

C A T S

CUMBRIA ADVISORY THYROID SERVICE

Christmas 2015 - Newsletter



Long may C.A.T.S. continue to give hope to Thyroid patients everywhere



HOPE



Hello Everyone

Welcome to our 2015 bumper edition newsletter. I am sorry we could not manage to publish our late summer edition, unfortunately the gremlins got in to our computer systems and try as we might there was very little we could do about the situation. I hope that this was not too much of a disappointment for everyone. We hope everyone is keeping well, and for all our members who have been away, we hope you have all had an enjoyable break. For all our members who have stayed at home did you manage to grab a bit of the summer sunshine? New research is showing that many people are short of vitamin D. This vitamin is mainly obtained from sunlight, and as we all know we don't seem to get many sunny days in this area. Supplies of Vitamin D can also be obtained from certain foods such as oily fish, mushrooms, beef, liver, cheese and egg-yolks, and fish-oil supplements, some foods are also now fortified with vitamin D. Look out for fortified milk, yogurt, cereals, butter and margarine spreads in your supermarket. If you think you may be short of this important nutrient have a word with your doctor or pharmacist for advice on how best to supplement your daily intake. As usual the office has been busy with lots of phone calls, letters and e-mails coming in. Thyroid disease is very complex and there are always queries that come along. These days doctors just don't have the time to explain things in detail. That is where C.A.T.S. can step in, so if you need to know anything about Thyroid problems don't forget to contact us. Our contact details are on the last page of your newsletter



Gold Stars

Don't forget to look out for a gold star on your newsletter as this indicates that your membership is due for renewal. You can use the form enclosed in your newsletter or contact the office for more details. Our Thyroid Friends membership subscriptions help cover the cost of printing and sending out our newsletters so if you want to help support us by renewing your subscription this will be a tremendous help for the work we do. We are currently accepting new members so if you know anyone who may like to join us please ask them to contact me for details.

TFNC news update

I have just received the news from Elizabeth and Sharon to say that owing to Elizabeth's ongoing health problems they have made the hard decision to close the TFNC group. This must have been a very difficult decision to make as I personally know how much the group meant to both of them. Both Sharon and Elizabeth have devoted many hours of their free time to raise the awareness of Thyroid problems within North Cumbria area and also the wider community and over the years the group has helped countless people. They are now inviting members of the TFNC group to transfer over to C.A.T.S. so they will still be able to access Thyroid support. So if you want to join us please contact me at the office. Thank you to everyone who has joined us already. (Membership costs just £6-00 for 1 year). If you do not wish to join us you will still be able to access our services but will not receive any more newsletters.



Thyroid Friends

Thank you to all our members who have renewed their subscriptions sent in donations and are continuing to support our work in so many other ways. Without this help C.A.T.S. would not be able to continue to operate. Many support groups and charity groups are having to fold because of lack of funds and lack of volunteers, please don't let this happen to C.A.T.S. When I look back over the 18 plus years we have been running I am very proud of what we have achieved. However there is a lot more work that needs to be done, our schools educational programme is almost completed and we will soon be ready to go out into our local schools to give the presentation. Thyroid problems are ongoing, many patients do not know about C.A.T.S so if you want to do something to help us please tell all your friends about our group.





Facebook Page

Don't forget to show your support by liking our Facebook page. This is still a work in progress, but when fully operational members will be able to post Thyroid questions, share their experiences, receive updates about our public meetings and special events and exchange ideas and tips on how to cope with Thyroid problems. We are hoping to have this service in place in the next few weeks so keep checking our page for updates, but for now please like and share our page at

[www.facebook.com/pages Cumbria-Advisory-Thyroid-Service-C.A.T.S./1387475768249218](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cumbria-Advisory-Thyroid-Service-C.A.T.S./1387475768249218)

Internet Warning

In our last newsletter I warned members to be careful about using some internet web-sites. I mentioned some sites that offer a cure for Thyroid problems. We need to be very cautious about such sites as most of them promote high level Iodine products or certain herbal remedies that are quite dangerous to Thyroid patients. A lady e-mailed to say that not all herbal remedies are dangerous, and I quite agree, sorry if the article was misleading. I have used herbal remedies myself with great success but it is very important to check with your doctor or pharmacist first just in case there is likely to be a reaction between your medication and the herbal product. Iodine is vital for Thyroid function but we will get what our body needs if we eat a good balanced diet. Foods such as yoghurt, cheese, eggs and milk, most vegetables, meat, chicken and fish all contain iodine and our body only needs around 150 micro-grams per day, which is a very small amount. Think about your thyroxine pills they are very small yet contain 25, 50 or even 100 micro-grams depending which dose you are on. Research has shown that under-active Thyroid patients who do consume more than the recommended amount, over a period of time, can develop symptoms of over-activity and in some cases a goitre. C.A.T.S. suggest Thyroid patients act with caution when using any products that contain iodine.



