



HIGHLIGHTS

Long Covid management & rehabilitation

With 1 in 33 people reporting Long Covid symptoms, we explore what can be done to help recovery.

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Genetic links to Gulf War illness & sheep dip poisoning

A gene has been identified which could identify people more at risk.

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How to get a good night's sleep

Sleep is essential and lack of it can be detrimental to one's immune system.

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My survival with multiple chemical sensitivities

Italian patient, Cinzia Pegoraro, tells us about her previously long undiagnosed illnesses, including multiple chemical sensitivity, and her long, difficult journey. She was previously forced to live an isolated existence and today, she is able to live indoors and have contact with family, friends and the outside world.

My name is Cinzia Pegoraro and I am a 50-year-old, full-time mother. We live in a town in northern Italy. I'm writing to tell you about my life with multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS).

Before I got sick, I was employed as a clerk, but I had to leave my job because my severe symptoms did not allow me to work.

I am also a former synchronised swimming competitor and have always led a healthy life. All my health problems started after a third shoulder surgery, which ended

with the insertion of a mini titanium screw.

After the graft, I had a fever and then severe stomach pains, vomiting started, and I was hospitalised for 10 days. At that time, no one was able to give an explanation for my symptoms. They discharged me with a diagnosis of epigastric (upper abdomen) colic.

Since that episode, I have never really recovered. Abdominal colic became more and more frequent. I then began to have problems of

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TAKING CARE WITH COVID-19

Coronavirus remains a serious health risk

In line with NHS guidelines, late this Spring, Breakspear Medical amended some restrictions relating to COVID -19. However, we are still actively trying to ensure the safety of everyone at the clinic.

Please be aware while you are attending the clinic:

- If you have any coronavirus symptoms, do not attend the clinic and call us to reschedule your appointments.
- Wash and sanitise your hands regularly.
- Limit close contact with other people.
- At the moment, while no one is legally required to wear face masks while at the clinic, if a patient is particularly vulnerable and wishes to wear a protective mask, they are encouraged to do so.
- If a masked patient wishes the clinical staff attending to them to wear a mask, please let us know in advance.

WELCOMING

Our new Quality Manager, Jason Adams



If you have been a patient at Breakspear Medical anytime over the last two decades, you have probably already met our new Quality Manager, Jason Adams, formerly our Senior Pathology Manager.

The Quality Manager's role is to ensure that the clinic provides the patients with the care they need and that the clinic is compliant with all applicable healthcare regulations.

Jason Adams' application to transfer to this role was welcomed. After nearly 20 years at Breakspear Medical, Jason understands how the clinic works and knows many of the patients and all of the staff members. In fact he knows one particular staff member very well, as a few years ago, Jason married Sharon Adams, Personal Assistant to Jean Monro. Just over a year ago, they welcomed their first child into the world.

Over the years, the clinic has employed a few different Quality Managers and each one has helped evolve the position into what it is today.

For patients, our Quality Manager is the person to approach if there is a complaint or question over policies and procedures or quality and safety issues.

For staff members, our Quality Manager monitors the quality of service by working closely with the various teams in the office and is involved in departmental meetings and day-to-day operations. Our Quality Manager is also involved in clinical and general audits, staff training, and performing health and safety checks, including fire drills, emergency lighting tests and risk assessments.

Please join us in welcoming Jason to his new role.



Long Covid management & rehabilitation

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), in April 2022, it was estimated that 7 in 10 people in the UK have been infected with COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic. It also found that about 1 in 33 people reported Long Covid symptoms. This article explores what can be done for Long Covid sufferers.

With an estimated 70% of the UK population having had COVID-19 and about 3% reporting Long Covid symptoms, there are a lot of people looking for help to recover from the ongoing symptoms.

COVID-19 was first recorded in 2019 and rapidly developed into a worldwide pandemic in 2020. As you may recall, there was a rush to create a vaccine to help defend the population. Despite there now being numerous vaccinations available, there are new variants with slightly different characteristics which may or may not be helped by previously acquired immunity.

Studies of many descriptions are currently underway to find out as much as can be discovered about this virus and its long-term effects. However, viral infections and post-viral symptoms are not a new field of medicine; we can apply principles learned from treating other viruses and conditions to help those with prolonged symptoms of COVID-19.

