

UPDATE / NEWS

I hope you are able to enjoy the Christmas season, albeit a different one. Obviously Covid 19 has impacted people in different ways. Let's hope that things gradually get better before too very long in 2021.

Covid 19 and diet

As Christmas can be a time of eating and drinking things we might not normally take in, I thought the following article might be interesting. Professor Tim Spector of the Covid 19 Zoe study tells us why he thinks [diet affects the efficiency of our immune system](#). To summarise – he says that different people react differently to various foods. There is no one size fits all. Elsewhere he recommends a varied diet of unprocessed food

From your experience ...

Different people react differently to the ongoing Covid 19 situation. Different people have different ways of coping with the changes or possible difficulties or even possibilities it may present.

For a future weekly update, please would you like to email me something – it can be very brief – about what you learnt from Covid 19 and lockdown in 2020 and how those lessons might help you or others in 2021? Ideas could be about anything: frame of mind, how you cheer up yourself and others, new things you have learnt, places you've discovered, new ways of doing things etc.

If you could let me have your thoughts over the next two weeks – let's say by Thursday 7 January – that would be great. Thanks.

Supplies of fresh fruit and vegetables

A combination of Brexit and transport delays caused by Covid 19 has shone a spotlight on how much fresh fruit and vegetables we import into the UK, especially from Europe. For a non-sensational account of what we grow here and what we import at different times of the year, [click here](#) for a BBC article.

With our ever-changing seasons, inevitably different fruit and veg grow well in our country at different times of the year. One way to limit the impact of any food delivery issues is to eat largely seasonal fruit and veg grown in the UK or Ireland. To find out what is available in season in the UK, [click here](#) for *Seasonal fruit and veg – a handy guide* from the Association of UK Dieticians. In addition eating seasonal UK food is a way of supporting UK farmers and reducing the carbon footprint caused by transporting food long distances.

For recipe ideas using seasonal produce, see the following sites:

[BBC Good Food Guide](#)

[The Flexitarian](#)

[Sarah Raven](#) To find seasonal recipes for other times of year from this site, you may find it easier to use your preferred search engine.

HINTS AND TIPS

When we may spend more time indoors

Despite the benefits of getting outside and moving around, shorter days and colder temperatures can make indoors have a greater appeal than the outdoors. Not that it needs stop us going outside – wrapping up in layers and moving can keep us warm.

The options open to a lot of us for indoor entertainment are huge. As those receiving this email are internet connected, there is an enormous number of possibilities This can be passive or active entertainment, exercise, learning new facts, learning new hobbies, researching and making plans. It depends largely on our choices and partly on our income. Here are just a few. Some cost money; some don't.

Watching television including online. The number of options is wide. For no more than the cost of the TV licence we have access to a huge range of free streamed programmes on BBC i player, Channel 4 All 4, Freeview Play. There are other free streaming services available, if you have the devices that support them. A handy site to find where you can stream a programme or film (free or paid for) you'd like to watch is <https://www.justwatch.com/uk>

Online exercise. Paid for or free. The choice is without limit. Just use your search engine. Popular fitness instructors, physiotherapists, Zumba ([this link](#) is to a Croydon based class), Pilates, yoga.

Learn to dance. Lots of free tutorials.

Listen to different kinds of music you've not really tried before.

Learn to draw, paint, do a wide range of crafts.

Learn to make do and mend / recycle (or upcycle) items you already have.

Learn new cooking ideas for using odds and ends in your fridge or store cupboard.

Learn about a new subject. It can be anything: geology, history, art, DIY, psychology, science, natural world, a band or musician, sportsman or sportswoman etc etc. There is a wealth of free information online, although you have to exercise judgement on the quality. The CityLit, based in London, is doing paid for classes

online in the current situation. Free online podcasts can be fascinating (eg on BBC i player, Channel 4, museums, other publicly funded institutions and very many more you can search out.)

If you're lucky enough to have access to a garden or can make space to grow something on a window ledge or near a window indoors – plan what you might grow starting in Spring all the way through to the end of the year.

Research and plan places to go locally – Croydon Council has an A-Z on its website of parks and open spaces. TfL has information on walks and cycles routes, eg London Loop and Vanguard Way both run through Croydon, Waterlink Way, Thames Walk.

Reading – Croydon Council now offers an online digital borrowing service from its website.

Whatever might interest you.

TO MAKE YOU SMILE

I suppose it says something that I couldn't find any good 2021 jokes online. So – I've resorted to a short compilation of animals at Christmas. These made me chuckle without my finding them cringe-making. After watching it you may wish to think twice before donning a pair of fluffy slippers!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4CAWQmJynA>

Wishing you all the very best for 2021

RELIABLE SOURCES OF ACCURATE INFORMATION

Croydon Council services

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/phealth/coronavirus-information/service-updates>

Test and Trace and If you have to self-isolate in Croydon

<https://new.croydon.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-and-service-updates/test-and-trace-keeping-croydon-safe/keeping-croydon-safe>

National – furlough, self-employed, small businesses, benefits, housing

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Job Help

<https://jobhelp.campaign.gov.uk/>
[Seven key tips for finding a job](#)

Health

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Money

<https://new.croydon.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-and-service-updates/get-help-your-council-tax-and-benefits>

<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en>

<https://www.turn2us.org.uk/>

<https://www.fca.org.uk/>

Citizens Advice

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/health/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you/>

Shelter

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/coronavirus