

Breast Cancer Support Group Sussex



Dates
For Your Diary

Hi Ladies

I hope everyone is well and looking forward to Christmas. It always seems manic this time of the year with all the shops crammed full and nowhere to park, but hopefully it is all worthwhile and that everybody has a great Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year.

Well our next meeting is **December 19th at the Horizon Centre at 6pm for our Christmas Party.** Plenty of food and drink and we have invited Curtis, the crooner (as we did last year) to entertain us with his wonderful voice, so let's have a great turnout for him. We have invited the ladies from the BRCA cancer group to join us for the evening, so let's make them really welcome and show them a good time. Their group has only started up 3 months ago and they also meet up at the Horizon Centre. All of them are carriers of the BRCA Gene as I am myself, so it is important for them to meet our group and know that we are there for them when and if they need our support at any time in the future. Now ladies, don't forget we have our **Secret Santa** coming to visit us all at our Party, so please bring a wrapped gift to the value of £5.00 where our **Secret Santa** will give them out. We will also hold our Raffle.

Our very great thanks go to Helen and Hayley from Elizabeth Arden at Boots at our November meeting. We had a great evening with Pat being made up beautifully, a wonderful raffle and lots of free samples. Everyone had a lovely evening and hopefully Helen and Hayley has said they would love to come back next year whenever we would like them to come.

We have decided that we will miss out our January meeting as the attendance is always very low (unless there is a demand for it) We will ask you all at the party what you would prefer. We are in the process of inviting some speakers to attend our group meetings for 2017 to give us any new information that we feel we should be updated with. We will inform you in the newsletter of future speakers.

Looking forward to seeing as many members as possible on the **19th December at 6pm.**

Best wishes

Joyce

December 19

Our Christmas Party with Entertainment. Don't forget your Secret Santa

December 25

Merry Christmas!

2017

January 1

Wishing You A Happy and Healthy New Year!

January 16

NO MEETING

Our Group Meetings are held at the **Macmillan Horizon Centre**, Bristol Gate (opp A&E at the RSCH) **6.30pm to 8.30pm**

**We're delighted to confirm that the entertainment
at our Christmas Party on Monday 19th December
will be provided by**



Curtis began performing at the age of six and appeared in many musicals and plays around Sussex. At 18 he was accepted on a full scholarship into Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts in North London where he studied musical theatre for the next three years. On graduating he went on to work with English pop singer Chesney Hawkes and ITV's Loose Women host Zoe Tyler, playing the part of Asher in Andrew Lloyd Webbers' "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat". He was also cast as a lead vocalist for a musical arrangement for Jamie Olivers' Food Festival "The Big Festival" along with many top west end performers. Curtis has appeared in various different areas of performance over the last three years including music videos, adverts, pantomimes and educational films. In 2013 Curtis was offered a position as a lead vocalist for musicals on a cruise ship, but decided musical theatre wasn't a path he wanted to take further and instead started a solo vocal career.



Miss Nadia Arif

I am a 4th year medical student and I attended a Breast Cancer Support Group: Brighton meeting in June with Professor Malcolm Reed. I spoke to the members about participating in my Individual Research Project (IRP), which I am undertaking as part of my medical studies at Brighton and Sussex Medical School, under the supervision of Professor Malcolm Reed and Professor Pietro Ghezzi. We have recently received approval from the NHS ethics committee, which was necessary to proceed with the study.

Our project is titled "The quality of information on breast cancer treatment options available on the internet" and this study aims assess how the quality of information on breast cancer treatment options is perceived by patients and healthcare professionals. The participants will be provided with a printed questionnaire containing a link to a URL containing ten links to websites. They will need to open the link, look at the websites and assess them for a number of criteria to be scored.

I hope that you will be prepared to help me with this study and will be attending the Christmas Party to answer any questions that you may have

A vertical pink ribbon, a symbol for breast cancer awareness, is positioned on the left side of the page.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Research Project: Assessing the quality of health information on breast cancer treatment options on the Internet

Have you been diagnosed with breast cancer?

If you have, help us help breast cancer patients find better quality health information on the internet. To take part, please ask for an envelope containing a questionnaire at the next meeting.



Participants must be over the age of 18 and have access to the internet. For more information, contact Professor Pietro Ghezzi:
Email: p.ghezzi@bsms.ac.uk
Telephone: 01273 873112

Essential Oils for Winter

By Our Aromatherapist, Kelly

As Autumn and winter brings cooler temperatures and richly coloured falling leaves, it's a perfect time to enjoy diffusing and blending with warming essential oils like ginger, cardamom, cinnamon and clove.

Below is a list of essential oils well suited for incorporation into your favourite



winter and autumn diffuser blends. The oils included in this list are selected for their warming, spicy, resinous or woody aroma.

