



HIGHLIGHTS

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Over 30 years of Breakspear Medical

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Getting your life back after diagnosis

Lynn Nabarro's mother was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Her mum immediately started feeling that it was all downhill from there. Lynn brought her to Breakspear Medical and now proclaims, "I've got my mum back!" Lynn shares their life-changing experience.

Just over a year ago, my 72-year-old mum was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease at the local hospital.

Over the previous few years, our family had noticed her left hand shaking and a general level of forgetfulness that was new to us. She walked a bit slower than we were used to, but we put that down to normal ageing. A couple of times we wondered if this was all more than old age. However, as she was seeing an NHS doctor for a stiff left shoulder at that time, we assumed there was nothing more behind it.

Generally, she was our usual fit and active mum. She was running three to four times per week, playing badminton, cooking Sunday meals for us all and doing volunteer work for a number of charities. Mum was often travelling the world and this didn't stop.

Along with Mum's stiff left shoulder, she had a weakness forming in her left hand and went to see her very good NHS doctor. This doctor has been Mum's physician for around 15 years so

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WELCOMING NEW DOCTORS TO

Our expanding Medical Team

We are pleased to welcome Dr Klaus Bruecker & Dr Shehzadi Mudassar to our Medical Team. Both of our new doctors bring a wealth of knowledge from diverse backgrounds and have begun consultations with patients.

Dr Klaus Bruecker



Dr Bruecker joined our Medical Team on a part-time basis. He is currently also working part-time as the clinical director for a mass vaccination centre.

Having completed his

medical degree at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, he moved to the UK as a house officer and completed his training in General Practice in 2006.

As one of Dr Bruecker's non-medical projects, he was part of a team which won the Prince's Trust Million Makers. Million Makers is an innovative entrepreneurial challenge which sees teams of employees from organisations across the UK, competing to raise as much as possible from an initial seed funding investment. The challenge collectively raises over £1 million every year to change the lives of young people across the UK.

Dr Bruecker has previously been involved with autologous stem cell transplants. This is a procedure in which a patient's healthy stem cells are collected from fat tissue or bone marrow. They are then prepared to be injected into the affected joint to replace diseased or damaged cells. While working with stem cells, Dr Bruecker became interested in Environmental Medicine, which requires developing complex individualised treatment programmes for each patient.

Dr Bruecker is fluent in English and German.

Dr Shehzadi Mudassar



Dr Shehzadi Mudassar joined our Medical Team on a part-time basis.

From an early age, she was good at science and research and over

the last year, she developed a special interest in Environmental Illness and Allergies. While researching on the internet, she discovered Breakspear Medical and applied directly to work at the clinic.

Dr Mudassar obtained her MBBS from Pakistan in 2002 and her diploma in Gynaecology and Obstetrics a few years later. For over seven years, she has been working for the NHS in emergency and surgery.

After getting married, Dr Mudassar moved to the UK to be with her husband, who was originally from her hometown in Pakistan. In 2019, she completed her MSc in Public Health from the University of Hertfordshire and soon after began working for NHS Test & Trace Programme.

Dr Mudassar is very family-orientated and loves to spend time with her three young children and her caring and supportive husband. She also enjoys travelling and does volunteer work in south Asian countries to help the poor and underprivileged.

Dr Mudassar is fluent in English, Hindi, Urdu and Pashto.

For an appointment, please ring our main number 01442 261 333 and speak with one of our friendly receptionists.



Facing the challenges of ageing

The population of the UK is getting older and looking after your health is increasingly important to help give yourself the best future. It is important to look after our environment to reduce its impact on our well-being. This article shares some information on how to grow old happier and healthier in our modern world.

When people talk about getting older, many share the desire to remain mentally engaged, retain mobility and stay safe.

Lifestyle interventions can help with your well-being and reduce the effects of ageing.

Nutrition & detoxification

It is beneficial for everyone to learn more about nutrition, or consult with a naturopath or nutritional therapist, in order to learn about optimising dietary choices, which may involve adjusting for food allergies/sensitivities.

