

Healthcheck

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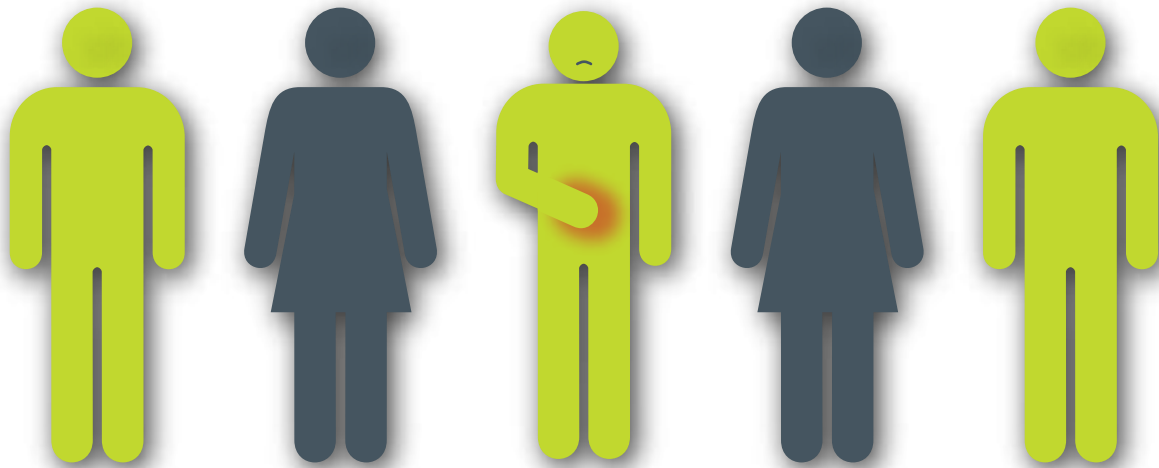
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New form of dietary intervention brings hope to IBS sufferers








It is estimated that up to one in five people will develop Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) at some point in their lives¹, so most people have probably either heard of IBS or know someone close to them who has the condition. Despite this, treatments for IBS have, in general, left much to be desired.

A NEW LOW FODMAP™ DIET recently introduced to the UK from Australia looks set to finally offer successful, long-term treatment for many people suffering from IBS. Supported by substantial scientific evidence, this new form of dietary intervention has been described as a significant advancement in the treatment of IBS by gastroenterologist, Dr Peter Irving and his colleagues at London Digestive Health, within The London Clinic.

Forget those diets from the past that simply focused on the removal of wheat and dairy products, the success of the Low FODMAP diet is attributed to the restriction of foods containing poorly absorbed sugars (FODMAPs). Common foods containing FODMAPs include (see list, next column):

Common foods containing FODMAPs that should be restricted:

-  Honey
-  Apples and pears and stone fruits, such as peaches, plums and nectarines
-  Onion, leek, garlic and artichoke
-  Polyol sweeteners (e.g sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol) that are often added to sugar-free varieties of gums, mints and chocolate and are also naturally in certain fruits and vegetables
-  Beans and pulses, such as baked beans, lentils and chickpeas

¹ Patient UK

story continued...

The diet works on the principle that not all sugars can be successfully 'broken-down' and absorbed within the small intestine. As a result, these sugars are rapidly fermented by bacteria in the bowel which draws in fluid and produces gas. This can cause a number of symptoms for those with a functional gut disorder such as IBS, which includes bloating, abdominal pain and diarrhoea.

Dr Irving comments: "Most treatments for IBS fail to improve symptoms in a significant proportion of people. Although many people with IBS are keen to try dietary therapy, previous studies of dietary treatments have either been of variable quality or have produced conflicting results. In contrast to this, the Low FODMAP™ diet has been shown to be effective in a high quality, placebo controlled trial and is also supported by data from other studies investigating how it works."

The Low FODMAP™ diet is not as restrictive as some diets and most people find it easy to adhere to, therefore also significantly increasing its chance of long-term success among followers. Close consultation with a trained dietitian is of key importance as they can provide patients with individualised advice. Provision of appropriate alternatives for High FODMAP foods is key, as well as ensuring the diet remains nutritionally adequate.