By their nature, spicy essential oils like [Cinnamon](#), [Clove Bud](#) and [Ginger](#) and Black Pepper are strong and quite warming. A little goes a long way with these oils. They shouldn't be heavily diffused into a room as they can irritate the mucous membranes. It's best to blend stronger spice oils into more gentle oils like [Sweet Orange Essential Oil](#)

Warming/Spicy/Resinous/Woody Essential Oils and Absolutes

[Allspice](#)

[Anise](#)

[Anise, Star](#)

[Balsam, Peru](#)

[BayBayLaurel](#)

[Benzoin](#)

[Black Pepper](#)

[Cardamom](#)

[Carrot Seed](#)

[Cassia](#)

[Cedarwood,](#)

[Atlas](#)

[Cedarwood,](#)

[Virginian](#)

[Cinnamon](#)

[Clove Bud](#)

[Common](#)

[Sage](#)

[Coriander](#)

[Cumin](#)

[Sage](#)

[Dill](#)

[Fennel](#)

[Frankincense](#)

[Ginger](#)

[Immortelle](#)

[Myrrh](#)

[Nutmeg](#)

[Oakmoss](#)

[Patchouli](#)

[Rosemary](#)

[Rosewood](#)

[Sage, Clary](#)

[Sage, CommonSage,](#)

[Sage, Spanish](#)

[Sandalwood](#)

[Vanilla](#)

[Vetiver](#)

Blend #1

4 drops [Sweet Orange](#) Essential Oil

3 drops [Ginger](#) Essential Oil

3 drops [Patchouli](#) Essential Oil Into

30 mls of base oil



Blend #2

8 drops [Sweet Orange](#) Essential Oil

6 drops [Lime](#) Essential Oil

6 drops [Sage](#) Essential Oil Into 50 mls base oil

Blend #3

3 drops [Sweet Orange](#) Essential Oil

2 drops [Cinnamon](#) Essential oil

1 drop [Clove Bud](#) Essential Oil

1 drop [Nutmeg](#) Essential Oil Into a burner or diffuser

Coniferous Essential Oils Are Also Excellent in Winter Blends

Though more traditionally associated with Christmas and wintertime, you may like incorporating coniferous oils like [Cypress](#), [Fir Needle](#), [Juniper Berry](#) and [Scotch Pine](#) into your autumn blends.

A Warning About Applying Spice Oils to the Skin

When creating blends and topical products that you apply to your skin, remember that many of the spice oils can cause skin irritation and should be used as incredibly low dilutions if at all.

Essential Oils for the Immune System

The [immune system](#) is the body's very first line of defence against invasion by viruses, and quite often coughs, colds and influenza break through when your immune system is depleted and your body is more susceptible to attack. If you do become infected it is entirely up to your immune system to fight off the virus, and if your immune system is compromised it can take a long time to completely get over coughs and colds.

Immunostimulant essential oils can help build up your immune system, thereby strengthening your body's defences against infection, which is extremely useful since antibiotics are unable to defeat viruses. Essential oils of bergamot, clove bud, [German chamomile](#), [niaouli](#), [peppermint](#), [lemon](#), [tea tree](#), and [thyme](#) help to promote the production of lymphocytes and phagocytes (types of white blood cells) which are a crucial part of your body's defence system.



Decongestant Essential Oils

The decongestant and soothing properties of essential oils are highly effective at clearing a stuffy nose and easing tickly coughs. Fill a large bowl with almost boiling water and add 3 or 4 drops of basil, eucalyptus, silver fir, frankincense, peppermint or pine essential oil. A particularly effective decongestant blend is 1 drop each of basil, peppermint and silver fir essential oils. Add lavender for its' soothing and anti-bacterial properties.

How to have a stress-free Christmas in the kitchen

Five tips for peaceful, happy holiday cooking



i 'Check the turkey fits in the oven ...' Illustration: Lauren Crow for Observer Food Monthly

1 Keep it tidy

It doesn't matter how many work surfaces you have, it is still possible to make a real mess cooking [Christmas](#) lunch. Clearing as much clutter from the kitchen three days beforehand will help you immensely on the day and keep a clear head .

Also clearing out the fridge and reorganising it so there is as much space as possible will make a big difference when all the produce starts to arrive for Christmas .

2 Be prepared

Get ahead on the 22nd by curing your own salmon to make gravadlax (blitz 175g salt with 250g brown sugar and leaves from a large bunch of dill –use to cure 1 large fillet or 2 small). It will be ready on Christmas Eve and will keep well – a great starter, snack or canapé .

Check that your turkey fits in the roasting tray and that it all fits in the oven. It might seem obvious but even the best cooks sometimes forget: I told Rose Gray about a dish that we cooked at the Carved Angel (goose à la poitevene) and she decided to try it one Christmas –she had massive problems with the oven size, and the depth of the oven tray when all the fat came out of the goose.