Making an effort to include foods with antioxidants may help your body with detoxification. In addition to eating well, there are pathology tests available that can

illustrate vitamin or mineral deficiencies, as well indicate irregularities in gut microbiota, which can be corrected by improving your diet and/or with supplementation.

Osteoporosis is a health condition that weakens bones, making them fragile and more likely to break. While it can affect anyone, including children, women are more at risk, particularly if the menopause begins early (before the age of 45). Bone density loss can be prevented by maintaining healthy levels of calcium, magnesium, zinc, vitamin D and other essentials, checking nutritional status, hormone status and maintaining an active lifestyle.

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GET CHECKED REGULARLY

When you visit your doctor, it is a good idea to have them check your:

- blood pressure
- blood sugar levels
- air flow
- hearing
- eyes
- moles, lumps or spots

Unusual levels or variation in these areas may indicate the early stages of potentially life-changing conditions.

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Facing the challenges of ageing

Managing your weight is also important as being overweight (or underweight) can be a major cause of illnesses, such as an increased risk of diabetes, arthritis and stroke.

Staying active

A loss of muscle mass and strength can lead to an increased risk of falling and fracturing bones.

From birth until about the age of 30, one's muscles are growing larger and stronger and then as one ages further, muscle mass slowly starts decreasing. This decrease is more noticeable in physically inactive people.



Make moving around a priority. Simply going for a short walk, doing a few jobs around the house or garden, or walking down the road to post a letter, can make a difference.

In addition to keeping active, it is a good idea to exercise, which involves more exertion of your muscles. This can be done at home or a gym. Studies and research have found that exercise affects one's mood positively and can help alleviate depression.

If someone has thin or weak muscles and tends to walk slowly and/or struggles with a standard grip test assessed by a clinician or has been on long-term steroid use, treatment for sarcopenia may be recommended. The treatment plan would focus on changes in diet and nutritional supplements (when required), as well as exercise programmes.

Keeping your brain active

A recent American study concluded that you

are more likely to live longer if you retire later. Even after removing the typical variables, such as gender, ethnicity, age, education, marital status and wealth, the researchers still found that retirement age was related to mortality, beyond all those variables.

There are many other ways to keep your brain stimulated, including volunteering, which can involve interaction with other people and learning new things, and brain games, which challenge your brain to work and strengthen neural connections. Learning how to play an instrument or learning a new language, reading a book or starting a new course at school can all help.

Practise memorising things; learning new memory tricks will improve your memory and may impress your friends.

Dealing with dementia

One of the biggest concerns with getting older is the threat of dementia. Dementia is not a natural part of ageing; it is a collection of symptoms that result from damage to the brain, caused by various diseases, such as Alzheimer's.

Due to the pandemic, in 2020, COVID-19 was the leading cause of death in England and Wales, which moved dementia to second place for the first time since 2015, according to the Alzheimer's Society website. Almost 25% of the people who died from Covid in 2020 also had dementia.

The NHS website states that there's no certain way to prevent all types of dementia, however, there is good evidence that a healthy lifestyle can help reduce the risk.

A healthy lifestyle can also help to prevent cardiovascular diseases, such as stroke and heart attacks, which are also risk factors for Alzheimer's and vascular dementia. Being overweight can increase your blood pressure and the risk of type 2 diabetes, which are both linked to a higher risk of Alzheimer's.

Dementia usually develops as a combination of genetic and environmental factors, such as smoking.

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Atmospheric factors

Research to find out how global warming is affecting human health is increasingly important.

A 2021 report published in *The Lancet* stated that in the past 20 years, heat-related mortality among people older than 65 years has increased by more than 50% with increased dehydration, kidney disease, skin cancer, tropical infections, adverse mental health outcomes, such as anxiety, depression and sleep disorders, pregnancy complications, allergies and cardiovascular and pulmonary morbidity and mortality. The harms disproportionately affect the most vulnerable.

Natural outdoor environments, including green spaces, play an important role in preserving health and wellbeing. While it may seem more comfortable to stay indoors in atmospherically controlled spaces, it is important to spend time outdoors, too.

