

The Foundations of Health

Whether you are waiting for your first appointment with us, have joined one of our online group courses, are starting to work with your first Functional Medicine treatment plan, or are a long-standing patient and have simply found yourself stuck in a rut or lapsed back into old habits, welcome to the Functional Nexus 'Foundations of Health' booklet.

We have designed this booklet to help inform, educate and inspire you to identify areas where your diet, sleep, stress management, movement habits and toxin exposures could be changed for the better. There are always improvements we can all make to progress and improve our health and wellbeing – wherever we are in the journey towards better health. Our clinic aim is to encourage all our patients to take ownership of their health, to be curious and learn what helps them to feel better (or worse), and to experiment with appropriate recommendations and suggestions when it feels right for them.

In this booklet, we share many of our tips and tricks which can help to restore balance to the body and support the natural processes of healing and health optimisation. Health improvements often occur naturally once we give our system what it needs (and stop doing things which are causing harm). Just small and incremental changes over time can add up to amazing benefits – the key is to start the journey – however small the step forward – it is all progress.

The Journey Towards optimum health has to start from where each of us finds ourselves now. Change is not always easy, but once the benefits are felt, the encouragement to continue gathers momentum.

The following pages contain notes on what we consider to be the essential Foundations for Health:

- A healthy diet
- Good quality (and sufficient) sleep
- Low stress levels and regular relaxation
- A regular programme of enjoyable movement (and rest)
- Reducing toxin exposure and support for natural toxin elimination processes

While we encourage all of our patients to familiarise themselves with these principals, it's important to remember that everyone has different strengths and problems which are unique to them. There is never a single best way to proceed which will work for everyone. Especially when it comes to diet and exercise, needs can be very diverse and what works well for one person may be actively detrimental for another. Do remember to listen to your body, and if something isn't working for you then stop and try to understand why. If you ever need help or are struggling to make changes, our expert Nutritional Therapy and Health Coaching team are always happy to support you in our one to one or group online coaching sessions.

At the end of each section of these notes there is space for you to write your own thoughts or keep track of progress or things you have tried. If you come across alternatives which you find effective then please feel free to share these resources with us so we can pass them on and help support others on their journey towards better health.

A Healthy Diet

I am sometimes asked what the *best diet* is for everyone to follow. After working with hundreds of patients and their food choices on an individual level, I know there is no correct answer to this question. Everyone is different and everyone has their own food history. Sensitivities, allergies and intolerances, poor chemical processing, disruption to the gut microbiome, nutritional deficiencies and deeply personal or spiritual beliefs will inform the best way for each of us to eat.

At the clinic we are here to listen to your needs and to work with your body and your unique set of requirements, to find the nutritional plan which works best for you. This may sometimes take us down blind alleys before we find the correct path for you – but with each trial we learn something new about your needs and how your body works best.

While we cannot give specific guidance on your own particular needs here, there are some basic principles which will be helpful for most people:

Increase Phytonutrient Intake

The majority of people will benefit from 9-13 servings of whole plant foods per day to prevent or reverse chronic disease. Aiming to eat a variety of colours is a great way to ensure there is a good variety of antioxidant sources in the diet. Aim to 'eat the Rainbow' each day with help from our colourful guide and starter recipes which are linked below.

You can find inspiration to help expand your diet in colour and read about the benefits of each of the Phytonutrients in the colourful handout below:

<https://drsarahdavies.online/document/the-phytonutrient-spectrum/>

For those with children (or who prefer the simpler format), our Phytonutrient Checklist can be printed out and kept on the fridge to encourage healthy eating and to record how many different colours you eat per week. Setting up a competition with children can help to make this exciting.

<https://drsarahdavies.online/wp-content/uploads/Phytonutrient-Checklist.pdf>

Looking for inspiration? Our Rainbow Recipe guide can be used to help increase colour and enjoyment in your cooking:

https://drsarahdavies.online/wp-content/uploads/Dr_Sarah_s_Rainbow_Recipes.pdf

Eat Whole, Unprocessed Foods

Highly processed or Ultra-processed foods will generally contain few or no minimally / non-processed ingredients and tend to be higher in salt, fat and added sugars. They often also contain unhealthy flavour enhancers, preservatives or thickeners. You can read more about these here:

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/junk-food-vs-healthy-food>

Processed foods have become widely available and it's difficult to avoid these while shopping. The more processed food we have in our diets, the higher the risks of developing chronic health issues such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and autoimmunity.

In the clinic we encourage avoidance of these foods and instead encourage high intake of good quality, minimally processed wholefoods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, legumes, extra virgin olive oil and spices alongside lean meat and fish. While these foods often require more home preparation, taking time to develop your culinary skills, an interest in healthy meal planning and cooking from scratch is one of the best investments you can make in your health long term.

Reduce Sugar and Balance your Meals

Eating refined grains and foods high in sugar increases the risk of heart disease and diabetes. Eating a healthy source of protein, fibre and healthy fats with a meal can help stabilise your blood sugar - especially when eating starchy vegetables like potatoes, fruit or whole grains.

Protein, fibre and fat will slow down the absorption of sugar/ carbohydrate into the bloodstream, help to

manage appetite and stabilise blood sugar levels. These foods are also good for metabolism and digestion.

For those who need to lose weight, improve mood swings and hormonal health or improve diabetic control, choosing healthier and lower carbohydrate options can be very beneficial. We have created a resource with some ideas to help you manage blood sugar and cravings:

<https://drsarahdavies.online/wp-content/uploads/Dr-Sarahs-Low-Carb-Tips-1.pdf>

Increase Healthy Fats

The key to improving the quality of fat in the diet is to avoid processed foods containing unhealthy vegetable and trans-fats. While fats have historically been demonised in popular health advice, newer studies show that using healthy fats in the diet and reducing sugars is a far more beneficial way to eat than following the low-fat diet. We encourage all our patients to actively seek out and include the following healthy fats in their diets:

Wholefoods rich in healthy fats and valuable fat-soluble vitamins and essential fatty acids include:

- Avocados
- Oily Fish: choose the healthier SMASH fish – Wild Caught Salmon, Mackerel, Anchovies, Sardines and Herring
- Nuts and Seeds, Nut Butters and Tahini

Cold pressed oils (not to be heated), which can be enjoyed in dressings and drizzled on vegetables:

- Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Avocado oil

Healthy oils for cooking and baking:

- Ghee
- Coconut oil
- Olive oil (for low temperature cooking only)

Stay Hydrated

Research shows that drinking enough water each day is crucial for many reasons: to regulate body temperature, deliver nutrients to cells, keep joints lubricated, support the immune system and keep organs functioning properly. Being well-hydrated also improves sleep quality, cognition, and mood while curbing food cravings.

Most people need at least 1.5-2L of water daily. This can be as hot or cold drinks (for those with sensitive digestion room temperature water is better). Opt for water or herbal (decaffeinated) teas as caffeine is diuretic, which means that increases the production of urine and as a result may inhibit hydration.