Thyroid and HRT



Did you know that if you take thyroxine and also take HRT (Hormone replacement treatment) you most likely will need a slightly higher dose of thyroxine. This is taken in to account when your doctor looks at your blood tests. However if you come off HRT you may need your dose of thyroxine adjusting slightly so it is wise to have your bloods done again approximately 6-8 weeks after coming off HRT. Many Thyroid patients I talk to find HRT does not agree with them and often opt for herbal remedies to sort out menopausal problems. Did you know that products that have an estrogenic effect on your body will also effect how your Thyroid works so if you are taking or are thinking about trying any such remedies please get your blood tests done regularly



Getting ready for winter

As we approach the winter Thyroid patients need to give their bodies every chance to get through the cold months without catching the dreaded colds and flu germs that go around. So here are some simple tips we can try

- * Taking the herb Echinacea along with Vitamin C, and the minerals Zinc and Selenium plus a Garlic supplement can ensure your immune system has a real boost (please check with your doctor or pharmacist before using these products just in case there could be an reaction with your medication it is always better to make sure)
- *Plenty of hot nourishing foods such as casseroles soups and stews are ideal and are easy to make.
- * Drinking plenty of hot drinks will help to keep your body's core temperature in the normal range
- * Eat a healthy diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables
- * Cut down on sugar as sugar has an adverse effect on our bodies T Cells (T Cells help to fight infections and also help to keep our immune systems strong)
- *Make sure you get plenty of sleep, as your body repairs itself while you sleep



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- * Think positive thoughts. Research shows that positive thinking people are more healthy
- * Give yourself a mental boost every day by saying - "My body is strong and healthy" or say "I am strong" (repeat these sayings 3 or 4 times a day and you will be surprised how this really works)
- * Keep as active as possible, even a 15 minute walk every day will do wonders for your self esteem and you never know you may lose a pound or two in weight.
- * If you can't get outside getting up and walking around the room every hour or so will help stop your joints from stiffing up.
- * Wearing extra layers of clothes (three or four thin layers are better than one thick layer).
- * If you can't heat the whole house then keep one room heated (between 18c and 21c is the recommended temperature).
- * Don't forget if it is really cold wearing gloves, an extra pair of socks and even a hat indoors can all help stop heat escaping from your body
- * Last of all don't forget to get your flu jabs (a lot of health practices do not send out reminders) so put a note in your diary so you don't forget. They are usually available from October onwards



Things you can do in winter:

Research is showing that even when we get older we still need to keep as active as possible here are some ideas for the winter months. We have included some useful telephone numbers so just give them a ring to see what is on offer

- * Your local leisure centre often runs classes in swimming, aqua aerobics, zumba, spinning and much more
- * If you are a film buff, the Vue cinema chain run a Senior Screening each week usually in the afternoon
- * For those of us who like walking why not join one of the Walking for Health groups, the walks are varied and usually last about 45 minutes to 1 hour and take place all over Cumbria

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- * Ulverston Leisure Centre 01229 584110
- Salt Ayre Leisure Centre 01524 847540
- Dalton Leisure Centre 01229 463125
- Heysham Swimming Pool 01524 420763
- The Park Leisure Centre 01229 871146
- Kendal Leisure Centre 01539 729777
- Cumbria Bowling 01229 826562
- Vue Cinemas 08721 240240



- Walking for Health 01229 831425
- (this is the Barrow Age UK Office, they are in charge of the walks for the Barrow/South Lakes area.) However if you live outside the Barrow area the Cumbria Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) office 01768 800350 will be able to give you details of your local walks.