Ongoing side effects

For some people with Covid, their sense of smell and/or taste was altered or lost. The exact number of people who

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LONG COVID-19 SYMPTOMS & DEMOGRAPHICS

The ONS reports that the most common Long Covid symptoms are:

- fatigue (56%)
- shortness of breath (31%)
- loss of smell (22%)
- muscle ache (21%)

Symptoms adversely affected the day-to-day activities of 1.4 million people (72%) of those with self-reported Long Covid.

Self-reported Long Covid was more common in those aged 35 to 69 years, females, people living in more deprived areas, those working in social care, teaching and education or healthcare, and those with another activity-limiting health condition or disability.

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Long Covid management & rehabilitation

experienced this varies between studies, however, it is suggested that this is a common symptom and may affect approximately 20% of Covid sufferers. A loss of smell is called anosmia. The mechanism that causes this is not entirely understood, however, it seems to be emerging that it is related to infection of cells that support neurons in the nose.

The following vitamins and minerals may help to alleviate anosmia:

Vitamin A: in the sense of smell, retinoic acid (RA) plays an important role in development and may affect growth in adults. To explore the potential effects of RA on recovery after injuries, adult mice were trained in a buried food paradigm and were given a single oral supplement of RA after olfactory (sense of smell) nerve transection. Results demonstrate that RA accelerates the recovery of olfactory functions after injury.

Ginkgo biloba: is an antioxidant that acts as a free radical scavenger in the treatment of olfactory injury. It improves blood flow to the olfactory system.

Alpha lipoic acid: results of a study have indicated that alpha lipoic acid may be helpful in patients with olfactory loss after upper respiratory tract infection.

Fatigue is another common long-term symptom of Covid. A recent study by the Pulmonary Physiology Laboratory and the Center for Post-COVID Care at National Jewish Health looked at energy production in Long Covid patients and found that lactate levels were increased. Lactate is a form of lactic acid. It is produced by muscle cells, red blood cells and other tissues when glucose (sugar) is broken down to create energy in the absence of oxygen. Increased levels of lactate indicates that Long Covid patients relied more on anaerobic energy production than expected.

Aerobic deficiency syndrome is something that athletes develop with reduced endurance. The principal symptom is chronic fatigue. In this

condition, athletes were unable to use aerobic metabolism and use anaerobic metabolism similar to that which occurs in Long Covid patients and patients with chronic fatigue syndrome.

In order to improve this energy cycle, which is known as the Krebs cycle, in patients with aerobic deficiency syndrome or chronic fatigue, we can provide nutritional supplements to improve the function of the mitochondria. Our IRATHERM® hyperthermia bed can be used to provide near-infrared light, which also improves mitochondrial function.

Long Covid can increase blood glucose levels to a point where people develop a condition called diabetic ketoacidosis. This condition occurs when one's body produces high levels of blood acids called ketones. It is a potentially life-threatening condition among type I diabetics or those who may be at risk of diabetes.

Other symptoms

There are many other symptoms of Long Covid, such as:

- dyspnoea (shortness of breath)
- trouble swallowing
- cardiac abnormalities, chest pain or tightness
- cognitive impairment, brain fog
- difficulty in sleeping
- symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder
- muscle pain
- sensation of pins and needles
- rashes
- concentration problems
- headaches
- tinnitus, earaches
- bowel inflammation, diarrhoea

As well, there are also various neurological complications of COVID-19. For example, sometimes people need to be evaluated with regard to whether they are still forming small clots in their systems, and treated if so.

If you have concerns about the lasting symptoms of Covid, speak to your doctor, who will investigate further to develop a treatment plan to address all your concerns.



Genetic links to Gulf War illness & sheep dip poisoning

New research suggests that some soldiers have a genetic predisposition to being more affected by chemical weapons because of the variation of a gene called PON1 (Paraoxonase-1), leaving them more susceptible to chronic symptoms. For years, PON1 has been linked to farmers who became ill after organophosphate exposure. This article explores how to identify and cope with this genetic variant.

According to Royal British Legion statistics, as many as 33,000 UK Gulf War veterans could be living with Gulf War illnesses. The man-made nerve gas, sarin, is believed to have caused thousands of soldiers to fall ill with mysterious symptoms. Sarin was released into the air when caches of chemical weapons were bombed. High levels of exposure can result in death, However, while known to be toxic in low levels, this nerve gas did not dramatically affect everyone's health.