Avoid Snacking Between Meals

Overabundance of foods in Western society, especially those which are highly processed and of poor nutritional and high sugar content, has created an obesogenic environment. Unstable blood sugars and the misconception that we need to eat frequently to maintain energy had caused an epidemic of overeating leading to a rapidly growing overweight population.

Studies show that eating three [balanced](#) meals a day with at least 3-4 hours between them can improve satiety and reduces hunger cues compared with higher meal frequency diets.

Other benefits to fasting between meals includes improvements in:

- Recognition of hunger cues and restoration of the ability to eat intuitively according to the body's needs (rather than eating for comfort or reward).
- Gastrointestinal motility and the ability to move intestinal contents efficiently through the gut,

reducing the occurrence imbalanced gut bacteria and excessive fermentation leading to gas and bloating.

- Healthier eating habits and reduction in snacking on ultra-processed foods which lead to obesity.
- Mood and mental health as stable blood sugars reduce hormonal imbalance and maintain healthy cortisol levels.

Choose Clean, Lower Toxin Foods

Our Food Plans place emphasis on eating clean foods for life and reducing exposure to harmful environmental toxins such as plastics, heavy metals and pesticides. There are many ways to minimize intake of these substances including:

Choose lean, organic meats (grass fed if possible), over fatty cuts, as pesticides concentrate in fat.

Buy organic vegetables where possible. The Environmental working group lists those foods most likely to be heavily contaminated and those which are safer:

<https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/summary.php#dirty-dozen>

Peel off the skin or remove the outer layer of leaves of leafy produce. You can remove surface pesticide residues, waxes, fungicides, and fertilizers by soaking the food in a solution of sodium Bicarbonate (1 teaspoon to every 2 cups of cold water), then rinsing well.

Wash produce before peeling it so dirt and contaminants aren't transferred from the knife onto the fruit or vegetable.

Swap plastic water bottles for glass or steel versions

Choose non-toxic pans, skillets, and pots made of cast iron or steel, ceramics or glass. Make your own non-toxic, non-stick pans by seasoning it with olive or coconut oil. There's a good guide on how to do this here: <https://www.serious-eats.com/how-to-season-cast-iron-pans-skillets-cookware>

Filter your cooking and drinking water to remove chlorine and other contaminants. Filters we like are:

- Berkey: <https://berkey-waterfilters.co.uk>
- Aarke: <https://www.aarke.com/uk/explore-purifier>

Practice Mindful Eating and meal hygiene

Research shows that it is not just what we eat but also how we eat that matters. Mindful eating has been shown to improve digestion, mood and nutrient absorption while reducing food cravings.

Mindful eating and meal hygiene recommendations include:

Create a relaxed environment – away from your workplace - when eating, as nervous tension at mealtimes can affect digestion. If you are feeling stressed take a moment to practice [diaphragmatic breathing](#) before you start eating.

Be in the moment – Try to be fully present, avoid multitasking or watching TV. Sit down and just eat. This helps with noticing internal and external cues that affect how much we eat and what we eat.

Ensure you chew each mouthful thoroughly as chewing aids with breaking down food into absorbable components and improves digestion. The food needs to be completely mushed before you swallow. Increased time spent on chewing promotes awareness of eating which is essential for recognition of satiety. In general, it takes about 20 minutes for your brain to signal to your stomach that it is full, so allow at least 30 minutes for each meal.

Avoid drinking any fluids with meals as it has been shown to inhibit the production of digestive enzymes and gastric acid leading to suboptimal digestion of foods

Eat slowly with your mouth closed to avoid gulping down air with your food

Avoid drinking from a straw as this can make you swallow air and lead to increased bloating.

Avoid eating a large meal late at night as that can hinder proper digestion and can also interfere with the quality of your sleep. Ensure that your last meal is at least 3 to 4 hours before bedtime.

Nutritional Supplementation

Unfortunately, due to intensive farming practices and loss of mineral and micronutrient content from the modern diet, most people will benefit from taking a good quality, well formulated Multivitamin. These supplements can help to bridge the gap between the nutrients provided by a healthy diet and those needed for optimal health. While we support the move towards plant-based diets and protection of our environment, without regular consumption of animal products, there is a high likelihood of developing micronutrient deficiencies (especially B12 and iron). For those who choose not to eat fish, we would also advise supplementation with a good quality Omega 3 for brain health and a healthy immune system.

Vitamin D is naturally made in our skin following sunlight exposure. Unfortunately, due to our latitude, UK residents are only able to access the correct sunlight frequencies to make this essential vitamin from March to October, and almost all become deficient in the winter months without supplementation. Vitamin D is essential for immune health, fighting infections and bone health. Everyone in the UK is advised to supplement Vitamin D, especially those with weaker immunity, pregnant women, children, the elderly and those with darker skin tones.

To avoid deficiency in essential micronutrients, our favourite recommendations include:

Multivitamin Options:

Biocare Methyl Multinutrient:

<https://myfunctionalapothecary.co.uk/collections/biocare/products/methyl-multinutrient-120-capsules>

Biocare Female Multinutrient:

<https://myfunctionalapothecary.co.uk/collections/biocare/products/female-multinutrient-90-capsules>

Nutri Advanced Multi Essentials for Women:

<https://myfunctionalapothecary.co.uk/collections/nutriadvanced/products/multi-essentials-for-women-60-tablets>

Nutri Advanced Multi Essentials for Men:

<https://myfunctionalapothecary.co.uk/collections/nutriadvanced/products/nutriadvanced-multi-essentials-for-men-60-tablets>

Omega 3 Options:

Biocare Mega EPA Fish Oil: https://myfunctionalapothecary.co.uk/products/mega-epa-omega-3-fish-oil-60-capsules?_pos=1&_sid=a3b8088ac&_ss=r

Cytoplant Vegan Omega 3: https://myfunctionalapothecary.co.uk/products/omega-3-vegan-60-capsules?_pos=3&_sid=a3b8088ac&_ss=r

Vitamin D Options:

BetterYou DLux+ (Vitamin D3 and K2): https://myfunctionalapothecary.co.uk/products/betteryou-dlux-vitamin-d-k2?_pos=9&_sid=513d23326&_ss=r

NutriAdvanced Vitamin D3 Drops: https://myfunctionalapothecary.co.uk/products/vitamin-d3-drops?_pos=10&_sid=513d23326&_ss=r

Recipe Books:

From the Hemsley sisters Jasmine and Melissa Hemsley '[The Art of Eating Well](#)'

Vegan Cookbook from Saskia Gregson Williams '[Naturally Sassy](#)'

[Detox Kitchen Cookbooks](#) by Lily Simpson and Rob Hobson

Amelia Freer '[Eat Nourish Glow](#)'

Websites:

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07496080755

<https://www.cleaneatingmag.com/clean-eating-recipes/>

<https://www.wellplated.com/>

<https://nourishingmeals.com/>

<https://www.sweetashoney.co/recipe-search/>

My Notes:

Sleep Optimisation

In a world where stress levels are rising, exposure to natural sunlight outdoors is diminishing and technology is leading to constant demands for everybody's attention, it's no surprise that so many of us struggle to get enough sleep.