Dr Irving adds: "In the past, dietary intervention has mainly been non-specific. However, everyone is different and what works well for one person with a functional gut disorder, may not work well for another. This new diet offers a really positive outlook for sufferers of IBS and other functional gut disorders."

Dr Irving is a consultant gastroenterologist at The London Clinic. Dr Irving also practices within London Digestive Health – a partnership of London teaching hospital consultants who specialise in the diagnosis and treatment of gastrointestinal disease, which is based within the Clinic. Dr Irving and his colleagues offer consultation and endoscopy relating to all aspects of gastroenterology, including reflux disease, Barrett's oesophagus, ulcer disease, abdominal pain, coeliac disease, inflammatory bowel disease (ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease), the management of upper and lower GI cancer and GI cancer screening.

Help halt the signs of ageing with the Titan laser skin tightening system

Skin is our body's largest organ, so it's no wonder that it needs a great deal of TLC to help it remain in peak condition, particularly as we get older. Yes, some people do have exceptionally good 'genes' when it comes to skin, but for the rest of us, there are ways and means of helping to maintain a healthy and youthful appearance.



DR CHRISTOPHER ROWLAND PAYNE, Consultant Dermatologist at The London Clinic, comments: "Good skin is a reflection of a healthy body and mind. While we cannot halt the signs of ageing, obvious things such as avoiding excessive sunshine, eating a healthy diet, getting regular exercise, getting the right amount of sleep and avoiding too much alcohol all have a positive effect on the appearance of our skin, no matter what the age."

In the last year an exciting new, non-surgical treatment has become available in the UK which offers an alternative for those who are still unhappy with the appearance of 'ageing' skin. The Titan laser skin tightening system is a non-surgical procedure that uses a safe, infrared light to heat the lower layer of skin (dermis). This heat causes the skin's natural collagen to contract resulting in lifted, tighter skin. It is particularly effective on the skin along the jawline, forehead, neck and under the chin. No preparation is required prior to treatment and no injections of anaesthetic are needed. Dr Rowland Payne adds: "This is a really exciting development as far as non-invasive anti-ageing treatments are concerned. In addition to producing an immediate tightening effect, the procedure also promotes new collagen production. This results in a

further tightening of the skin over the ensuing three months, further improving folds, lines and lax skin."

With the desire for everything to be perfect nowadays, from skin to hair to teeth, Dr Rowland Payne is seeing more and more people in search of treatments to help them slow down the effects of ageing. Dr Rowland Payne adds: "The most popular cosmetic treatments are:

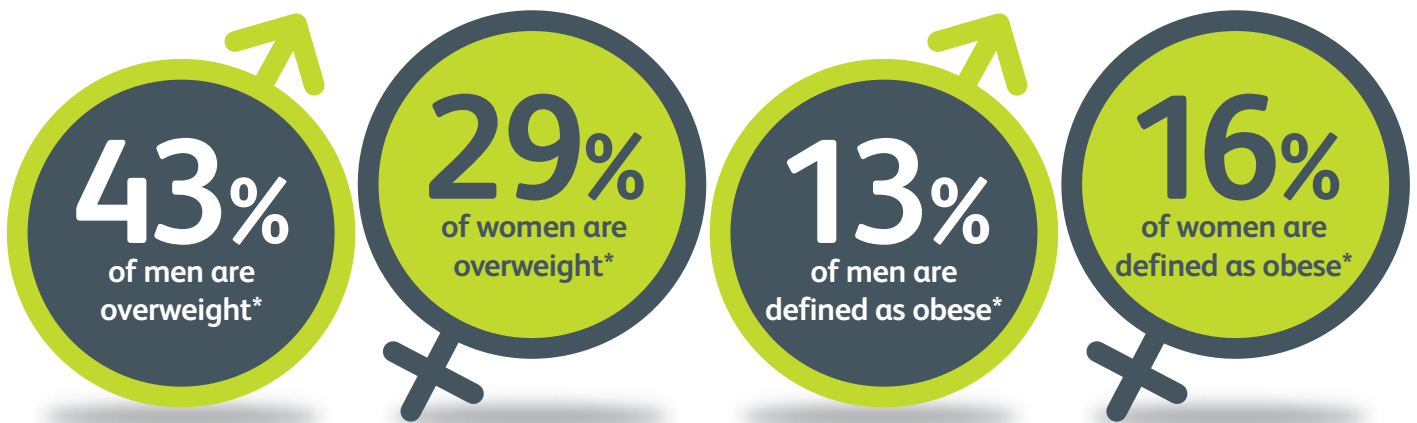
1. Removing brown spots & veins from the backs of hands
2. Removing broken veins from the face and legs
3. Botulinum & fillers for wrinkles

