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Illustration
NILA AYE

FEELING TIRED ALL THE TIME?

For decades, chronic fatigue syndrome, including ME (myalgic encephalomyelitis), was branded 'all in the mind'. Now research has revealed clear physical changes in the brains of those suffering from this debilitating and chronic condition – and with that the first effective treatment, which is transforming patients' lives.

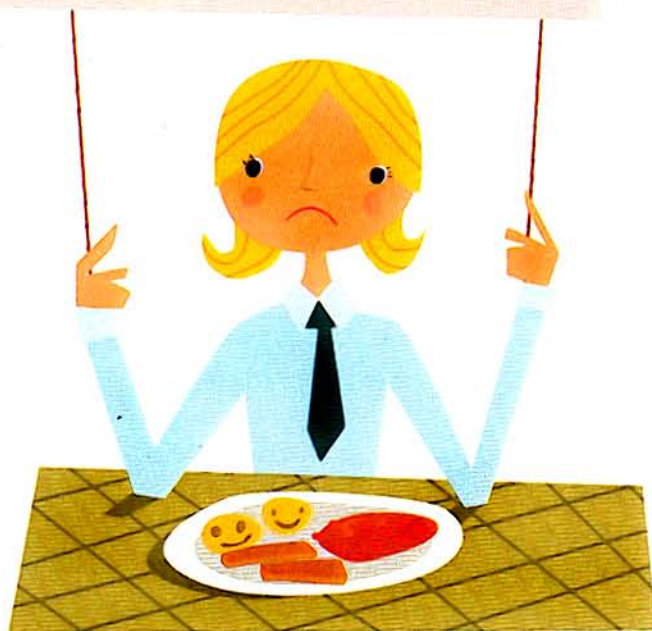
A study using specialised brain scanning by Professor Basant K Puri, a consultant at London's Hammersmith Hospital, found unusually high levels of the chemical choline in the brains of chronic fatigue sufferers. Choline and fatty acids are used together by the body to make phospholipids, which are vital for information transfer between cells. 'The reason for the excess choline is that patients aren't making phospholipids because they don't have enough of the right fatty acids,' says Professor Puri. 'The underlying problem is almost certainly a viral infection such as glandular fever, which stops the process in which the precursor omega-3 and omega-6 essential fats are converted into fatty acids.'

Professor Puri goes on to explain that viruses, which can hide in the body for months or even years, stop the body producing the key omega-3 fatty acid EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and cause a number of symptoms, the most obvious of which is fatigue. He found that supplements of omega-3 and omega-6, with a good diet and gentle exercise, can produce an effect within three to six months. He recommends an adult daily dose of eight capsules of VegEPA, which combines pure EPA and virgin evening primrose oil (£11.95 for 60 capsules, tel: 0845 130 0424; www.vegepa.com). Additional benefits include lower blood pressure, shinier hair, healthier joints, glowing skin, improved concentration and more restful sleep. (Of course, you don't need to have ME to benefit from this regime.)

Professor Puri recommends a diet based around lean beef and lamb (organic if possible), oily fish, vegetables (such as vitamin B-rich leafy greens), fruit (especially vitamin C-packed kiwi fruit and strawberries), peas and beans, pulses and lentils, whole grains, brown rice, seeds (particularly pumpkin and flax), nuts (such as almonds and brazil), organic whole milk and yeast extract. For exercise, and to improve muscle tone, Professor Puri suggests short daily periods of walking, swimming, yoga and/or the Alexander technique.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: a Natural Way to Treat ME by Professor Basant K Puri (Hammersmith Press, £14.99) is available from good bookshops or via www.amazon.co.uk

Feed me better



JAMIE'S WINNING DINNERS

After watching Jamie Oliver's TV series *Jamie's School Dinners*, where he takes on the gargantuan task of revolutionising school food, I'm now a fully paid-up member of the JO fan club. Both teachers and parents agree that if you replace junk food diets with nutritious meals made from fresh ingredients, children behave better, learn better and are less likely to succumb to obesity and illness. Jamie's Feed Me Better campaign has already made the government agree to spend more money on school meals, and its excellent website, www.feedmebetter.com, continues the campaign for junk-free school dinners and offers information and a platform for your views. From the end of this month, Feed Me Better school packs with information and recipes for teachers and dinner ladies will be available via the website for £10 plus £4.50 p&p (all profits are ploughed back into the campaign). To order, call 0871 222 5678. And for scrumptious, nutritious recipes and lunchbox ideas for all ages, check out *Jamie's Dinners* (Michael Joseph, £20). To order a copy for just £14 plus £1.95 p&p, call the YOU Bookshop on 0870 162 5006, or visit www.you-bookshop.co.uk

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

If you, or someone you know, has been referred to a breast clinic or diagnosed with breast cancer, pick up a copy of *Breast Cancer Care's Your Guide to Breast Cancer Services 2005* from your local clinic. This A4 paperback is packed with invaluable information, including what happens when, which questions to ask, and useful resources of all kinds. There's also an overview of breast clinics nationwide, which you can check out online at www.breastcancercare.org.uk/yourguide2005. For a range of helpful free leaflets, call the Breast Cancer Care helpline on 0808 800 6000 or visit www.breastcancercare.org.uk/Publications

UP YOUR ENERGY

When you feel below par all the time, conventional medicine can't always help. At such times, I consult a reputable healer and two of the best are bio-energy practitioners Seka Nikolic and her brother Momo Kovacevic. Their method involves removing negative energy from your body and 'flicking' it away, while replenishing your system with positive energy. I went to Momo feeling drained, and my four sessions had an extraordinary effect. A colleague recently had a 'soup-up' session with Seka which perked her up no end. Seka has a good record with sports injuries too. They practise at the Kailash Centre, 7 Newcourt Street, London NW8, tel: 020 7722 3939; Seka, £75 for 30 minutes, Momo, £60 for 45 minutes. Seka also operates from the Hale Clinic, tel: 020 7631 0156; £85 for 30 minutes.