The amount of sleep that qualifies as "enough" differs depending on who you ask. But it usually falls between about 7–9 hours per night for adults (and even more for children and teens). However, everyone is a bit different in terms of their ideal amount of sleep. Some of the best sleep aids are simple measures, including adjusting the type of light you're exposed to daily, managing stressors in your life, making changes to your diet, and establishing a consistent night time routine.

Getting enough sleep is a vital, dynamic part of a healthy lifestyle. The body needs adequate rest each night for a variety of reasons, including:

- Fighting infection and strengthening the immune system
- New growth and repairing of tissues and organs
- Maintaining good digestion
- Supporting detoxification
- Healthy hormonal metabolism
- Maintaining cognitive health

Sleep Hygiene Measures

Create a Healthy Routine

Develop a Relaxation routine. One hour prior to bedtime allow your mind to relax and unwind. A hot bath will support sleep onset.

Avoid heavy meals within 3 hours of bedtime. Enjoy healthier meals which will balance blood sugars in the evening containing good quality proteins and fats.

Avoid excessive liquids before bedtime to avoid sleep disturbance in the night.

Try Journaling. If you're having racing thoughts or worried about the next day, write it all down on paper. Counting your blessings is a great way to end the day on a positive note.

If you can't settle, try a relaxation technique or meditation to aid relaxation. We have suggested various helpful resources below.

Set a regular bedtime. Try to rise and go to bed at the same times each day, including weekends. Retire between 10 and 11pm for the healthiest melatonin production.

Avoid stimulants

No caffeine after 3pm (it has a 12-hour lasting effect). You may need to avoid it altogether if you are sensitive. This includes coffee, cola, tea (including green / matcha tea), and dark chocolate.

Avoid alcohol before bed. Although it can act as a sedative initially, it can cause night waking and disrupt sleep in the longer term. It can also increase snoring and sleep apnoea.

Exercise in the morning or earlier in the day if possible. Exercising at night can lead to increased alertness for some people (due to increase in the stress hormone cortisol).

Create a bedroom which is conducive to sleep

Stay cool at bedtime (<18°C). The cold will help decrease your core body temperature which can help to initiate sleepiness.

Keep your room dark. Use curtains or black-out blinds, especially in summertime when the days are longer.

Banish laptops, phones, TV and work from the bedroom. Make your bed a comfortable sanctuary

away from work to relax and sleep.

Improve your Circadian Rhythms and Melatonin production

Take a few minutes to expose yourself to the sun each morning. Exposure to morning sun helps to maintain the natural circadian rhythms that govern sleep and waking.

Reduce Blue light before bed. Turn off electronic devices (which give off blue light), at least 2 hours before bed if possible. The blue wavelengths enter the eyes and prevent the production of melatonin (the natural sleep hormone). Try reading instead of watching TV to wind down in the evening. If you really need to use a screen, then look at options to reduce blue light exposure below.

If you want to improve your overall sleep/wake cycle, changing the colour and brightness of indoor lighting can have a profound effect on sleep quality and melatonin production. See more information in our resources below.

Avoid napping as it interferes with the natural Circadian Rhythm. If extremely tired, limit nap time to 30 minutes or less.

Helpful Resources

Blue Light Blockers:

For those who need to continue with screen use before bed, the use of amber coloured glasses or Apps to change the screen brightness and colour can be used. Options include:

F.Lux: <https://justgetflux.com>

<https://www.amazon.com/amber-glasses-sleep/s?k=amber+glasses+sleep>

Try to view the sunset and dim the house lights after dark, always being mindful of safety.

Indoor Light Management:

If you want to improve your overall sleep/wake cycle, changing the colour and brightness of indoor lighting can have a profound effect on sleep quality and melatonin production. Opt for flicker-free, low colour temperature light bulbs as this will reduce the impact on your circadian rhythm and relax your nervous system. This is a good article to help you decide on the most appropriate light bulbs for your sleep hygiene

<https://www.blockbluelight.co.uk/blogs/news/led-fluorescent-lighting-dangers>

Specialist lamps have also been found to improve mood in those who tend to suffer with seasonal low mood (SAD syndrome). There is a good article on this issue here:

<https://www.healthline.com/health/sad-lamp>

Relaxation Exercises / Apps for Sleep

Insight Timer: Free App with thousands of guided Sleep Meditations, sleep stories and soundtracks to aid sleep: <https://insighttimer.com/individuals>

The Sleep Foundation also produced a review of available apps to support sleep for adults and children: <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/best-sleep-apps>

Uncommon Knowledge Sleep Hypnosis sessions: <https://www.hypnosisdownloads.com/sleep-problems>

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Technique:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86HUcX8ZtAk&list=PLFxT7tUfXXZFGOm1wez6CRCAzIVfj5UTq&index=7&ab_channel=relaxforawhile

Supplements for Sleep

There are many Natural ways to help support sleep safely. Herbal therapy can be very effective and we offer tailored advice in our 1-1 Nutritional Therapist and Doctor-led sessions. However, the following suggestions can be tried by all:

Essential oils:

Pillow sprays and diffusers have been found in studies to transmit signals to the brain inducing a feeling of calm and sleepiness. In particular, lavender, bergamot, Cedarwood, Clary Sage and Chamomile have all been found to be effective as aromatherapy agents.

Products which we enjoy include:

https://naturaldispensary.co.uk/products/Sleep_Ease_Pure_Blend_10ml-10002484-0.html

https://naturaldispensary.co.uk/products/Sleep_Better_Pillow_Mist_100ml-10003322-0.html

Teas:

Provided they don't make you visit the bathroom in the night, a warm relaxing herbal tea before bed has been used as a natural sleep-aid for centuries. Many herbs have also been studied for their sleep-promoting properties. You can read more about this here:

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/teas-that-help-you-sleep>

Some of our favourite bedtime teas are:

Dragonfly Tea Night Sky Calm: <https://dragonflytea.com/products/night-sky-calm>

Clipper Organic Sleep Easy Infusion: <https://www.clipper-teas.com/product/organic-sleep-easy-infusion/>

Pukka Herbs Night Time Tea: <https://www.pukkaherbs.com/uk/en/products/night-time-tea>

Teapigs Snooze Sleepy Tea: <https://www.teapigs.co.uk/products/snooze>

Magnesium:

Magnesium is one of the UK's most common deficiencies and lack of this important mineral is associated with inability to relax, poor sleep and cramps. Various forms can be used to support a healthy sleep routine including bath salts, skin lotions and sprays as well as more traditional drinks and pills.