Many sheep farmers have been experiencing similar symptoms to some Gulf War veterans.

According to groundsure.com, there are approximately 34 million

sheep and lambs currently on UK farms. Many of these animals are being treated with sheep dip (which often contains organophosphorus or pyrethroid compounds) to control sheep scab and other parasites, such as ticks and lice. This has resulted in many farmers and mobile sheep dippers being heavily exposed over time and some, but not all, are experiencing debilitating symptoms.

It has long been suggested that people who have a weak variant of the PON1 (Paraoxonase-1) gene cannot manage exposure to organophosphates.

A new study by American

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COMMON SYMPTOMS

- memory and concentration impairment
- difficulty finding words
- rashes
- hypertension
- reduced coordination
- diarrhoea
- chronic fatigue
- severe pain
- insomnia
- tingling sensations

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Genetic links to Gulf War illness & sheep dip poisoning



scientists concluded that soldiers who had a lower level of PON1 have a much higher chance of becoming seriously ill from sarin.

The gene PON1 helps generate a blood enzyme that efficiently breaks down chemicals. PON1 has two versions. The first version is the Q variant, which can break down sarin and OPs. The second version is the R variant, which can break down many chemicals, but not sarin and organophosphates (OPs). Everyone has two copies of the PON1 gene and has either a QQ, RR or QR genotype.

According to the study, which was published in Environmental Medicine, Gulf War veterans with the QQ genotype who were likely exposed to sarin had their chances of developing Gulf War illness increased by 3.75 times, while those with the QR genotype had their chances increased by 4.43 times. However, those veterans with the RR genotype had their chances of developing Gulf War illness significantly increased by 8.91 times.

Genetic testing available

At Breakspear Medical, we offer a genetic test that can tell a person which PON1 genotype they have, as well as other useful genetic markers, which can qualitatively assess particular areas of health risk related to the specific genes. Knowing this information can help address present and potential health risks and environmental factors that need to be considered.

Helping the body deal with toxins

While currently there is no simple solution to detoxifying Gulf War veterans and sheep farmers, there are a variety of things that can be done to upregulate the body's ability to deal

with some toxins. Moderate consumption of alcohol (ethanol) may be of help and there are a number of nutritional supplements which may be of benefit, too.

Recommended nutritional supplements:

Astaxanthin—is a chemical that is found naturally in certain plants and animals. It is an antioxidant, which is believed may also improve the way the immune system functions and help skin, joint and eye health.

Pomegranate—is a type of fruit that is native to Northern India. It contains numerous potent antioxidants, may lower blood pressure in hypertension and may increase PON1 activity.

Quercetin—is found in a variety of foods including apples, berries, grapes, onions, shallots, tea, seeds, nuts, flowers, bark and leaves. It is anti-inflammatory, an antioxidant, has inhibitory effects on inflammation-producing enzymes (cyclooxygenase, lipoxygenase) and inhibits histamine release from mast cells.

Resveratrol—is a natural food ingredient, which numerous studies have shown possesses a very high antioxidant potential. It has been found to support cardiovascular, cognitive and cellular health.

Hyperthermia can be used to help detoxify the body. Fever is the body's natural defence system that raises its temperature above normal in an attempt to destroy invading organisms and sweat impurities out of the system. For centuries, sauna has been used to create the same effect. Sauna is also used to boost metabolism, as when pulse rates increase, blood vessels become much more flexible, extremities benefit from increased circulation and toxins are excreted through sweat and on the breath. Our IRATHERM® whole-body hyperthermia bed raises the body surface temperature, as does a sauna, and also raises the body core temperature, which can have a major therapeutic effect.

If you have concerns about your genetics, which may be affecting your health, or want more information on programmes that help with symptoms, please speak to one of our doctors or our Environmental Naturopath.

RECOMMENDED RECIPE:

Baked fish with salsa verde

This gluten-free dish is easy and quick to make, using fresh ingredients. Perfect for a summer's evening meal outdoors!