Liver & detoxification

The liver is metabolically the most complex organ in the body. While it has various functions (see page 6 *About your liver* for more information on its important functions), it is essential for making toxins less harmful to the body and removing them from the bloodstream.

Adverse reactions to drugs are often due to a decreased capacity for clearing them from the system.

At Breakspear Medical, a DetoxiGenomic panel can be used to determine how efficiently the liver is working at clearing the pollutants from the body. Measuring the detoxification pathway enzyme through a genomic panel could be very valuable, as each process can be supported nutritionally with various, specific vitamins and minerals.

Trend of growing older

People are living longer and this trend may be in part because of improved medical knowledge and health service use in elderly people. For example, if type 2 diabetes is diagnosed earlier and treatment begins sooner, there would be improved health, which could lead to a more active life, which could improve enjoyment of life for longer.

Believe in yourself and do not resign yourself to the myth of inevitable decline. Research shows that the brain can rewire, strengthen, improve, adapt and continue learning. It is your role to give it the chance to do so.

If you suspect that you are experiencing typical signs of ageing, seek medical advice, which could provide some lifestyle changes to improve and extend your quality of life.



Staying active over 50

It is a myth that at a certain point in our life, our brains no longer function as they should.

The brain has the amazing ability to change, modify, re-wire itself and adapt in its structure and function in response to learning, experiences, environment and setting.

To keep your body and brain functioning optimally, try to:

- Eat a nutritionally balanced diet and use nutritional supplements when needed.
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol, smoking and avoid air pollution when possible.
- Keep active by making moving around a priority.
- Get a good night's sleep, which will benefit you mentally and physically.
- Keep your brain stimulated by seeking new experiences and learning new skills.
- Reduce stresses in your life. Using meditation or exercise may help you deal with stress. Speak to a qualified experienced counsellor if you need help to manage things in your life.
- Believe in yourself.



TAKING CARE WITH COVID-19

Coronavirus remains a serious health risk

To help protect all our patients & staff from COVID-19, Breakspear Medical is remaining cautious & adhering to precautionary protocols.

As the global pandemic spread to the UK, many new procedures were put in place to help ensure the safety of everyone at Breakspear Medical.

Please be aware that while you are attending the clinic:

- Even if you do not have any symptoms, please perform regular rapid lateral flow tests and if your results are positive, do not attend the clinic.
- If you have any coronavirus symptoms, do not attend the clinic and call us to reschedule your appointments.
- We ask that all patients wear face masks while at the clinic. (Staff will continue to wear masks in common areas, however, may remove them when seated at their desks.)
- Wash and sanitise your hands regularly.
- Limit close contact with other people.



About your liver

Many types of liver disease do not cause symptoms in the early stages and can easily go undetected. It may be useful to understand more about how important your liver is to your well-being.

Your liver is your body's largest solid organ and is important to your health.

The liver is concerned with:

- energy balance regulation
- blood protein synthesis
- immune modulation
- detoxification of toxic substances, both of external and self-made origin - foreign chemicals, called xenobiotics, or internally generated compounds often from gut bacteria

It has two main mechanisms for removing unwanted toxins from the body. Toxins are generally fat-soluble and difficult to transport across membranes for excretion.

The liver can chemically alter the toxins by either a phase 1 reaction (oxidation) or a phase 2 reaction (conjugation). These reactions make the toxic compound more water-soluble and readily excreted in the bile or urine.

For both phase 1 and phase 2 reactions, certain enzymes are involved. It is possible to measure the ability to detox by measuring the genes that make the proteins

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and using a DetoxiGenomic panel*. The primary reason for measuring this is to know how efficiently the liver is working at clearing the pollutants from the body.

We are all accumulating pollutants and there are only four routes out of the body. These routes are through our breath, urine, stools and skin.

In the breath, there are volatile chemicals which can be eliminated. Some chemicals come out in bile and can be eliminated in the stool. However, some bile is partially re-absorbed and is needed for absorbing fats and fat soluble vitamins.

When the liver makes the toxins water soluble, then the kidneys and urine can then expel the toxins, even if perhaps they had been fat soluble previously.