Magnesium supplements are a foundation of many of our supplement plans. Here are a few products we like to recommend:

Epsom Salts: https://naturaldispensary.co.uk/products/Epsom_Salts_1_5kg-14735-0.html Add 1 cup (275g) per hot bath and soak for 15 minutes or more

BetterYou Body Oil Spray: https://myfunctionalapothecary.co.uk/products/magnesium-oil-5ml?_pos=6&_sid=8ba59b3df&_ss=r

Biocare Magnesium Taurate: https://myfunctionalapothecary.co.uk/products/magnesium-aurate-60-capsules?_pos=2&_sid=8ba59b3df&_ss=r

Nutri Advanced Mega Mag Calmeze: https://myfunctionalapothecary.co.uk/products/megamag-calmeze-magnesium-powder-orange-raspberry-or-chamomile-flavour?_pos=8&_sid=8ba59b3df&_ss=r

Sleep Apnoea and Snoring

The British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association offer a snoring self-diagnosis tool designed to help you identify the likely cause of any snoring and help find a solution to the problem. This can be accessed here:

<https://britishsnoring.co.uk/itests/>

In cases where sleep is disturbed by airway collapse (snoring or stopping breathing), further investigation needs to be undertaken to find out what the underlying causes are, in order for it to be treated effectively.

Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA):

Sleep apnoea is when airflow to the lungs becomes blocked during sleep, and is considered to be clinically significant if the episodes last for more than 10 seconds and more than 5 times an hour. Those who suffer from this condition will awake (sometimes repeatedly with a loud snort), many times at night, and usually feel very tired during the day. People with sleep apnoea may complain of excessive daytime sleepiness often with irritability or restlessness. But it is normally the bed partner, family or friends who notice the symptoms first.

In more severe cases, sleep apnoea can lead to increased cortisol, weight gain, high blood pressure and increased risk of chronic health problems and effective relief from this problem is really important in those with poor health. You can read about this condition and the common symptoms here:

https://britishsnoring.co.uk/snoring_&_sleep_apnoea/what_is_sleep_apnoea.php

The STOPBang Questionnaire is a simple screening tool which you can use to determine whether you are at high risk of having the condition:

https://britishsnoring.co.uk/stop_bang_questionnaire.php

If you or your doctor suspect that Sleep Apnoea may be an issue which is affecting you, SleepTest.co.uk offer further advice and access to simple home testing kit which can be used at home (without waiting for referral to a sleep clinic on the NHS):

<https://www.sleepTest.co.uk>

Better Breathing for Sleep Disturbance and Snorers

Snoring and sleep disturbance can often be improved through improved management of the airways at night to reduce mouth breathing and encourage better nasal airflow. Ways which some people find can improve nasal breathing and reduce snoring include:

Tackling weight gain which is often associated with increased swelling in the tissues of the throat and neck.

Reducing exposure to environmental allergens for those affected. This may include feather pillows, house dust and pollens. For some a good Quality HEPA filter may be worth the investment. The article below discusses this topic and has some recommendations for filters:

<https://www.flexappliances.uk/the-know/how-do-air-purifiers-stop-snoring>

Reducing exposure to foods causing excessive sinus blockage or mucous. Most commonly dairy and alcohol.

Avoidance of alcohol in the evenings – which can lead to excessive sedation and airway blockade.

Use of essential oils in a diffuser such as eucalyptus and peppermint can help to clear nasal blockage and reduce snoring. You can read about effective remedies here:

<https://www.healthline.com/health/essential-oil-for-snoring#snoring>

Sleep on your side. Sleeping on the back is usually associated with increased risk of airway collapse. Devices to encourage side-sleeping can be very effective for some people. There are some great tips on side sleeping here: <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleeping-positions/side-sleeping>

Mandibular Advancement Devices

Mandibular Advancement Devices (MAD) are aimed at tongue based snorers to hold the lower jaw and tongue forward making more space to breathe and prevent snoring. If you have false or uneven teeth, gum disease or temporo-mandibular joint dysfunction, please consult with your dentist before trying this approach. You can see the available devices here:

https://britishsnoring.co.uk/shop/mandibular_advancement_devices_MADs.php

Buteyko Breathing

The Buteyko breathing method trains you to switch from mouth breathing to nasal breathing, helps to reduce nasal blockage, reduces breathing volume and can be used to significantly reduce snoring and sleep apnoea in mild to moderate cases. You can read about the benefits of the Buteyko technique for sleep disturbed by airway problems here:

<https://buteykoclinic.com/sleepapnea/>

Our qualified Buteyko coach Laura offers online Buteyko technique lessons to patients as an initial three-session training programme (plus top-up sessions as required). Please do contact the clinic to book an appointment.

The Buteyko Method - Breathwork sessions with Laura Johnson, Nutritional Therapist.

- Reduce Stress & Anxiety
- Improve Sleep Disorders
- Manage Asthma & other breathing conditions

Developed in 1952 by Ukrainian Medical Doctor Konstantin Buteyko, this breathing technique can help improve peripheral oxygenation and reduce stress hormone levels by stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system. Buteyko is practised as a series of breathing exercises specifically designed to reduce over-breathing (clinically known as 'chronic hyperventilation').

A commonly held belief is that taking deep, full, large breaths is beneficial for health, however this over-breathing can constrict blood vessels and airways, worsening the symptoms of numerous conditions. The Buteyko method helps to correct disordered breathing patterns, enhance feelings of calm and is proven to help with sleep disorders (including snoring and sleep apnoea), asthma, hayfever, anxiety, panic & depression and can also help to lower blood pressure.

Our qualified Buteyko coach Laura offers an initial three-session training programme (plus top-up sessions as required). Sessions are recommended weekly to fortnightly (subject to availability) at a cost of £195 per initial package. Please do contact the clinic to book an appointment or enquire further.

Continuous Positive Airways Pressure (CPAP)

Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy is the most common treatment for patients with moderate or severe sleep apnoea. Using a mask which fits over the nose, the machine provides a constant flow of pressurized air designed to support the airway and prevent the soft tissues of the mouth and throat from blocking regular respiration while sleeping.

Patients often report better quality sleep, decreased snoring, and increased energy and ability to concentrate during the day. The therapy can also help to effectively manage the side-effects of sleep apnoea including high blood pressure and diabetes. Controlling sleep apnoea is a crucial part of lowering your risk for cardiovascular problems, obesity, Alzheimer's disease, and stroke.

Referral to an NHS specialist clinic or private clinics are both available for further advice on this treatment.

My Notes:

Stress Reduction / Relaxation

For most people, dedicating time each day to engage in a relaxation or mindfulness technique can have many positive health benefits. However, not everyone relaxes well with mindfulness or meditation, for some, feeling physically grounded in exercise, breathing techniques or even cold water therapy may be a better option. Finding what works best for you is important and we acknowledge that everyone is different.