INGREDIENTS:

4 fish filets (any white fish or salmon)

Salsa verde:

1 large bunch of flat leaf parsley

Handful of basil leaves

2 garlic cloves, crushed

1 tbsp fresh mint leaves, chopped

2 anchovies

2 tbsp capers

2 tbsp red wine vinegar

1 tsp Dijon mustard

3 tbsp flaxseed oil

4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

½ red onion, finely chopped

METHOD:

1. Heat the oven to 190°C/fan 180°C.
2. Place fish on a greased baking tray and cook in oven for 15-20 minutes, until fish is cooked.
3. While the fish is baking, prepare the salsa verde by putting all the ingredients in a food processor (except the oils and onion) and processing the mixture until chunky. Then slowly add the oils and mix through. Stir in the chopped red onion.
4. When the fish is cooked, spoon the salsa verde over the fish and serve with a green salad or new potatoes.



How to get a good night's sleep

It is not only important for you to get consistent sleep each night, it is imperative. Loss of sleep can reduce your reaction times, impair your alertness & has been associated with a wide range of serious health problems, including heart disease. This article provides some options to help you get a better night's sleep.

Sleep is an essential function. While you are sleeping, your body and mind are given a chance to recharge. If you are having troubles sleeping, there are a number of things you can do to try to improve your sleeping patterns.

Most adults require between seven and nine hours of sleep each night.

Loss of sleep, even of a few short hours during the night, can prompt your immune system to turn against the healthy tissue and organs and can increase inflammation in the body.

A laboratory study monitored people being given flu viruses up their noses for a week and measured the amount of mucus produced, and their blood and saliva immune antibodies were also measured. There was a clear linear relationship with the higher infection rate in those who were getting less sleep to those who were getting the more sleep.

Furthermore, those who had the most sleep had more powerful antibody responses.

Everyone has different factors in their lives that affect their sleep. For example, careers which include shift work and having young children put strain on one's ability to have uninterrupted

sleep. Additionally, lack of sleep has been linked to a higher risk for certain diseases and medical conditions, including obesity, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, poor mental health, and early death.

Fortunately, there are a variety of things that you can do to improve your sleeping patterns.

Sleep regime

It is best to have a realistic bedtime and keep to it every night, even on the weekends.

It is important to eat at least about three hours before bedtime and avoid all stimulants, such as caffeinated and sugary drinks, between dinner and bedtime. Caffeine can delay the onset of sleep and sugary foods and drinks can increase your blood sugar level to disrupt your sleep.

It is best to unwind before going to bed, which means stopping working or studying, watching television or other stimuli. Studies have shown that listening to classical music, such as baroque, which is composed at 60 beats per minute, for half an hour to an hour before bedtime, creates more alpha (calming) waves in the brain.

If you have problems falling asleep, you may

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consider taking a sleeping aid, such as melatonin. Melatonin is a hormone that your brain produces to regulate your sleep-wake cycle. Your brain naturally produces it in response to darkness.

Natural levels of melatonin in the blood should be highest at night, helping you to get to sleep, and gradually decrease in the morning, prompting you to wake up.

Also, it is helpful to try to sleep in total darkness, or as close to it as possible, as even the smallest amount of light can disrupt your production of melatonin and serotonin.

Serotonin is a chemical that carries messages between nerve cells in the brain and throughout your body. It can influence how well and how long you sleep. Serotonin is also important in producing melatonin.

Nutritional support

Most people should get all the nutrients they need by having a varied and balanced diet, although some individuals may need additional support in the form of nutritional supplementation if their diet is lacking or there is suboptimal function in the pathways in the body.

To support sleep, there are a number of nutrients and botanicals that can help with occasional insomnia and sleep improvement.

For example, here are a few botanicals that may help with sleep:

Lavender essential oil: increases deep, slow-wave sleep, decreases rapid-eye movement (REM) sleep.

California poppy: has an effect on brain chemistry that may raise the levels of one of the chemicals, called acetylcholine, and serotonin activity, which help regulate REM sleep.

Lemon balm: extracts have been shown to enhance parasympathetic activity, which is the name for the processes that continue while one sleeps, such as digestion and salivation, and helps regulate sleep.

Tryptophan is an essential amino acid, which

must be acquired from food. After absorbing tryptophan from food, our body converts it to 5-HTP (5-hydroxytryptophan), and then to serotonin, and lastly, melatonin. It can be found in many plant and animal proteins. Tryptophan sources include chocolate, oats, dried dates, milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, red meat, eggs, fish, poultry, sesame, chickpeas, almonds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, buckwheat, spirulina, and peanuts.

