

Guillain-Barré & Associated Inflammatory Neuropathies



gain

Reaching out while you stay in

GAIN / coronavirus COVID-19 newsletter issue 4 17/04/2020

- At least another 3 weeks lockdown – keep going, stay safe
- Stay at home. Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres away from other people
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home
- Do not meet others, even friends or family. You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms

Stay at home. Protect the NHS. Save lives.

MOXIE NEEDS YOU



Calling all Home Heroes to meet the
#TwoPointSixChallenge
to Save the UK's Charities

<https://gaincharity.org.uk/gain-2-6-challenge/>

Introducing The 2.6 Challenge

The coronavirus/Covid-19 pandemic is set to have a catastrophic effect on the charity sector with the cancellation of thousands of events and the loss of billions in income through the associated fundraising. Charities throughout the country are starting to struggle, as their main fundraising season grinds to a halt before it even gets started.

What this means for GAIN is a drop in income of at least £50,000 during the first three months of the financial year, potentially rising to more than double that amount.

Set up by Britain's mass participation event organisers, The 2.6 Challenge will bring the nation together on Sunday 26 April to save the UK's charities.

The GAIN 2.6 Challenge is a simple and fun way for people of all ages and abilities to do their bit to help us meet the projected funding shortfall. It could be something as simple as pledging to walk or run 2.6 miles/km as your daily exercise, to doing 26 minutes of yoga, or juggling for 2.6 minutes. Why not use it as a launchpad for your **GAINmomentum** challenge?

Thank you to supporters who responded to our Emergency Appeal last week.

We want to continue to help all the families who rely on us for information and support, but to do this, we're going to need some help. We know times are especially tough for people unable to go to work because of the lockdown, but if you can afford to help, please consider making a donation, no matter how small.

Visit the website for further information and to start fundraising or make a donation.

<https://gaincharity.org.uk/gain-2-6-challenge/>

Coronavirus Myth-buster

from the World Health Organisation

For further information go to <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>

Do 5G mobile networks spread COVID-19?

No. Viruses cannot travel on radio waves/mobile networks. COVID-19 is spreading in many countries that do not have 5G mobile networks. COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. People can also be infected by touching a contaminated surface and then their eyes, mouth or nose.

If I can hold my breath for 10 seconds without coughing or discomfort, am I free from coronavirus?

Being able to hold your breath for 10 seconds or more without coughing or feeling discomfort DOES NOT mean you are free from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) or any other lung disease.
The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are dry cough, tiredness and fever. Some people may develop more severe forms of the disease, such as pneumonia. The best way to confirm if you have the virus producing COVID-19 disease is with a laboratory test. You cannot confirm it with this breathing exercise, which can even be dangerous.

Can the new coronavirus be transmitted through mosquito bites?

No. **The new coronavirus CANNOT be transmitted through mosquito bites.** To date there has been no information nor evidence to suggest that the new coronavirus could be transmitted by mosquitoes. The new coronavirus is a respiratory virus which spreads primarily through droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose. To protect yourself, clean your hands frequently with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Also, avoid close contact with anyone who is coughing and sneezing.

Do vaccines against pneumonia protect you against the new coronavirus?

No. Vaccines against pneumonia, such as pneumococcal vaccine and Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib) vaccine, do not provide protection against the new coronavirus.
The virus is so new and different that it needs its own vaccine. Researchers are trying to develop a vaccine, and WHO is supporting their efforts. Although these vaccines are not effective against the new coronavirus, vaccination against respiratory illnesses is highly recommended to protect your health.

Can regularly rinsing your nose with saline help prevent infection with the new coronavirus?

No. There is no evidence that regularly rinsing the nose with saline has protected people from infection with the new coronavirus.
There is some limited evidence that regularly rinsing nose with saline can help people recover more quickly from the common cold. However, regularly rinsing the nose has not been shown to prevent respiratory infections.

Can eating garlic help prevent infection with the new coronavirus?

No. Garlic is a healthy food that may have some antimicrobial properties. However, there is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating garlic has protected people from the new coronavirus.

Does the new coronavirus only affect older people?

People of all ages can be infected by the new coronavirus. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus. WHO advises people of all ages to take steps to protect themselves from the virus, for example by following good hand hygiene and good respiratory hygiene.

A brief update from Dr Gareth Parry (Any Questions, issue 2)

A few weeks ago, I wrote that COVID-19 did not appear to trigger GBS. Has anything changed? Probably not but I need to stress again that my answers were based on what knowledge we currently have, and this is a rapidly evolving field and recommendations may change as we learn more.

A week ago, a single case of COVID-19-associated GBS was reported. The case was seen in January, early in the course of this pandemic, and **the GBS occurred prior to the diagnosis of COVID-19 infection**. Eight days after being admitted to the hospital with GBS the patient developed cough and fever and was diagnosed with COVID-19 infection. There are a few reasons to suspect that the association is no more than coincidental:

1. In this reported case, the GBS occurred prior to symptomatic infection whereas GBS usually follows symptomatic infection by 10-20 days. Of course, we know that individuals may contract the virus up to 2 weeks before they manifest symptoms which is why we are asked to isolate for 2 weeks. Thus, it is remotely possible that the asymptomatic viral infection triggered an immune response that led to GBS much more rapidly than usual.
2. One of the factors that predicts severe GBS is a short interval between the inciting event (infection in most cases) and development of weakness. In this reported case the GBS pre-dated symptomatic infection so the interval between viral exposure and weakness must have been extremely short and yet the GBS was very mild with rapid and complete recovery.
3. Perhaps most importantly, this is the first case of GBS associated with the virus despite there being more than 1.7 million confirmed cases (as of April 12, 2020) since December 2019 and probably many more that have not been diagnosed. The incidence of GBS is roughly 2 cases for every 100,000 of the population every year so if COVID-19 was a trigger for GBS we would have expected to see about 30 cases, not just this one.