Try to have a great quality chicken stock in the freezer to give your gravy a boost. My mum always recommends saving the cooking water from mashed swede and onion for the gravy. It does add flavour and can be made the night before, the mash being reheated on the day .

3 Turkey time

Cooking a turkey seems to worry a lot of people but thinking of it as just a large chicken tends to calm the nerves.

Brining the turkey beforehand not only keeps it moist but can add flavour depending on what spices you add to the brine. (I prefer bay, star anise, peppercorns, coriander seeds, fennel and thyme)

If you have a cool place (with no threat from hungry pets) leave the turkey out but covered on Christmas Eve so that it is at room temperature when you stick it in the oven the next morning . If not leave it out of the fridge for at least an hour before cooking – this will ensure that the bird cooks more evenly and quickly .

Start cooking the turkey upside down on a bed of onions and stock veg before finishing right side up . This will help keep the breast moist . If the bird will only fit in the oven at an angle make sure the legs are pointing to the back of the oven as this tends to be the hottest part.

All nervousness about the bird being cooked can be eased by purchasing a meat probe. Test the bird by probing the thickest part of the thigh: when the temperature is 74C or above you can pour yourself a large gin!

Allow the bird to rest for at least 45 minutes: this will give you enough time to crank up the oven and finish the spuds. The turkey can be rested upside down –breast side down. This will keep it moist but you will have to give up the crisp skin .

If you're stuck for oven space, try roasting two guinea fowls instead: very tasty and much quicker.

4 Know your roots



i Carrots: 'braise in a pan with butter and honey. Finish with good vinegar and chopped parsley.'
Illustration: Lauren Crow for Observer Food Monthly



If you are cooking lots of lovely veg , timing can be very important with oven space . This is the only time my mum uses her hostess trolley and I have learnt to love it on Christmas day.

Roast potatoes: try sprinkling par boiled potatoes with a little semolina and drizzle with some squeezy Marmite before roasting for best spuds ever. The marmite adds a more “savoury” flavour – the semolina provides extra crunch .

Parsnips: instead of roasting, try cooking them in milk and pureeing the drained parsnips with ground almonds, crushed garlic, lemon juice and olive oil. This can be made the day before and can double as a dip sprinkled with toasted flaked almonds .

Carrots: braise in a pan with butter and honey. Finish with good vinegar and chopped parsley. Turnips and beetroot can be cooked this way too . Mix them all together and sprinkle with pomegranate seeds .

Mixed greens: The mixed greens can be tossed in a hot browned nut butter before serving .

If your stove top is overwhelmed with pans try other gadgets to cook your veg – I love using my contact grill (panini-type press) for quickly cooking leeks and broccoli

Sprouts: Roast your sprouts for a change. Cut them in quarters or half and toss in a little oil and butter. Roast in a medium hot oven for about 15 minutes until they are slightly browned and tender. You could combine them with roast cauliflower and blanched chopped kale.

The perfect bubble and squeak

The traditional Boxing Day bubble can be tricky as the veg can be wet, making frying the cakes quite messy. So it’s good to use some potato with mashed swede and chopped greens or peas. If the cakes are mixed and shaped when everything is cold and then coated in flour, beaten egg and breadcrumbs, they will be easier to handle when cooking. Chill the veg cakes and brown in butter and oil on both sides before finishing in a medium oven .

5 *Pudding, anyone?*

Prepare an amaretti crumble mix and keep in the fridge. It's great for an emergency pudding – try as a topping with apples, a little chopped orange and booze.



Crumble topping

Serves 6

flour 175g

butter 125g

sugar 100g

crushed amaretti 100g

eating apples 8 chopped

orange 1, peeled and diced

orange juice and zest of 1

dried apricots 100g, chopped

dates 50g, chopped

sugar 75g

Calvados or brandy a slug

Or you can whip up mascarpone cream with orange zest and a few drops of orange flower water. Stir in pomegranate seeds and stuff stoned dates with the cream for a quick but stunning dessert. Serve over sliced clementines. Sprinkle with pistachios and more pomegranate seeds and drizzle with honey.

Jane Baxter is co-author of Leon: Fast Vegetarian (Conran, RRP £25).

10 tips to boost self-esteem (from Breast Cancer Care)



Many people struggle with their self-esteem after a diagnosis of breast cancer. Isabelle Cullis suggests some simple ways to help you feel better about yourself.

Self-esteem describes how we think and feel about ourselves, and usually refers to the value we place on ourselves as a person. Unpleasant or stressful experiences can lower our self-esteem and positive experiences and achievements can help improve it.

Someone with low self-esteem tends to have a negative opinion of themselves and finds it difficult to recognise anything positive they've done or nice qualities they have. It's common to have high expectations of ourselves and be more critical of ourselves than others. And it can be difficult to ignore our inner critic when it pipes up frequently.

Breast cancer and self-esteem

Breast cancer brings many changes that can have a big impact on self-esteem.

The physical effects of treatment (such as pain, fatigue and sleep problems) may mean you can't do the things you used to, and this may persist for months or even years after treatment. Changes to your body image – through surgery or other treatment side effects such as hair loss, lymphoedema and weight changes – can have a huge impact on how you feel about yourself. They may leave you feeling less feminine or unattractive.

A sense of uncertainty and loss of control can also affect your self-esteem, as can a change in your role. You might suddenly go from being an independent person – whether you're working or being a

full-time mother or carer – to being a vulnerable patient or ‘that person with breast cancer’.

Low self-esteem can have a big impact on your mood and everyday life. Many people experience a loss of confidence and motivation, and it's common to feel low and anxious when you have breast cancer. You might avoid doing things you normally would, like seeing friends, attending social events and even engaging in hobbies or work. Low self-esteem often affects your relationships too.

10 ways to improve self-esteem

Improving your self-esteem can be challenging and often takes time and effort. But there are some simple things you can do every day to help you feel better about yourself.

1. Celebrate the small things

Focusing on positives can help us improve our mood and break negative thinking habits. Try noting down some positive things at the end of each day. Think about things that have happened, something you may have done or a compliment you received.

2. Set yourself a challenge

Maybe you want to get back into a hobby you used to enjoy or learn something new. Make an achievable plan and set yourself a realistic timeframe. Once you've achieved it, congratulate yourself and allow others to congratulate you too.

3. Be more mindful

We can easily get caught up in our thoughts and believe them to be facts. But in reality, thoughts are just thoughts and are not necessarily true. When you notice unhelpful thoughts such as ‘I’m rubbish’ or ‘I should be able to cope’, try adding the phrase ‘I’m having the thought that...’ before the thought, or say: ‘There goes that inner critic again’. Techniques like these can help us take our thoughts less seriously.

4. Be compassionate to yourself

Self-compassion is not about self-indulgence, but more about understanding when we're struggling and not punishing ourselves for it. Watch out for that inner critic, and when you notice it ask yourself: ‘What would I say to a friend?’

5. Seek out supportive people

Surround yourself with supportive people who love and value you. You could also try Breast Cancer Care's online Forum or Someone Like Me service.

6. Don't compare yourself to others (or yourself before cancer)

We all fall into the trap of comparing ourselves to other people, but we can also compare ourselves to our 'old self'. For example, you might think about all the things you could do before cancer. This often results in us feeling low and bad about ourselves. Try to look at how far you have come instead and how you can continue to progress – this will help motivate you as well as improve your self-esteem.

7. Make time for yourself

We often don't spend enough time doing something we love or that makes us feel good about ourselves. Try to factor in some 'me time' each day or week and don't allow yourself to feel guilty – you've earned it.

8. Set realistic expectations

Cut yourself some slack! Often we feel we should be able to manage or achieve certain things and we beat ourselves up when we can't. Remind yourself of everything you've been through and pace yourself. There is such a thing as 'good enough'.

9. Look after yourself

Eat well and exercise regularly. Improving physical wellbeing can improve your emotional wellbeing too. Exercise can give you an energy and mood boost, and eating well reminds you you're worth looking after.

10. Get support if you need it

If you've tried these tips and found they haven't worked for you, speak to someone about getting some support. It can be challenging to ask for help, but your treatment team and GP will be aware of local counselling and psychology services that can help you explore these types of issues and support you to feel better about yourself.

Isabelle has worked as a psychology practitioner in the NHS and now helps co-ordinate Breast Cancer Care's Moving Forward service.

Christmas Cookies - fun to make with kids



Ingredients

300 g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
100 g dark brown soft sugar
1 tsp baking powder
0.5 tsp ground cinnamon
100 g unsalted butter, softened
2 large free-range eggs, beaten

Method

- 1 Preheat the oven to 160°C, fan 140°C, gas 3 and line 2 baking sheets with baking parchment.
- 2 Put the flour, sugar, baking powder and cinnamon in a large mixing bowl. Add the butter and eggs. Mix together until it comes together as a smooth dough. Halve the dough, wrap 1 piece in cling film and chill.
- 3 Dust a work surface with flour, roll out the dough to about 5mm thick and cut out biscuits using different sized star cutters. Re-roll the leftovers and cut out more until all the dough is used up. Do the same with the remaining chilled dough. Arrange the biscuits on the trays and bake for 20 mins until lightly golden. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Decorate with your choice of decorations.