Medication Cards

Following on from the article on Holiday Tips (Summer 2015) we have had some medication cards printed. There is space to list all the medication that you take plus room to list your personal details. These cards will fit into your wallet, purse or handbag so are ideal to carry around with you, and will act as a reminder for all the medication you take. If you want one of these cards please let me know (there is no charge for the cards.)



Breakfast

I am surprised when I talk to our members at our meetings by how many of them do not bother to eat breakfast. This is one of the most important meals of the day. When we wake up our bodies have been starved of food overnight. So to kick start our metabolism and raise our energy levels we need food. You would not try to drive a car without petrol in the tank would you? In the same way our bodies need food to give us the energy to function properly. Wholegrain cereal or porridge are good choices for Thyroid patients as these help keep our sugar levels stable for longer. However many of our members lead busy lives, so if time is a factor then toast, smoothies or just some fruit and yoghurt are better than eating nothing.





Web-site

Don't forget while we are not having our public meetings you can still access Thyroid information via our website visit www.cumbriancats.co.uk our website is currently being updated so if you have a problem accessing our site you can still contact me at the office.

Postage costs

If you want to help us save money you can have your newsletter sent by e-mail. To register, contact Peter at richjon51@talktalk.net You can opt back to paper copies any time you wish.



Blood tests results

I get lots of calls from people who do not feel well, but have been told their blood tests are fine. So I thought I would give everyone some information about how we can understand our blood results. You are usually given two readings with the standard Thyroid test

FT4 -(between 8 to 18)

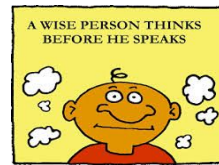
TSH- (between 0.02 to 6.00)

These are the normal ranges for the South Cumbria area. Other areas may use a different range so please check with your health practice to see if the figures are different. Your FT4 may be in the normal range but up near the top of the range. This will give you (symptoms of over-activity). Or near the bottom of the range (symptoms of under-activity)

In both cases you will feel unwell. C.A.T.S. always advise patients who do not feel well to talk to their doctors as there may be other reasons for not feeling well. If you want further information on this subject please contact me at the office.



Words of wisdom



I found these words the other day while looking up some information on the computer, I thought that they were very true, so I am sharing them with everyone . Hope you like them

Anything that annoys you is teaching you patience
Anything that angers you is teaching you forgiveness and compassion
Anyone who abandons you is teaching you to stand on your own two feet
Anything you hate is teaching you unconditional love
Anything that has power over you is teaching you how to take your power back
Anything that you fear is teaching you courage to overcome your fear
Anything you can not control is teaching you how to let go

Diabetes and Thyroid



Diabetes has been in the news quite a bit lately, so I thought I would write some information about the link between Thyroid dysfunction and Diabetes. Many Diabetic patients have abnormal Thyroid function blood tests. Also many of the phone calls we get are from patients telling us that there is a history of Thyroid problems and also Diabetes within their family. So it is not surprising that research shows a link between the two conditions. It is estimated that there are over 1 million undiagnosed Diabetics. So, if you have put on a lot of weight recently or lost weight without even trying, are always tired despite having a good night's sleep or are always running to the loo. Then book an appointment to see your GP and ask to be checked for Diabetes. These symptoms can relate to other health conditions but if it turns out you do have Diabetes the sooner it is diagnosed the better it is for you.



C.A.T.S.



In 1997 a lady called June Kasaven had the idea of starting a Thyroid support group for the South Lakes area. The response June received after doing a 5 minute slot on the local radio was overwhelming and gave her the motivation to start Cumbria Action For Thyroid Sufferers. The group went from strength to strength but sadly in 2004 June had to step down from her leading role due to health problems. The group then relocated to Ulverston and became known as Cumbria Advisory Thyroid Service



Smoking

The effects of smoking on our health has also been a hot topic with smoking being blamed as the cause of cancer, heart disease and many other health conditions. However did you know that smoking also has a bad effect on our Thyroid gland? Research shows that if you smoke and have a Thyroid problem it will be harder to balance your hormone levels and you are likely to experience more difficult to control symptoms than a non smoker.



Mental health issues

Did you know that 1 in 4 people will suffer from mental health issues at some point in their lives? Sadly some patients will experience many episodes of this devastating illness. Research has shown that there is a link between this condition and your Thyroid hormones. In 2005 C.A.T.S. conducted a survey and found that over half of our members had experienced mental health issues. My own research has shown that depression and anxiety can be one of the first signs that your Thyroid is not balanced. So if you are feeling a bit low, depressed or anxious go to see your doctor and tell them how you are feeling. There are lots of treatments available and speaking out is the first step to help.



HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE CHRISTMAS FROM THE
C.A.T.S OFFICE





Heart disease



Did you know that ladies are protected against developing heart disease with their female hormones, but once the menopause comes, you are at just as much risk as men? Smoking, high blood pressure, putting on a lot of weight, not doing much exercise and high cholesterol levels are all extra risk factors. Hyperthyroid (overactive) patients often have rapid heart rates and a fast pulse. These conditions can lead to high blood pressure. Over a period of time this can put a strain on the heart. Heart strain will give symptoms of breathlessness, swollen ankles and irregular pulse. Hypothyroid (underactive) patients usually have high cholesterol levels, fluid retention and often put on a lot of weight that is difficult to get rid of. These conditions have a negative effect on the heart and it is quite common to develop Angina. The good news is that with the modern treatments available today heart problems can be treated very easily.



Competition

As it is nearly Christmas I thought we would have a little competition, the prize is a £10.00 gift voucher of the winner's choice. All correct answers will be put into a hat and the first one to be drawn out will win the prize. So, off we go! --- What was the name of the C.A.T.S. founder?

Either contact the office with your name and answer or e-mail Peter at

richjon51@talktalk.net Peter will confirm your submission

Closing date is the 15th December so you should get your prize before Christmas.

Good luck everyone!





Do you like our bumper newsletter?



We usually publish 4 newsletters each year, as you know we could not produce our late summer edition. So as not to disappoint everyone we are sending out this bumper edition, as you can see there is a lot more information in this issue. What we would like now is for you to tell us if you would like more of these newsletters. Or do you still prefer 4 regular newsletters. Or we could even do 2 regular ones followed by a mini summer one, then a bumper edition for Christmas. Please let me know what you think, you can add your thoughts to your competition answers or post separately, again you can e-mail Peter his e-mail address is on page 10 remember even if you do not receive your newsletters by e-mail you can still e-mail By using this method you will save on postage. By helping us we can help you and start to plan for 2016.



What would you like from C.A.T.S?

C.A.T.S. is a community group that was set up to support Thyroid patients in the Cumbria area. However we now have former members of the TFNC group who have joined us. The result of this is that our members are now scattered far and wide. We have always tried to provide a good service for our members. With the availability of modern technology over the years our members needs have changed. In the next few weeks we will have updated our website, introduced our Facebook page and will be arranging some public meetings and events for next year. So what we need is your suggestions about what kind of meetings you would like, suggestions for speakers etc would also helpful. We also need a few members to volunteer their services for any events we run. So if you have any ideas, or suggestions, or would like to help at our meetings please contact me at the office.

Public meetings

Sorry but we have not been able to arrange any more meeting, but are working hard to get some bookings made for 2016. More details will be announced in our next newsletter. See everyone in the spring.



That's All for Now Folks

Sorry but we have come to the end of this newsletter. I hope you all enjoy reading our news and views about the topics we have managed to cover. If you want to contribute to our newsletters or share your views on anything Thyroid related just give me a ring at the office. There are several ways to get in touch you can ring us on 01229 869705, e-mail me at - moyramm@yahoo.co.uk or moyra@cumbriancats.co.uk or write to us at C.A.T.S. The Old Cottage, Garden Terrace, Baycliff, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 9RP.

We wish all our members and friends a very enjoyable Christmas and a happy and healthy 2016. See you all in March

Keep well, Keep happy

Best Wishes Moyra

CATS – Information Guidelines

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RULES

Please note that all information supplied to CATS will be treated with the strictest of confidence and will not be passed on to any other source.

ALL CATS VOLUNTEERS WORK TO STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY
RULES AT ALL TIMES

Disclaimer



Any information produced in this newsletter is to help those suffering with thyroid disease. Whilst every effort is made to provide accurate information, it is impossible to ensure that the information given is relevant to every individual. No responsibility is accepted by CATS and it is recommended and essential, that if in any doubt about your condition, that you should always contact your doctor, specialist physician or surgeon to seek medical advice.

C.A.T.S recommends that you ALWAYS seek your Doctor's advice



A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