The type of foods you eat affect your sleeping patterns, too. During the night, your brain goes through natural cycles of activity, which include non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. A high-sugar diet that is low in fibre results in less deep NREM sleep and more awakenings at night. NREM sleep is the time that your body builds bone and muscle, repairs and regenerates tissues and strengthens the immune system.

Address health issues

There are a number of health conditions that can seriously affect one's sleep. One such condition is called sleep apnoea. Sleep apnoea is when one's breathing stops and starts while asleep. It includes symptoms such as snoring, excessive daytime sleeping, choking or shortness of breath sensations during sleep, restless sleep, unrefreshing sleep, changes in personality, morning headaches and night sweats. If you think you may be experiencing sleep apnoea, please see our sleep apnoea leaflet for further details and guidance.

There are many conditions that are connected to sleep disruption, such as age-related cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease. While fragmented sleep is considered to be an early symptom, sleep deprivation may be a contributing factor in these conditions' development.

It is best to review your general health to ensure that you are addressing any condition that may be reducing your hours of sleep.

For the benefit of your health, if you are having trouble sleeping, speak to a medical professional, who may recommend treatments to help you get a good night's sleep.

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My survival with multiple chemical sensitivities



Cinzia Pegoraro

intolerance to preserved foods, which caused the loss of my voice, an asthmatic cough, and dizziness. Over the years, the situation worsened and spread to almost all foods, including organic ones.

Over the years,

unfortunately my body also became increasingly intolerant to chemicals. I had to exclude as many chemicals as possible from my life because every little inhalation or contact with environmental xenobiotics caused me severe symptoms. These symptoms included sudden dizziness, which caused me to collapse, an asthmatic cough, intestinal problems, esophagitis, strong pain, loss of vision, photophobia, and blurred and/or double vision. At an Italian public healthcare facility, the first diagnosis I received was of fibromyalgia, which was followed over the years by Idiopathic Environmental Intolerance (IEI), Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS). The diagnosis process was complicated because many doctors are unaware of these conditions.

Life was not easy because, in order to survive, I had to exclude almost all chemicals from my home, which meant a big change for both me and my family. It is very hard in this modern world to function without chemicals.

It is because chemicals are such a big part of modern life that MCS gradually leads to social isolation. One has to distance oneself from even the most loved ones because they are part of normality, where detergents, fabric softeners, deodorants, perfumes, colognes and other scented products are a constant presence. Anyone circulating in this world becomes contaminated with these smells, which make

me, and people like me, physically sick.

Italy does not recognise MCS as a disease and, over the years, I have not received the care and assistance I needed. In 2015, my health worsened to the point of putting my life at risk as I was in urgent need of blood transfusions. It was not easy to access a hospital because they are not set up to deal with MCS patients. Previously, I had been denied treatment for fear of the onset of side-effects.

After 12 years from the onset of the disease, my situation had become unbearable. My symptoms had become so serious that I was no longer able to feed myself adequately due to adverse reactions to almost all foods, including food and drug supplements. I experienced reactions such as asthma, trouble swallowing and oesophagitis (inflammation of the lining of the oesophagus). Professor Giuseppe Genovesi, of the Policlinico Umberto I in Rome, assessed my condition as serious and unmanageable because I needed high-level specialist care that was not available anywhere in Italy.

Prof Genovesi referred me to Jean Monro at Breakspear Medical. Sadly, Prof Genovesi has since passed away prematurely. I will always be grateful to him for helping to save my life.

In August 2015, when I arrived at Breakspear Medical, I could not stand up because my legs were stiff, swollen, dark in colour and could not support me. I had severe abdominal pain and dizziness, constant fever, paraesthesia (burning or prickling sensation), widespread pain, renal colic, vomiting and diarrhoea. I could not stay indoors for long periods due to the presence of chemicals. For example, formaldehyde caused me to pass out. I had dry eyes, blurred vision, light sensitivity and, in the evening, in the absence of sunlight, I was practically blind.