“It is incident to physicians, I am afraid, beyond all other men, to mistake subsequence for consequence.”

Dr Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

Samuel Johnson made this observation about 300 years ago but it is just as true today and while he made the comment about physicians it is equally true for the entire human race, including those who should know better such as the physicians who wrote the Lancet article. Just because “B” follows “A” it does not mean that “B” was caused by “A”. The authors of the article were quick to acknowledge that this association may just be a coincidence, but the headlines generated screamed “First case of GBS associated with COVID-19” which is the message that gets out to the GBS community. We cannot yet say with complete certainty that there is no chance that COVID-19 could trigger GBS, but this single case does not change the validity of what I had wrote three weeks ago. As more data emerges, we may learn that there is a link but, in the meantime, don’t panic.

Covid-19: Can 'boosting' your immune system protect you?

Not surprisingly, whenever there is a health scare, all sorts of theories start doing the rounds about miracle cures, and ways you can supposedly protect yourself. The myth-buster on page 2 has hopefully dispelled some of them, but what about the idea of 'boosting' your immune system?

The 1918 flu pandemic was the most lethal in recorded history, infecting up to 500 million people (a quarter of the world’s population at the time) and killing tens of millions worldwide.

But with crisis comes opportunity, and the – sometimes literal – snake oil salesmen were out in force. Fast-forward to 2020, and not much has changed. Though the Covid-19 pandemic is separated from the Spanish flu by over a century of scientific discoveries, there are still plenty of questionable medicinal concoctions and folk remedies floating around. This time, the theme is ‘boosting’ the immune system.

“There are three different components to immunity,” says Akiko Iwasaki, an immunologist at Yale University. “There’s things like skin, the airways and the mucus membranes that are there to begin with, and they provide a barrier to infection. But once the virus gets past these defences, then you have to induce the ‘innate’ immune response.” This consists of chemicals and cells which can rapidly raise the alert and begin fighting off any intruder.

“When that is not enough, then we kick in the adaptive immune system,” she says. This involves cells and proteins – antibodies – which take a few days or weeks to emerge. Importantly, the adaptive immune system can only target particular pathogens. “So, for example, a T-cell specific to Covid-19 will not respond to influenza or bacterial pathogens.”

The concept of “boosting” a person’s immune system would, presumably, involve making these responses more active, or stronger. In actuality, you wouldn’t want to do this. Take the symptoms of a cold – body aches, a fever, brain fog, copious amounts of snot and phlegm.

Most of these problems aren’t actually caused by the virus itself. Instead, they’re triggered by your own body, on purpose: they’re part of the innate immune response. In this case, the mucus helps to flush out the pathogen, the fever helps to make your body an uncomfortably hot environment in which it’s harder for it to replicate, and the aches and general malaise are by-products of the inflammatory chemicals that course through your veins, telling immune cells what to do and where to go.

But the process is exhausting, so you wouldn’t want to have it turned up to 11 all the time. And most viruses, including coronavirus, will trigger it anyway. If kombucha, green tea or any of the various “immune-boosting” concoctions on the market really had any impact, they wouldn’t give you a healthful glow: they’d give you a runny nose.

You can read the full article here;
<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200408-covid-19-can-boosting-your-immune-system-protect-you>

Beat the isolation and join the conversation!

Not being able to mix with friends and family outside your own household is difficult, and especially so for anyone living alone or with health issues. That is why we have started something new that anyone can join in! You can join the conversation using an ordinary landline, but if you have access to a smart phone, or a tablet, laptop or computer equipped with a camera and microphone, you can join the **weekly chat** with sound and video link, every Tuesday at 2pm.

When?

Every Tuesday
at 2pm

Where?

From the comfort of
your own home!

Visit our website for details of how to join in
www.gaincharity.org.uk



Ten tips to help if you are worried about coronavirus

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak means that life is changing for all of us for a while. It may cause you to feel anxious, stressed, worried, sad, bored, lonely or frustrated.

There are some simple things you can do to help you take care of your mental health and wellbeing during times of uncertainty. Doing so will help you think clearly, and make sure you are able to look after yourself and those you care about.

8. Stay connected with people via phone calls, video calls, and social media
9. Talk about your worries – if you can't talk to someone you're close to, there are helplines you can phone
10. Support and help others – helping someone else (within guidelines) can benefit you as well as them

1. Feel prepared by working through the implications of staying at home
2. Look after your body by eating healthy, well-balanced meals, drinking enough water, and exercising regularly
3. Stick to the facts – find a credible source you can trust such as GOV.UK or the NHS website (see below)
4. Stay on top of difficult feelings - focus on the things you can control, such as what you do and who you speak to
5. Do things you enjoy – adapt them if necessary or try something new. There are lots of free tutorials online
6. Focus on the present rather than worrying about the future. Try some relaxation techniques
7. Look after your sleep – maintain regular sleeping patterns and avoid screen-time before bed

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-tips/>

Keep in touch

Post is being picked up from the office regularly, and emails and social media are monitored during office hours

@ office@gaincharity.org.uk

www.facebook.com/groups/727400487277814/

@gaincharity

gaincharity

If you need to phone any of us, please use the mobile numbers below (Mon-Fri 9am-3pm)

Caroline	07719 280965
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Simon	07878 090965

And if you want to drop us a line, you can write to us at the usual address;

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Pride Parkway, Sleaford, NG34 8GL