The skin can be used for both fat soluble pollutant excretion, as well as those which are water soluble, through sweat.

Measuring the detoxification pathway enzyme through a genomic panel could be very valuable, as each process can be supported nutritionally with various, specific vitamins and minerals.

You can also help your liver by maintaining a healthy weight and keeping within recommended alcohol limits

**Breakspear Medical offers DetoxiGenomic panels for those who wish to find out how their liver and detoxification processes are functioning. This test requires samples collected by mouth swabs.*

RECOMMENDED RECIPE:

Gluten-free Yorkshire pudding

This gluten-free side dish, which tastes like an egg pancake with a crispy outside, can accompany any roast dinner.



INGREDIENTS:

75 grams potato starch	1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
75 grams ground almond	1/2 tsp salt
4 eggs	Cooking oil
200ml milk	

METHOD:

1. Heat the oven to 200°C/fan 190°C
2. Drizzle some cooking oil, such as sunflower, evenly into the holes of a non-stick muffin tin and place in the oven to heat through.
3. Lightly whisk the eggs and mix with the potato starch, ground almond, bicarbonate of soda and salt.
4. Continue mixing while gradually adding the milk until the batter is smooth and lump-free.
5. Remove the hot tins from the oven and carefully and evenly pour the batter into the holes, filling them within 0.5cm of the top.
6. Place the tins back into the hot oven and bake for 20-25 minutes and the puddings have puffed up and browned. They are better slightly overdone than underdone.
7. Serve immediately.

LOOKING BACK

Over 30 years of Breakspear Medical



Established well over 30 years ago, Breakspear Medical has changed premises several times, while continuing to provide our many clinical services to treat a variety of allergy and environmental illnesses.

In 1988, Dr Jean Monro moved her private practice to Breakspear College in Abbots Langley, which is how Breakspear Medical Group Limited got its name.

The college was named after Nicholas Breakspear, who was the only Englishman ever to become pope in Rome.

The listed building had a three storey centre block with two storey wings. The building was sold and has since been converted into luxury apartments.

Prior to moving to Breakspear College, Dr Monro's private practice was run from her

family's home. The three storey house is called Montrose, and is located in Toms Lane, Kings Langley.

Montrose was the first house built in Toms Lane in the early part of the 20th century. As more houses were built, the house was numbered 111.

Montrose later became the guesthouse for out of town patients while the clinic operated in a few different nearby premises which did not have in-patient facilities. Breakspear Medical now offers short stay accommodation in several

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nearby apartments. The guesthouse was sold a few years ago and has returned to being a family home.

Immediately after moving from Breakspear College, the clinic relocated to an office building just off Belswains Lane, Hemel Hempstead. Due to space restrictions and MHRA cleanroom air requirements, the Antigen Laboratory then operated out of a mobile laboratory at the back of the building. The building had a short-term lease and, after three years, the clinic had to be moved again. The Belswains Lane site was converted into a housing estate.

The clinic then moved to Lord Alexander House in central Hemel Hempstead, facing the River Gade, initially with the Antigen Laboratory mobile unit in the back car park. The laboratory was later relocated inside the building.

The business was spread over two floors of the multi-storey office building, which was shared with HM Inland Revenue and other businesses. The lease on these premises was also quite short.

Fortunately, the opportunity to purchase nearby premises was presented just in time and then, nearly 20 years ago, the clinic moved into its current premises, at Hertfordshire House.

Hertfordshire House previously belonged to a scientific engineering company, which moved to larger facilities in the Maylands Industrial Estate. Soon after purchase, the building was stripped down to the concrete and

transformed into an environmentally-friendly, facility.

As Breakspear Medical expanded and needed more space, the vacant building across the road and up the hill was leased. The former tyre centre was emptied out and converted into Breakspear Pharmacy. Today the former tyre centre operates as a garage after Pharmacy moved to the adjoining property.

The building next door came on the market a few years ago and Breakspear Medical was able to purchase it, too.

The building had previously been named after the printing company and was renamed Maple House. Today, the Breakspear Pharmacy is on the ground floor and the first floor is set up as a lecture hall, with a full kitchen and facilities.

