



## Top Health News

### Alzheimer's: Thousands to trial blood tests for dementia

Memory clinics across the UK are to begin trialling blood tests to see if they can accurately diagnose dementia.

The hope is that more people will be able to access care, support and new drug treatments at an earlier stage.

The research, by University College London and the University of Oxford, will involve around 5,000 volunteers.

The five-year project will study blood tests for Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

Currently, around a third of patients with dementia never get a formal diagnosis and are left with worry and uncertainty about their condition.

#### Rogue proteins

Only around 2% of patients have one of the 'gold standard' tests for Alzheimer's - either a specialist PET brain scan or a spinal lumbar puncture.

Both can show the presence of rogue proteins in the brain such as amyloid and tau which start to accumulate up to 20 years before symptoms emerge - but tests are expensive.

The Oxford team will be looking at a range of blood tests, which could be a cheaper and easier way for doctors to spot early signs of the disease.

One blood test will look for traces of these proteins in the blood in order to diagnose Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia. Some tests will also look for potential biomarkers for vascular and frontotemporal dementia, and dementia with Lewy bodies.

The researchers will also look at whether the blood tests can help detect these diseases at various stages.

Dr Vanessa Raymont, from the University of Oxford, is leading a study which will recruit volunteers from more than 50 UK trial sites, which are all NHS memory clinics.



She told the BBC that although several dementia blood tests had already shown promising results, they had limitations.

[Fergus Walsh, BBC News \(click here to read full article\)](#)

## **New treatment option to prevent migraine recommended for NHS use**

Up to 170,000 NHS patients in England are set to benefit from a new treatment option for migraines, thanks to new guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

The drug atogepant, which is marketed as Aquipta by AbbVie, has been recommended for preventing both chronic and episodic migraines.

Somebody has to experience at least 15 headache days a month, with eight of those having features of migraines to suffer from chronic migraine, while episodic migraine is characterised as fewer than 15 headache days a month.

The oral treatment has been approved for adults who have tried unsuccessfully with at least three preventive treatments, and suffer from at least four migraine days a month.

NICE's director of medicines evaluation, Helen Knight, highlighted the fact that atogepant is taken as a tablet and not via an injection, which could help more patients access the treatment given some people have allergies or phobias.

She said: "Today's final draft guidance demonstrates our commitment to focusing on what matters most and getting the best care to people while ensuring value for the taxpayer."

The treatment works by blocking the calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP) receptor – CGRP is a protein found in the nerves of the head and neck that can cause blood vessels to dilate and thus inflammation and pain.

All the latest innovations from the pharmaceutical industry will be detailed during National Health Executive's 'Life Sciences' online conference later this year, where expert guests will discuss:

- Clinical trials
- Pathology
- Genomics
- Digital technologies

- Patient safety

Migraines are thought to impact around 4.5 million people in England. The Migraine Trust has previously estimated that migraines cost the NHS £1bn a year.

[Louis Morris, NHE \(click here to read full article\)](#)

## **NHS expands 'one-hour' liver testing to help detect and eliminate Hep C**

Thousands of people unknowingly living with hepatitis C are to be identified, diagnosed and cured thanks to major NHS investment in rapid testing technology and an extension of a ground-breaking medicines deal.

New liver scanning and portable testing units will be deployed in a range of communities where patients are at high risk of contracting the infection. This includes on community clinical outreach vans, at drug and alcohol support services, or at special testing events in some GP practices as part of the final phase of the dedicated hepatitis C Elimination Programme, which could see England become the first country in the world to eliminate the virus as a public health threat.

Once found by targeted outreach, hepatitis C patients can be treated on the NHS with antiviral medicines all thanks to a two-year extension to a pioneering deal with three pharmaceutical companies, to supply the latest antiviral drugs

Since the elimination programme drive began in 2015, around 84,000 people have been treated for hepatitis C and it is hoped the virus can be stamped out as a public health concern in England, years ahead of the World Health Organisation's 2030 ambition.