"I am often asked how to achieve a better complexion and I cannot emphasise enough the damage caused by overexposure to the sun. Not only does excessive sun lead to many cosmetic problems, it is also the primary cause of skin cancer. Skin cancer affects one in five people in Britain and the diagnosis and surgical treatment of skin cancer is an everyday part of my work."

The London Clinic has a number of consultant dermatologists who provide a full range of dermatological inpatient and outpatient services.

The truth behind weight loss surgery

Being overweight is defined as having a 'Body Mass Index' (BMI) of more than 27. Over 43% of men and 29% of women in the UK are overweight. Of these, 13% of men and 16% of women are defined as obese, with a BMI greater than 30.



* Figures from the UK (www.heartstats.org)

FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHOSE weight poses a serious health risk, medical or surgical intervention is sometimes necessary to significantly improve their health and quality of life. Bariatric surgery and non-surgical techniques are just some of the options available for patients.

The London Clinic's Bariatric Service has been established to help people who are obese, using a team of specialists to support patients through their journey, from their initial assessment through to after-care and beyond. This includes a psychological assessment, dietary advice, sleep analysis and a diabetes and endocrinology assessment amongst other key evaluations.

Mr Ahmed R Ahmed, Consultant Laparoscopic, GI and Bariatric Surgeon at the Clinic, comments:

"It is important that people do not see weight loss surgery as an easy option to help them lose weight. Bariatric surgery should only be performed following an in-depth consultation with a surgeon, like myself, who can provide expert

advice on a case-by-case basis and assess a patient's suitability for surgery. At The London Clinic we use the latest techniques, involving laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery, without converting to open surgery, which is less invasive and significantly reduces recovery time.

"We pay particular attention to pre and post-operative care in order to optimise the outcome of the patient's operation and ensure a smooth and rapid recovery after surgery."

Mr Ahmed provides further information on the different weight loss treatments available at The London Clinic:

NON-SURGICAL TECHNIQUES

For those who do not yet meet the criteria for surgery or those who need more time prior to deciding to opt for surgery, non-surgical techniques are recommended in the form of both lifestyle (diet and exercise) and medical intervention (tablets). These techniques aim for a 5-10% weight loss.

BARIATRIC SURGERY

Bariatric surgery, which has a near 100% success rate for sustained weight loss, is a treatment for morbid obesity - having a body weight high enough to pose a serious risk to health, usually indicated by a Body Mass Index of 40 or more - and has arguably the best long term outcomes. It includes a number of different options to suit different patients' needs including:

• Gastric Band

A gastric band is an inflatable silicone ring, inserted in the stomach which can be used to control the amount of food passing into the digestive tract. The operation is done as a laparoscopic surgery procedure. The benefit of a band is that the patient will feel full quicker and for longer than usual. The key advantages of this procedure are that it's less invasive and easier to reverse than other surgical techniques designed to aid weight loss.

• Gastric Bypass

A gastric bypass is where the stomach is stapled to leave a smaller pouch attached (again usually by staples) to a section of the small intestine. This operation can also be done with laparoscopic surgery. Weight loss following a gastric bypass is generally 70% of the patient's excess weight after two years.

• Sleeve Gastrectomy

This is a new bariatric procedure which involves stapling the stomach to leave a narrow 'banana' shaped stomach. The remainder is then removed from the body thus making this type of surgery irreversible. This procedure has fewer complications than the gastric bypass, yet offers nearly as much weight-loss - around 25% of total body weight. Furthermore, if necessary, the sleeve can be converted into a gastric bypass in the future.