Finding an activity which you enjoy, to help down-regulate the stress response, is great for reducing high cortisol levels and inflammation, improving sleep, regulating hormones and helping with weight loss.

We have collected together a number of alternative strategies you may wish to consider to lower stress and its effects. Feel free to experiment with different techniques and discuss the options with your Functional Medicine Doctor, Nutritional Therapist or Health Coach.

Guided Meditation

Many forms of meditation have been shown to be beneficial for health. Forms include resting the mind on the senses, on a phrase such as a positive affirmation or a mantra or on the breathing. For many, guided meditations are an accessible way to start a meditation practice and there are thousands of resources to help those wishing to access the benefits of meditation.

Meditation Apps:

Attached to your phone? Put it to good use supporting you in your meditation and relaxation efforts. Those with consistently good patient feedback include:

Calm: Soothing music, sleep stories and guided meditations all in one place – requires subscription: <https://www.calm.com>

Insight Timer: A beautiful collection of meditations all for free <https://insighttimer.com/meditation-app>

Headspace: <https://www.headspace.com>

Smiling Mind: <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app>

Self-Compassion Meditations:

Self-compassion meditation is a way to help reduce self-criticism, work through painful emotions and nurtures a feeling of loving-kindness towards ourselves and others. There are many teachers of this technique who offer guided meditations for all to enjoy and we have selected a few for you to try:

Dr Kristin Neff: <https://self-compassion.org>

Dr Christopher Germer: <https://chrisgermer.com/meditations/>

Biofeedback Training:

If you like to see results from your practice and engage with new technology, you might enjoy adding in a biofeedback sensor to show you how your practice is going and help teach mindfulness and relaxation in the midst of the everyday hustle of life.

Heartmath: The Heartmath sensor allows you to see your Heart Rate Variability (HRV) – which is a reflection of your inner balance and emotional state: <https://www.heartmath.com>

Vagal Nerve Stimulation

The Vagus nerve controls our Parasympathetic nervous system. We can activate this by many means – by breathing exercises, singing, gargling with cold water and many other forms of relaxation therapy. However, in recent years, several electronic techniques to directly stimulate the nerve have been

developed and some of our patients have found this to be useful in addition to their other lifestyle changes for reducing stress levels.

Sensate: <https://www.getsensate.com/pages/meet-sensate>

Neurosym: <https://nurosym.com/pages/story>

Physical Meditations and yoga:

Yoga is designed to be a moving meditation. For devotees of this practice, you may enjoy some of the beautiful short meditations available from Adrienne: <https://yogawithadriene.com/classroom-meditation-for-all-ages/>

Psychotherapeutic support

Everyone needs a place to feel validated and understood. For some this means talking to family, or friends. For others professional support is required. The clinic is a safe place for you to talk about your experiences and feelings. However, we are happy to work with you to find other forms of mental and emotional support.

The Journey: Our Functional Medicine Health Coach and psychotherapist Karen is skilled in this approach which uses guided introspection to enable clients to strip away layers of emotions that have been stored in their bodies over the years, causing both emotional and physical blocks. Sessions last up to 3 hours for adults and 90 minutes for children.

This globally recognized and critically acclaimed healing and transformational process, pioneered by Brandon Bays, has released hundreds of thousands of people world-wide from blocked emotions and trapped cell memories, releasing conditions as varied as anxiety, depression, physical illness, trauma, low self-esteem, phobias, unwanted behaviours, pain, relationship difficulties and career limitations, allowing them to live more freely and to their potential.

If you would like to discuss this therapy further with Karen, then please book a discovery appointment through the clinic.

Breathing techniques

If guided meditations or using thought to slow heart rate and breathing are not for you, then you may find benefit from addressing high cortisol and stress via regulation of the breath. Used as a yoga technique for thousands of years, breath alteration or control should only be undertaken with trained guidance (phone apps are fine).

Buteyko Breathing: Buteyko can help improve peripheral oxygenation and reduce stress and cortisol levels by stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system. It lowers the heart rate and stress response by lowering the breathing rate.

Our qualified Buteyko coach Laura offers online Buteyko technique lessons to patients as an initial three-session training programme (plus top-up sessions as required). Please do contact the clinic to book an appointment or enquire further.

Relaxing Breathing is available through many Apps and a selection are reviewed here: <https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/best-meditation-apps/>

An excellent summary of widely used breathing techniques is given by **Dr Rangan Chatterjee** in his blog (with some great video content) here: <https://drchatterjee.com/5-breathing-techniques-help-reduce-stress/>

Trial of the Wim Hof Technique: The Wim Hof Method is a simple, yet powerful method, based on the foundation of three pillars; Breathing, Cold Therapy and Commitment. Online courses or retreats with wild swimming and ice baths are all available online to those brave enough to wake the ice warrior within. You can read more about this here: <https://www.wimhofmethod.com>

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT):

EFT, also known as Tapping is a holistic healing technique based on the combined principles of ancient Chinese acupressure and modern psychology. The basic Tapping technique requires you to focus on a thought or emotion while using your fingertips to tap on specific meridian points of the body. This process, sends a calming signal to the brain, allowing you to feel relaxed and in control. Resources include:

The Tapping solution from Nick Ortner: <https://www.thetappingsolution.com>

The Tapping Q&A : <https://tappingqanda.com/>

Go EFT Tapping-Reduce Stress: <https://completehomespa.com/eft-app/>

Brain Retraining Techniques:

These courses have been found by many patients to be great and accessible resources with a holistic approach to stress management. Take a look at the websites or discuss with your doctor or Therapist which of the courses might be most appropriate for your situation.

Dynamic Neural Retraining System (DNRS): A self-directed learning programme designed to regulate maladaptive stress responses. We also use it to help patients suffering with Mast Cell Activation syndrome and Multiple Chemical Sensitivity. <https://retrainingthebrain.com>

Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) Rewire: Aimed specifically at patients with chronic fatigue, POTS and MCS, and is especially beneficial where there is a combination of fatigue and anxiety. You can read more about this here: <https://ansrewire.com>

Curable: This is an app which uses multiple cognitive techniques and exercises to help people suffering from chronic pain. We have seen success in patients with migraine and fibromyalgia when combined with our holistic approach. <https://www.curablehealth.com>

The Gupta Programme: A brain retraining programme designed to help those with Chronic health conditions which has been successfully used to help patients with CFS / ME, long covid, Anxiety, MCAS POTS and chronic pain. <https://www.guptaprogram.com>

Laughter / Smiling:

There is strong evidence that laughter and smiling can help to improve both mental and physical health by:

Stimulating endorphin release, helping to reduce pain and increase the feeling of wellbeing.

Increasing positivity - smiling during brief a stressor, can help the release chemicals in the brain that reduce stress levels.

Decreases risk of heart disease by stimulating circulation and supporting blood vessel relaxation, which helps to lowers blood pressure.