While an important part of the clinic is to help recover the health of as many patients as possible, there are still quite a number of patients with longer term illnesses who remember the previous facilities.

Many long time staff members, who were there from the beginning, have since retired. (The wards are named after two such individuals, who have passed away.) There are also quite a few current staff members who have been with the family-run company for over 20 years.

After all the years, the objective of successfully helping those with allergy and environmental illnesses has remained the top priority.

Facing page, top: Hertfordshire House (current premises). Bottom row, left to right: Breakspear College, Belswains Lane, Montrose (former guesthouse), and Dr Monro with Sarah, Duchess of York at Breakspear College.



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Getting your life back after diagnosis



knows her well. We all knew that for her to have gone to see the doctor that her arm was really bothering her. It was the loss of some ability and independence that was really worrying and annoying her.

The doctor referred her for physiotherapy, which she undertook. It helped a bit but not much. The doctor also sent her for blood tests and scans as a precaution. At no point had anyone mentioned Parkinson's; it just wasn't on our radar.

During the early days of the Covid pandemic, in November 2020, an appointment came through for her to go to the local hospital for the results of the recent tests. She went on her own, expecting to be told what was wrong with her shoulder. She didn't mention the appointment to any of us, as why would she? To her, it was just a routine appointment for her stiff shoulder.

I was working from home when Mum turned up unexpectedly after her appointment. It was apparent that something was seriously wrong, as she sobbed whilst trying to tell me what had happened. She was terrified, but eventually she managed to tell me she had Parkinson's. To her, it felt like the end of the world. She foresaw losing all her independence, which would be intolerable to my mum.

We went online and looked up some facts about Parkinson's and realised it is a long-term, slow impact disease that generally can be

caused by external factors. The standard treatments, such as supportive therapies and medication, help to relieve the symptoms.

The NHS doctor put her on a low dose of dopamine, a common drug to help slow down and minimise the effects of the Parkinson's. They also booked her in with a Parkinson's nurse, who was lovely. She was very helpful in managing our perception of the disease and calming everything down a bit. She suggested Mum continue with her regular exercise and drink plenty of water.

I already knew of the Breakspear Medical through some good friends. At this point I wondered if this was something that their treatment approach would help with. I spoke to Mum and she wanted to explore this option to make sure we were doing everything we could. I set up an appointment with Dr Jean Monro.

After the appointment, Mum decided she wanted to go ahead with the entire intense treatment programme. The programme was spread over 12 weeks and involved regular clinic visits and many dietary and lifestyle changes. Mum was tested for food intolerances, levels of contaminants in her body, any viruses that may be in her bloodstream and candida. I am sure there were other things, however, those are the main ones I remember!

After the treatment programme was presented to Mum, she was able to decide how much or how little she wanted to do. This really helped her mentally, as the whole "loss of control" issue was huge to her. She took control of her future and decided to do everything that was suggested.

The extensive, holistic approach to Mum's treatment aimed to detoxify her body to best aid her body to cope with Parkinson's. The programme consisted of infusions, injections, continued tests to monitor progress and nutritional supplements to take at home. Full explanation was provided all the way along so we understood what the treatments were and how they could help.

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Along with continuing to exercise and drink plenty of water, an important element of her treatment programme considered her food intolerances. A gluten-free diet with minimal sugar was recommended and this was the hardest bit for Mum. Also, some of the treatments and supplements that she was taking caused a loss of appetite, so for a while, eating was a chore. Finding tasty gluten-free alternatives was also a challenge, but fun, as I love baking and together we explored many options.

Advice on eliminating toxins from her home environment was another large part of the treatment programme. It was recommended she not use scented toiletries and cleaning products, to minimise chemical exposure. I explored this avenue. We were given advice on where we could obtain suitable products, but I always love a challenge! I now make many of these products at home, for her as well as my friends and family.

Mental health care was also considered with regular meetings and talks with the Breakspear Medical team to find out how Mum was coping and to help her with anything she was struggling with. The Patient Liaison staff were always on hand to answer any general questions Mum may have and were unfailingly cheerful and supportive.