Healthcheck

Snoring – a common and embarrassing condition that can be more serious than you think...

Everybody likes to think that they don't snore, but how do you really know unless you have been told by your partner, friends or family? Snoring used to be something that people felt they were unable to control, and many do not realise it can increase the risk of developing more serious health conditions, such as coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke or diabetes.

WHEN WE GO TO SLEEP the muscles in our body, including our throat muscles, relax, and for most people this aids a peaceful night's sleep. However when the throat muscles relax too much this can cause the passage way in the throat to narrow and partially collapse at times – stopping people from breathing. The narrowing or closing of the throat during sleep, which interrupts a person's breathing, is called sleep apnoea. Fortunately, our body has a defence mechanism which can sense when the airway is blocked and as a result we wake up, take a deep breath and fall back to sleep without even noticing. Even though this process sounds very alarming, in its mildest form it is actually very normal and should not cause any disturbance to your sleep.

So, what are the causes of sleep apnoea? Sleep apnoea is normally caused by anything that increases the normal narrowing of the throat when we sleep. Overweight men between 30 and 65 are most commonly affected, especially those with a neck size of more than 17 inches, as the extra fat can put pressure on the throat causing the passage way to narrow. Anything that makes the throat narrower to begin with, for example large tonsils and a partially blocked nose which causes pressures lower down the throat, can also trigger sleep apnoea. In its more

serious form, this continuous cycle of stopping breathing and waking up can occur up to hundred times a night, and can disrupt your natural sleeping pattern, making you feel very tired the next morning.

Sleep apnoea and heavy snoring are actually a lot more common than people tend to think. More than half a million people in the UK are thought to have sleep apnoea, but less than one in four are aware of it¹.

If you are concerned that you may have sleep apnoea, there are a few signs that you should be aware of:

- Heavy snoring
- Severe daytime drowsiness, particularly if you feel sleepy during everyday activities
- Morning headaches
- Irritability
- Impaired concentration



There are a number of self help remedies that can help to treat sleep apnoea. For example losing weight, avoiding smoking and drinking alcohol

Sleep Apnoea symptoms

- Snoring
- Morning headaches
- Irritability
- Impaired concentration
- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Decreased libido

after 6pm and sleeping on your side, to help clear the airway, will all contribute to getting a better night's sleep. If, however, sleep apnoea is causing more severe problems such as difficulty in concentrating in the work place, your GP can recommend that you take a sleep study. A sleep study will make a variety of measurements during your sleep (without any discomfort to you), following which a variety of treatment options can be offered. It is important to remember snoring can also be caused by a number of other factors such as low thyroid activity, nasal polyps or acid reflux. Your GP will be able to explain these to you in more detail.

Dr Beata O'Donoghue, Consultant in Anaesthesia and Sleep Medicine at The London Clinic says, 'There are hundreds of thousands of sufferers who are still undiagnosed in the UK as many of them are unaware of the condition and do not relate the signs to sleep apnoea. Snoring can be embarrassing especially for women but it is comforting to know that

Self help and clinical treatment for Sleep Apnoea

- Lose weight
- Avoid drinking after 6pm
- Avoid smoking
- Adapt your sleeping position
- Use of prosthetic dental appliances
- BiPAP treatment

this condition is common and that treatment is available'.

The most common treatment for sleep apnoea is Bi-Level Positive Airway Pressure (BiPAP), whereby air is delivered by a mask while you sleep. This aids the opening of the throat passage by slightly different settings of pressurised air for when you inhale and exhale. Because of these dual settings BiPAP allows people to get more air in and out of the lungs without the natural muscular effort needed to do so. Although this is not the most attractive device and at first it may be awkward, the results show that this treatment greatly improves sleep and eliminates day time drowsiness.

Consultant anaesthetists and physicians specialising in sleep disorders run sleep studies at The London Clinic, using sophisticated monitoring systems and diagnostic equipment.

¹ NHS.uk

² NHS.uk