Causing the release neuropeptides that help to maintain immune tolerance and fight infection.

There's a lovely article on this here: <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/laughter-is-the-best-medicine.htm> Life can be hectic and overwhelming, so try to include humour in your daily routine and remember to smile.

My Notes:

Movement for Health

For most of us, a healthy movement routine can bring about improvements in mental and physical health. Exercise can also be used to form social connections and helps us connect to nature and the great outdoors. Finding what works for you means looking at the type, intensity, duration and the social context of exercise.

However, as with relaxation, finding the right type and level of exercise is not always straightforward and there is no correct or best choice for everyone. We have outlined some ideas below aimed at the full spectrum of patients we see in the clinic.

Pacing: Sometimes NO EXERCISE is the best Choice

For those with CFS / ME, it is important to take into account your energy reserves and whether you will be able to repay any energy debt incurred by a particular exercise. If you have significant post-exertional malaise, POTS or are prone to energy 'crashes' then the correct choice for you may be to stop exercise and to rest to try and build up reserves of energy for healing and the essential activities of daily living.

Delayed Onset Muscle soreness (DOMS), or mental fatigue brought on within hours or a day or so of exercise is a sign that the intrinsic energy production systems are lacking and require some kind of input or fix before you can progress to any form of graded exercise therapy. This doesn't mean you should necessarily do nothing – rather the amount of energy expended should not cause any worsening afterwards, and the activity should be reproducible on a daily basis without causing any worsening of symptoms.

In severe cases, even mental stimulation or activity will cause exhaustion. In these cases, lying horizontal and resting to reserve at least 20% of energy produced per day for healing is advised.

While pacing is not a treatment for CFS/ME, it does provide a way of coping with the lack of energy and preventing the debilitating 'crashes' which are a notable feature of this illness. ME-pedia.org, have covered this topic in some detail with some useful resources here:

<https://me-pedia.org/wiki/Pacing>

Simple Home Exercise / Starting Out:

For those who are able to exercise without making themselves feel worse, but are struggling to get exercise into their routine, the important thing is to get started. We can't advise you on exactly what would be best for you, but love Dr Chatterjee's practical approach to getting moving in your own home – no special equipment required:

Wake up your Sleepy Glutes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWwSm_0BtuY

The 5-minute kitchen workout: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtZB95-AVZM>

Activity Tracking:

No matter the type of exercise that you choose to engage is important to aim to move regularly throughout the day and avoid prolonged sitting, which is linked to insulin resistance, obesity and increased CVD risk. Even if you already dedicate at least 30 minutes a day to structured exercise (as per NICE recommendations), it's still important to get up and move for at least few minutes, multiple times throughout the day.

To achieve that, you may find an activity tracker that will give you regular reminders to get up and move helpful. You can find trackers in the link below:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Sports-Activity-Trackers/b?ie=UTF8&node=4294916031>

Choosing something you enjoy:

Sometimes the best exercise is simply the one which you will do because it brings you joy. Do you want to dance / climb / run / walk / swim / garden or golf? Does yoga appeal or would you prefer a martial arts

class? If you hate being cold and wet, then choose an indoor activity, if you love feeling the wind and rain on your face then maybe joining the local running or wild swimming group might be the best thing for you. Engaging with others or the outdoors are key elements which can make exercise fun, interesting and enjoyable. Look for local clubs, gyms and support networks. Being surrounded by like-minded people can help improve motivation and make getting fit really enjoyable.

In our clinic we all have a huge range of interests from hill walking, climbing and cycling through to karate and kick-boxing. Joanne and Laura are cold-water enthusiasts. If you don't already have something you love then try something new.

Exercise for Bone Density Problems

Weight-bearing exercise is particularly important to help reduce bone thinning. For those with osteopenia or osteoporosis, physical therapy is essential in helping to improve and re-build bone density (alongside nutritional interventions).

Margaret Martin provides an excellent practical overview of what has been shown to work from yoga, to rebounding and 'stomping' exercises. Her website with reference to exercise videos and her exercise plans for Osteoporosis can be found here: <https://melioguide.com>

<https://melioguide.com/health-guides/osteoporosis-guidelines/osteoporosis-exercise-plan/>

Motivational Online Trainers

For those that enjoy and can tolerate a more intensive resistance training sessions, we have canvassed staff and patients to curate a list of our favourite online exercise plans:

Caroline Girvan:

Enjoyed by our NT Kelly and Patient Pathway co-ordinator Sam. Great for home weight training, Calisthenics and body-weight exercises. Good for improving muscle strength and fitness.

Caroline presents a mixture of HIIT, resistance training and plyometrics. The Programmes are free with extensive YouTube Video workout support.

<https://www.carolinegirvan.com>

Sydney Cummings

Sydney is a motivational trainer and coach and has countless of free resistance training sessions on her YouTube channel. Whether you want a quick 5 minutes or a full 40-50 minute home workout, this might be one for you:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SydneyCummings/playlists>

Pahla B

For gentler weight bearing sessions, you can follow Pahla B who offers free sessions on her YouTube channel. Phala specialises in offering exercise advice to the over-50's and her workouts are aimed at women who want to lose weight and feel motivated:

<https://pahlabfitness.com>

Exercise for Mind and Body

Yoga is a gentler form of exercise that combines breathing exercises, meditation, and poses. Studies show that practicing yoga has many mental and physical benefits. It increases flexibility, improves respiration, energy and helps to protect against injury:

You can join your local yoga class or you can try online sessions. Our personal recommendations are below:

Yoga With Adriene

<https://yogawithadriene.com>

Well with Hels

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3gH1Llc0-BsaFI1A-o_LVg

Jessica Richburg

<https://jessicarichburgyoga.com/>

Tai Chi - is a Chinese martial art practice which combines moving meditation in the form of a series of gentle exercises that create harmony between the mind and body. Although Tai Chi is slow and gentle, it has been shown to improve strength, flexibility and balance. Some studies show that it can also reduce falls and injuries in elderly. Here are few online resources you may enjoy:

Dr Paul Lam

<https://www.youtube.com/@drpaulamtaichiproductions>

Leia Cohen Taiflow

<https://www.youtube.com/@Taiflow>

Qigong practice typically involves moving meditation, coordinating slow-flowing movement, deep rhythmic breathing, and a calm meditative state of mind. People practice qigong throughout China and worldwide for recreation, exercise, relaxation, preventive medicine, self-healing, alternative medicine, meditation, self-cultivation, and training for martial arts. Online you may enjoy:

Thich Man Tue

<https://www.youtube.com/@QigongMeditation/about>

Cold water swimming

Swimming in cold water has lots of reported benefits from aiding recovery and reducing inflammation to boosting your immune system and reducing stress and anxiety. Some swimmers also say that they don't feel the cold and therefore don't need to turn their heating on – helpful during a fuel crisis!