We started noticing an improvement in Mum's tremors after a couple of weeks. Continued improvement in this was the biggest indicator that the programme was making a difference. Although we hadn't noticed she had started to "shuffle" instead of walk before starting her programme, we noticed when it stopped. Her memory improved and her overall confidence is back to where it was pre-diagnosis. Whilst we know there is no cure for Parkinson's as such, we can see how lifestyle changes and the treatment programme from Breakspear Medical will minimise its impact on her life.

Around six weeks into the programme, friends and family, who didn't know what we were doing, commented that she looked 10 years younger. This made her one super happy lady!

Best of all, Mum is no longer absolutely terrified of the future and can see she will continue to have a good, independent life.

From my point of view (and I am emotional writing this bit), I have my mum back. She is one awesome lady who I aspire to be like. I want her around for as long as possible, as healthy as possible. I know my sister and the rest of her friends and family feel the same.



PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Parkinson's disease is thought to affect around 1 in 500 people. According to NHS.uk, most people start to develop symptoms when they're over 50 and men are slightly more likely to develop it than women

Parkinson's is caused by a loss of nerve cells in part of the brain called the substantia nigra. The cause is loss of nerve cells is largely unknown.

Symptoms usually develop slowly over years and the progression varies from one person to another. Those with Parkinson's may experience:

- tremor, which is involuntary shaking of particular parts of the body at rest
- bradykinesia, which means 'slowness of movement'
- stiffness in arms or legs beyond what would be expected from normal aging

• gait and balance problems
People with Parkinson's may also experience non-motor symptoms, which include apathy, depression, sleep behaviour disorders, loss of sense of smell and cognitive impairment.

Most experts believe that a combination of genetic and environmental factors is responsible for causing Parkinson's.

Currently there is no cure.



Dr Jean Monro

PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM DR JEAN MONRO

A new beginning, after retirement

As you may know, I have retired from the practise of medicine.

I practised medicine for more than 60 years, 40

of which have been in Environmental and Nutritional Medicine. I became fascinated in this approach because it involves searching for the causes of ill health, rather than just treating the symptoms.

I have decided that there is a continued role for me to offer

my services as an environmental naturopath. I have been granted naturopath registration by the General Naturopathic Council and Association of Naturopathic Practitioners.

Most of the principles of environmental medicine are not dependent on the prescription of medicines; they involve discerning the causes of illness, reducing exposures through lifestyle choices, diet and nutrition.

As an environmental naturopath, I can undertake all the same practice except that I will not prescribe medicines. This does not preclude me from recommending over-the-counter preparations and, of course, recommending supplements where I deem them appropriate. Should a prescription medicine be required I can refer you to a medical colleague.

I have always loved being a doctor and I am privileged to have had the opportunity of helping many thousands of patients. My special interest in allergy, diet and nutrition, started when I was a young mother and realised that both of my children have coeliac disease. Both boys

recovered from their related serious illnesses and started to thrive when I put them on a strict grain-free diet.

Their father, Richard, and I soon realised that the boys' symptoms were similar to many of those he had. For most of his life, he had experienced serious tummy upsets, migraines, eczema, poor immune response to infection and manic depression. Richard went on a strict gluten-free

diet, too, and within just a few weeks, he felt better than ever before and

was able to permanently stop taking various prescription drugs.

In the 1970s, I started a clinical research project at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery in London. For over 10 years, we investigated and treated food allergy in patients with migraine. Ever since then, I have worked in the field of allergy, and food and chemical sensitivity/hypersensitivity. Over time, my special interests have broadened further into arthritis, asthma, eczema, ME/CFS and many other chronic conditions, which are often the result of undiagnosed infection, as well as other provocants.

My environmental naturopath consultations are available at a lower rate than I used to charge as a doctor. I am also pleased to offer naturopathic consultations to follow my colleagues' medical consultations, providing my experienced environmental naturopathic perspective.

I hope to see you soon.

To book an appointment, simply call Reception 01442 261 333.

“ I look forward to continuing to help Breakspear Medical patients. ”

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