As if it were yesterday, I remember Jean Monro's kind and polite way of approaching me. She was not surprised or incredulous listening to my story about my ailments. On the contrary, she was asking pertinent questions and it was at that moment that I believed that she would be able to help me. She recommended many diagnostic tests to find the

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cause of each ailment and put all the pieces of the puzzle together. She has great knowledge and much valuable experience in the treatment of environmental diseases.

The whole clinical team at Breakspear Medical works together to tackle cases, each with an area of special interest and wide range of experiences. Together, they were able to diagnose and treat my mastoiditis that had caused me strong and persistent dizziness over the years. Mastoiditis is a serious bacterial infection that affects the mastoid bone behind the ear. Through neurophysiological testing, they detected the presence of a small fibre neuropathy and found that I had low levels of oxygen in the tissues. They treated me with cycles of oxygen and fatty acid infusions to help repair the cells.

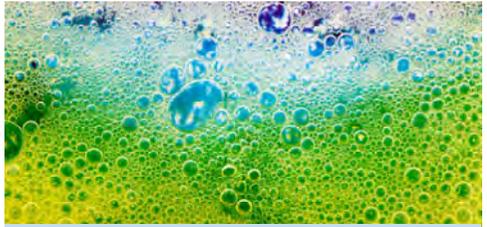
Before I could proceed with other specific treatments, they treated me with low-dose immunotherapy (LDI) because there was a need to make my body tolerant to food, supplements, drugs and chemicals. Previously, if I took vitamins by mouth or infusions, I had severe adverse reactions. Thanks to LDI, within a few months, I gradually began to tolerate food again and thus be able to nourish myself.

Over time, with constant care, I managed to recover part of the tolerance towards chemicals necessary to be able to live indoors and have contact with people and the outside world.

It was not an easy path to recovery because the problems I suffered from were many. However, I was taken by the hand, accompanied and supported by all the staff of the clinic. Everyone there was indispensable and special.

Breakspear Medical is a safe place for MCS sufferers, as the facility is free of toxic substances and the staff also do not use scented products. Each treatment proposed to the patient is explained in detail and documented.

Without the specific and personalised therapies that were offered to me at Breakspear Medical, I would never have been able to tell my story because there would have been no happy ending!



MCS DEFINED

Multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS) is a chronic condition affecting an increasing number of people of all ages.

People with MCS often report adverse effects from exposure to everyday amounts of common chemicals, such as:

- perfume, cologne, aftershave
- deodorants, antiperspirants
- hairspray, hair styling products
- cosmetics
- standard laundry products
- car exhaust
- paint

MCS must be distinguished from acute chemical toxicity, which is where a given amount of a chemical produces illness in all who are exposed to it.

Some symptoms of MCS are:

- disorientation, confusion
- rash
- hyperactivity
- headaches, migraine
- chest pains
- breathing problems
- muscle pain, weakness
- loss of balance, clumsiness

The reactions vary in severity and can occur immediately or several hours later. Severe symptoms often interfere with daily life and work.

Symptoms of MCS vary from person to person and can affect any part of the body. Many sufferers are misdiagnosed by doctors who are unfamiliar with the condition because of the unusual symptoms.

Help us to celebrate 40 years & help others



As part of our plans to celebrate 40 years of business this coming autumn, we are currently working behind the scenes to revitalise our website & share more recovery stories online.

There are three different ways that you can help us by sharing your story:

- 1) Give a short (1-3 sentence) testimonial
- 2) Share your case study
- 3) Write a Google review

If you would like to help, please let a member of our Patient Liaison Team know next time you're at the clinic, visit breakspearedical.com/tellus or drop an email to the editor, Carolyn Monro: CMonro@breakspearmedical.com (Testimonials and case studies can be kept anonymous, if you'd prefer.)

Currently we have less than 10 reviews on Google and we'd love to get that number to over 40 by the autumn.

HOW TO WRITE A GOOGLE REVIEW



Writing a review on Google just takes a few moments.

- 1) Log into your Google account, and search for "Breakspear Medical".
- 2) Find the reviews area (next to the star rating in your search results, or under the company's name in the sidebar in Google search) and click on the blue box with white font that says, "WRITE A REVIEW."
- 3) Star rate the business (1 star is poor, 5 stars is great) and share a few details of your own experience at the clinic.
- 4) Click "Post" and your review will be published.

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