NHS national medical director, Professor Sir Stephen Powis, said: "This investment ensures the NHS will continue to save thousands of lives and set the international standard in the drive to eliminate hepatitis C by 2030 and, while tackling a significant health inequality.

"New portable testing devices, and an extension of our landmark commercial deal, is helping us reach those most at risk as we begin our final push to wipe out the virus and find and cure any remaining cases.

"We urge anyone who could be living with hepatitis C to get checked for peace of mind – there are a range of ways to get tested, including screening programmes or doing a simple test at home – if left untreated, the virus can lead to life-threatening conditions, but treatment is simple, curative and easily accessible."

[NHS \(click here to read full article\)](#)

## Thousands with Type 1 diabetes in England to receive 'artificial pancreas'

Children and adults in England living with Type 1 diabetes are set to receive an "artificial pancreas" in a world-first initiative being rolled out by the NHS.

The "ground-breaking" device continually monitors a person's blood glucose, then automatically adjusts the amount of insulin given to them through a pump.

The system is called a Hybrid Closed Loop System, sometimes termed an artificial pancreas, where a blood sugar monitor, insulin pump and software on a person's phone talk to each other, according to Diabetes UK.

It removes the need to draw blood with a finger prick test, or manually inject insulin for some users.

The NHS says this could prevent life-threatening hypoglycaemic and hyperglycaemia attacks, which can lead to seizures, comas or even death for people living with Type 1 diabetes.

There are currently more than 269,000 people living in England with the condition.

Identifying and treating it costs the NHS in England around £10bn a year, or 10% of its entire budget.

Local NHS services will start identifying eligible people living with Type 1 diabetes, and they have been given £2.5m to make a start on treating patients.

[Amelia Harper, Sky News \(click here to read full article\)](#)

## NICE launches second consultation on genetic testing to guide treatment after a stroke

A second consultation on recommendations that clinicians should offer CYP2C19 genotype testing when considering treatment with clopidogrel after an ischaemic stroke or Transient Ischaemic Attack (a "mini stroke") has begun today, Wednesday 3 April 2024.

NICE currently recommends clopidogrel as a treatment option for people at risk of a secondary stroke. For some people with certain variations in a gene called CYP2C19 other treatments could work better. The genotype test would identify people who have the gene variants so they can be offered an alternative treatment.



The draft guidance recommends testing only for people who have very recently had a stroke or TIA. This is because the risk of another event is higher at this time and therefore so is the potential benefit of testing. As the risk of a recurrent stroke or a “mini stroke” reduces over time, so does the benefit of testing.

For this reason, those people already taking clopidogrel will not be offered retrospective testing.

People who are currently taking clopidogrel should continue with the treatment until they and their NHS clinician consider it appropriate to stop.

Laboratory-based CYP2C19 genotype testing was the committee’s preferred option followed by the Genedrive CYP2C19 ID Kit point-of-care test. If neither of the first two options are available, the Genomadix Cube point-of-care test can be used.

The NICE committee suggested that a phased rollout could be used when introducing laboratory-based testing with testing initially offered to people with a higher risk of stroke recurrence who would benefit most from it, such as people who have had a non-minor stroke. The committee recognised that it will take time to build up the testing capacity as no testing is currently undertaken to find out if clopidogrel is a suitable treatment.

[NICE \(click here to read full article\)](#)

## **New menopause drug a ‘game changer’ for one of main symptoms**

A new drug will be a “game changer” for menopausal women, an expert has said.

Veoza, which is set to be fully available in Ireland in April, is a non-hormonal medication designed to stop hot flushes and night sweats.

Campaigners say the daily tablet offers women an alternative to hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for the dreaded menopause symptoms.

Loretta Dignam, the founder of Menopause Hub clinics across Ireland, said its approval is a “hugely positive development”.

She said: “A UK study concluded that women experience a weekly total of 17 hot flushes and 11 night sweats – and this symptom alone can impact severely on sleep, mood, concentration, work and personal lives.