However, it's important to do this safely to avoid hypothermia and beginners should always be accompanied by someone else in case of problems. The Outdoor Swimming Society have plenty of hints and tips on getting started:

<https://www.outdoorswimmingsociety.com/how-to-acclimatise-to-cold-water/>

If you enjoy cold-water immersion, then you may want to consider combining it with yoga and the breathing exercises which form part of the powerful Wim Hof Technique:

<https://www.wimhofmethod.com>

There are plenty of groups and retreats available to help you learn and benefit from these techniques if this is something which interests you.

My Notes:

Reducing Toxin Exposure

We advise all our patients to reduce their exposure to common toxic pollutants found in foods, water and the environment. While many people appear to cope well with 'normal' levels of chemicals entering their bodies, those with significant health problems (such as CFS/ME or Migraines), children and the elderly, may be at much greater risk of complications due to side effects from these exposures.

Filter water for drinking and cooking

Water filtration helps to eliminate unwanted chlorine and any lead which may be present. We recommend either:

A Berkey Filter: <https://berkey-waterfilters.co.uk/>

The Aarke Glass jug Filter: <https://www.aarke.com/uk/explore-purifier>

Or an under-sink reverse Osmosis filter: <https://www.waterfiltermag.com/best-reverse-osmosis-system-reviews/>.

If your budget will stretch to it, then whole house filtration systems are also an excellent solution. <https://waterfiltershop.co.uk/whole-house-filtration-systems.html>

Avoid Aluminium, Copper and Teflon / Non-stick surfaces in pans:

Copper and Aluminium exposure has been linked to increased risk of dementia and neurological toxicity. Teflon (PTFE), releases toxic gases, including fluoropolymers which have been linked to liver and kidney problems, high blood pressure in pregnant women and thyroid disorders.

Instead, choose non-toxic pans, skillets, and pots made of cast iron or steel, ceramics or glass. Learn how to make your own non-toxic, non-stick pans by seasoning it with olive or coconut oil. There's a good guide on how to do this here:

<https://www.seriousseats.com/how-to-season-cast-iron-pans-skillets-cookware>

Don't apply Aluminium -containing Anti-perspirants: This includes Driclor

These can also cause increased levels of toxic aluminium in the brain and have been linked to increased risk of breast cancer. There are loads of effective, non-toxic, great smelling and effective products on the market and even readily available in your local supermarket:

Get Fussy: <https://www.getfussy.com/pages/about>

Wild: <https://www.wearewild.com/get-started/deodorant?bid=1682620031-200>

Ben&Anna <https://benandanna.uk/shop/deodorants>

EarthConscious <https://www.earthconscious.co.uk>

Check personal care products for parabens, sodium-lauryl-sulphate, heavy metals (sunscreens and deodorants) and triclosan (an oestrogen mimic in hand washes and some toothpaste). If you are sensitive, also be aware of gluten, milk and soy in many of the more 'natural' products too. Look for safe alternatives in health food stores and online. Brands for clean personal products which the clinic team uses and would recommend include:

Weleda for beautiful creams, deodorants and non-toxic toothpaste. <https://www.weleda.co.uk>

Green People also have a great range of personal and beauty products on offer <https://www.greenpeople.co.uk>

Yoni Products – for perfume-free and artificial absorbents-free period products. <https://yoni.care/products/pads/>

Kingfisher Natural Toothpaste	https://www.kingfishertoothpaste.co.uk
REN Skincare:	https://www.renskincare.com
Tropic Skincare (contains soy):	https://tropicskincare.com
Avalon Organics:	https://www.avalonorganics.com

Limit Phytoestrogen Exposures

Avoid eating out of plastic packaging and drinking from water bottles which may contain BPA and phthalates as these are oestrogenic – even in the tiny doses which pass into our foods stored in them.

Never microwave in plastic and look for inventive ways to keep food out of contact with plastics using glass and steel where possible.

Ikea has great glass storage containers which can go in the oven, microwave or freezer.

<https://www.ikea.com/gb/en/cat/food-containers-20606/>

Swap plastic water bottles for steel or glass alternatives.

Choose cleaner household products

Switch cleaning products to less toxic and more environmentally friendly brands – especially if they are used in areas which will come into contact with your skin or food. Brands such as Method and Ecover are widely available in Supermarkets, but if you check locally you may also be able to source refillable, plastic free options such as Miniml or BioD:

Friendly Soap Products	https://friendlysoap.co.uk/products/laundry-powder
Ecover	https://www.ecover.com
Method	https://methodproducts.co.uk
BioD	https://biod.co.uk/shop/laundry/
Miniml	https://minimlrefills.co.uk
Simple Living Eco	https://simplelivingeco.com

We love our local refillable / Zero-Waste shops – Have a look to see if there are versions near you:

Millers' Refillers High Peak	https://millersrefillers.com
Lentils and Lather Stockport	https://www.lentilsandlather.co.uk
Plentiful Wholefoods Ramsbottom	https://plentifulshop.co.uk (also has a great online shop if you're not local)

We also have patients who make their own non-toxic household cleaners. There is a great article on getting started here:

<https://thegreenparent.co.uk/articles/read/make-your-own-cleaning-products>

Choose Clean, Lower Toxin Foods

Our Food Plans place emphasis on eating clean foods for life and reducing exposure to harmful environmental toxins such as plastics, heavy metals and pesticides. There are many ways to minimize intake of these substances including:

Choose lean, organic meats (grass fed if possible), over fatty cuts, as pesticides concentrate in fat.

Peel off the skin or remove the outer layer of leaves of leafy produce. You can remove surface

pesticide residues, waxes, fungicides, and fertilizers by soaking the food in a solution of sodium Bicarbonate (1 teaspoon to every 2 cups of cold water), then rinsing well.

Wash produce before peeling it so dirt and contaminants aren't transferred from the knife onto the fruit or vegetable.

Choosing low Mercury Fish

Fish associated with the highest mercury content include marlin, shark, swordfish, tilefish, and tuna. These should be avoided completely but we do want you to enjoy the benefits of the **SMASH** fish:

Sardines

Mackerel

Anchovies

Salmon (wild caught, not farmed)

Herring

and other small non predator fish such as whitebait.

Choosing Organic Produce

We know from experience that supermarket shopping and recent cost-of-living increases doesn't really make this an easy choice, but this way of farming produces healthy food without contamination from persistent pesticides. Many of these chemicals have been linked to chronic health problems (including cancer and arthritis), especially among farmworkers who can be exposed to very high levels of these toxins.

In addition, organic farming methods are friendlier to the environment and help to support pollinating insects which are threatened by modern intensive agriculture.

