now being rolled out across the nation.

People who have recovered from Coronavirus infection need to donate their blood while still convalescing from the disease. During this phase, the blood serum would contain high amounts of natural antibodies produced to combat the virus and which remain circulating in the blood of recovering patients for months after the infection.

The progress of Coronavirus in the UK means there is an abundant supply of convalescent plasma serum from those who have recovered and have developed antibodies.



Benefits of hyperimmune therapy treatment

The potential for using hyperimmune plasma therapy could save many UK lives if implemented quickly.

The great thing is that there is minimal research and development needed, only treatment protocols that need to be agreed. Also, there are relatively low costs associated with the use of hyperimmune plasma as a treatment as there are no 'manufacture' costs, as plasma is donated by recovering patients (much like blood is donated). Because of the rapid spread of the Covid-19 virus we already have an abundant supply of convalescent serum in the UK from the population of individuals recovering from this disease.



The evidence for using hyperimmune plasma treatment

Convalescent hyperimmune plasma therapy is a long-established treatment approach which dates back to the late 19th century and was widely used during the 20th century to help stem other outbreaks such as measles, polio, mumps, and influenza and may be a crucial and practical tool now in the fight against Covid-19.

Reports coming from China confirm they are seeing positive effects of using hyperimmune plasma therapy to assist critically ill Covid-19 patients. Every week there are more and more research papers being published based on clinical interventional studies from across the world pointing to the use of this form of therapy.

USING HYPERIMMUNE PLASMA THERAPY IN TREATING COVID-19 PATIENTS

We have the expertise here in the UK to use this form of treatment

I have previously led a group of Intensive Care Consultants at University College London Hospital (UCL) that specialise in administering hyperimmune plasma to treat critically ill patients. This means identifying the most effective antibodies, working out how much plasma is required for the patient and how to administer it. We've had experience with assisting complex cardiac surgical patients with promising results.

Other UK specialist groups have used this treatment in the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa – another virus where no vaccine seemed imminent. Where tried, there have been promising effects to assist COVID-19 patients.

Hyperimmune Plasma Therapy gathers pace across the world

The US, China, Germany, France, Italy and even smaller countries like Mauritius are ahead of the UK in the use of convalescent hyperimmune plasma. FDA in the US approved the use of convalescent plasma in March and the Mayo Clinic Group is leading the initiative with more than 100 sites gearing up across the US working in partnership with the American Red Cross to treat patients. Even celebrities in the US are joining the fight by encouraging the American public to donate plasma!

This treatment could help young people who are seriously affected by Covid-19

Sadly, across the nation we are hearing about younger and seemingly healthy people succumbing to the Covid-19 virus. It is likely that a proportion of the 'normal' younger population also do not mount a 'normal' immune response.

We've seen this in research studies on healthcare workers exposed to 'hepatitis B' vaccine and others after the influenza vaccine. What is encouraging to know that those who may not respond adequately to active immunisation techniques may respond to hyperimmune plasma treatment.

Using plasma extracts could help boost the immunity of key workers treating patients at the front-line

Extracted elements can be used from harvested hyper immune plasma and could also be used to bolster the immunity of front-line staff to reduce the tragic number of deaths of key medical workers.

The British public need to hear that the Government are taking a proactive approach

It's great to hear that finally hyper Immune therapy is going to be imminent-ly used in the UK and we all need to hear about it, to boost morale and give us some much-needed positive news. It's a proactive positive treatment approach to this rapidly unfolding disaster, that, I believe, will help improve the survival rates of those that become critically ill from Coronavirus.

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