Heales Medical Occupational Health

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“I personally endured up to 39 hot flushes a day and then more at night with the duvet on and off over a three-year period, so I know first-hand how debilitating they can be, so this will be a game-changer.”

Ms Dignam said up to 80% of some 652,000 Irish women suffer symptoms of menopause.

These are primarily hot flushes and night sweats which are triggered by low oestrogen levels, affecting the part of the brain that regulates body temperature.

She said Veoza offers another option to women who cannot take HRT for various medical reasons or for those whose bodies will not absorb the hormones.

[Cillian Sherlock, Independent \(click here to read full article\)](#)



## Recipe of the Month - Egg Drop Coriander Broth

### Recipe

- 500ml water
- 1 stock cube or stock pot
- 1 or 2 eggs
- 25g fresh coriander
- 1 tbs extra virgin olive oil
- 1 small garlic clove
- ¼ tsp salt flakes
- 1 piece sourdough bread



To see the method for this recipe, and for more recipes from Corrie, sign into [www.heales.com](http://www.heales.com) and click on Healthy Eating Blog.

## Workout of the month - Exercises to help Posture

### Exercises

1. Deadlift
2. Banded row
3. Banded pull-apart
4. Worlds Greatest stretch
5. Upper back Prayer stretch



These exercises can be performed for 10 repetitions for 3 sets each.

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To see Carys performing the workout, and for details on how to do the exercises, log on to the Heales Medical Health and Wellbeing portal and check out the workout on our homepage.

## Health Promotion Calendar

Click on the event to go to their website.

### MAY

#### National Osteoporosis Month

01/05/24-31/05/24

#### National Walking Month

01/05/24-31/05/24

#### Lyme Disease Awareness Month

01/05/24-31/05/24

#### Sun Awareness Week

06/05/24-12/05/24

#### World Asthma Day

07/05/2024

#### May 12th International Awareness Day for Chronic Immunological and Neurological Diseases (CIND: ME, CFS, FM, GWS, MCS)

12/05/2024

#### Mental Health Awareness Week

13/05/24-19/05/24

#### Salt Awareness Week

13/05/24-19/05/24



## JUNE

### Scleroderma Awareness Month

01/06/24-30/06/24

### Heart Rhythm Week

03/06/24-09/06/24

### BNF Healthy Eating Week

10/06/24-14/06/24

### Men's Health Week

10/06/24-16/06/24



## Health Promotion and Education

Heales Medical can help advise and manage proactive health promotion days that will encourage employees to adopt healthier lifestyles.

Our health promotion days specialise in the prevention of ill health and the promotion of health & well-being within your organisation.

Our services are delivered by high calibre, well qualified staff with a broad experience base and all results are assessed against National Clinical Guidelines.

During each assessment, the health professional will ask lifestyle questions about the employee's general health and give health advice.

After each assessment we will be able to provide results, advice and an information pack.

If you have any queries or are interested in having an event, please contact a Heales Occupational Health Advisor or Contract Manager for further information.

- ✓ Advice of physical activity
- ✓ Advice on healthy eating
- ✓ Advice on weight management
- ✓ Advice on stress management

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- ✓ Advice on smoking, alcohol & drugs
- ✓ Understanding blood pressure
- ✓ Understanding blood cholesterol

## Health and Wellbeing Portal

For more resources see our Health and Wellbeing Portal!

Our portal has a wide range of information, tips and advice to help you support your health and wellbeing, including:

- Health Promotion Blog
- COVID-19 advice
- Health & healthy eating tips
- Health Newsletter archive
- Healthy lifestyle & exercise blog
- Vegetarian blog
- Accessible apps
- Specific information and tip pages for injury, illness and disability in daily life and in the workplace
- Occupational Health information

Pages and information will be updated and added to continually, if you have any suggestions, let us know at [carys.swanton@heales.com](mailto:carys.swanton@heales.com).