We are lucky to have a number of shops which supply healthy organic produce locally:

The Unicorn Grocery Store (Manchester) <https://www.unicorn-grocery.coop>

On the 8th Day (Manchester) <https://ontheeighthday.co.uk>

However, if you are struggling to find organic shops near to you there are now many online delivery services offering weekly fresh and seasonal produce which can be delivered to your door. The ones we have tried and like include:

Abel&Cole: With an amazing and expanding line of Ethically sourced organic food and clean personal and household products online. <https://www.abelandcole.co.uk>

Riverford: Offering ethically sourced, organic Fruit and veg <https://www.riverford.co.uk>

Planet Organic: Massive range of organic produce <https://www.planetorganic.com>

There are a number of other developing services on the market – if you have good reviews of any we would love your feedback to pass on to other patients.

Driven by health concerns, the government monitors residue levels in food consumed in the UK. Pesticide Action Network UK, has analysed and compiled the most recent five years of government data and turned it into a handy list you can stick on your fridge or in your back pocket when you go shopping.

A fully organic diet can be difficult and expensive to achieve but the Pesticide Action network UK have done loads of work to help you make informed choices about your shopping habits and list the worst offenders on their website each year (alongside those foods least likely to be contaminated). You can read about their work here:

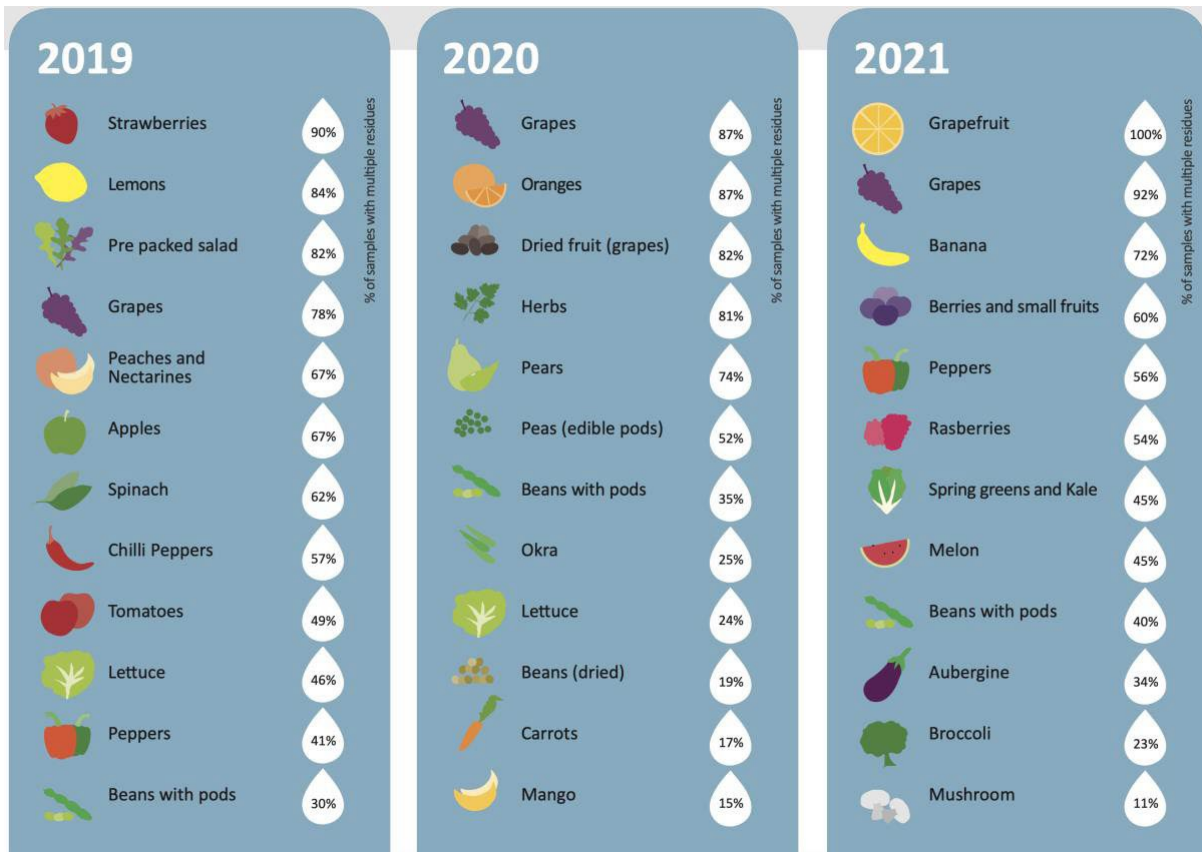
<https://www.pan-uk.org>

They also have a great advice on gardening without pesticides here for the green-fingered among you:

<https://www.pan-uk.org/gardening-without-pesticides/>

Their Annual 'Dirty Dozen' List is available as a download here: <https://www.pan-uk.org/dirty-dozen/>
These are the foods most likely to be highly contaminated.

So far the only available data for the UK is from 2021 but this will be updated in due course. The results from 2019 to 2021 are available below:



Methods for Improving Toxin Elimination

Toxins can be cleared in a number of ways and we can support the natural detox processes through good nutrition, hydration and by encouraging sweating (by exercise or sauna use):

Keeping Hydrated: Most people need at least 1.5-2L of water daily. This can be as hot or cold drinks.

Avoid Constipation: Aim for 2-3 soft evacuations per day. Speak to our Nutritional therapists if constipation is an issue for you. Good hydration and fiber intake can be really helpful. Adding chia and linseeds to your diet can really help. Perhaps try a delicious chia pudding recipe:

<https://feelgoodfoodie.net/recipe/3-ingredient-chia-pudding/>

Sauna use: Many toxins are stored in fat cells under the skin and can be mobilised and eliminated more swiftly using heat and red light sauna therapy (even without sweating). Both traditional heat saunas and near Infra-Red Therapy can be helpful, but for those who struggle with high heat or have low blood pressure, a Far Infra-Red (FIR) blanket or mat might be more appropriate.

Always start with very short sauna sessions (they can release a lot of toxins from the fat layer under the skin very rapidly), and work up slowly. Shower immediately after to ensure all toxins are washed off the skin (to prevent them from being re-absorbed). At first you may find you don't sweat – take your time.

Home sauna purchase or hire is possible and perhaps not as expensive as you might think. Little space is required for the portable Mat saunas and these may be a possibility for you. Try to choose a device with low EMF. Options recommended to us by other patients include:

<https://www.nearinfraredsauna.co.uk/near-infrared-sauna>

<https://www.infraredsauna.co.uk>

<https://www.get-fitt.com> (Far Infra-Red)

Dry Skin Brushing encourages improved circulation to the skin layers and helps with lymphatic drainage. You can read more about this here: <https://www.apollohealthco.com/dry-brushing/>

Nutrition for Detox support: It may surprise many to learn that we are not advocates of the juicing and fasting approach for long term detox (although these may have their place). Instead, we encourage our patients to actively increase intake of protein, fiber and micronutrients which can help to improve the natural detox processes in the liver. This is a big topic and our Detox Food Plan discusses this topic in more detail here: <https://drsarahdavies.online/document/detox-food-plan/>

My Notes: