



# THE STROKE AID SOCIETY

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## NEWSLETTER – JULY/AUGUST 2012

Hello

As you are all aware, Yvonne Thomé has resigned after 15 years of dedication to Stroke Aid. She will be truly missed and has certainly left “big shoes” for me to fill. I’d like to take this opportunity to thank her on behalf of all of us at Stroke Aid for all her hard work and we wish her all the best as she embarks on her journey as a “lady of leisure”.

As the new “reporter”, I will be focusing on:

- News from Stroke Aid.
- The latest medical interventions for the prevention and treatment of Stroke.
- I will also include any contributions anyone would like to share about anything interesting, so please e-mail any contributions.

## NEWS FROM STROKE AID

1. Sheila Haydock has been very busy planning a fantastic workshop which will be held at Paterson Park Recreational Centre on the 11 September 2012.  
The title of the workshop is: **A practical workshop of how to assist and understand the difficulties which face people who have had strokes.**
2. The Stroke Aid AGM is scheduled for the 23 October 2012.
3. Our website [www.strokeaid.co.za](http://www.strokeaid.co.za) has been revamped. Check it out.
4. Stroke Aid Diaries will soon be available at **R30 each**, so please place your orders ASAP.
5. Rachel Bramson’s book “My Miracle Comeback” is an emotional and inspirational story that demonstrates the courage and determination of a woman on her journey from darkness to light and from trauma to peace.  
At R55 each, you can get your copy from Stroke Aid. Proceeds from this book is going to Stroke Aid.

6. Due to the Jewish Holidays (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur), Stroke Aid will be closed at Paterson Park Recreation Centre on Tuesday the **18 and 25 September 2012**.

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE TREATMENT/PREVENTION OF STROKE

### Pregnancy Hormone Relaxin Shows Stroke Benefits

At the Endocrine Society Annual Meeting, held on the 25 June 2012, the following study was presented:

Said to be the first of its kind, this study was designed to evaluate the effects of Relaxin in stroke patients.

***Relaxin is a naturally occurring hormone best known for its properties in causing pelvic expansion and relaxation during pregnancy.***

#### **How the study was implemented:**

36 post stroke patients were randomly assigned into 2 groups of 18 patients each, with 1 group receiving rehabilitation in addition to oral relaxin and the other group receiving only rehabilitation

#### **The results of the study:**

Results of the study showed that patients who received Relaxin had greater improvements in their general condition and rehabilitation exercises.

Scores on Functional Independent Measures (FIM) for daily activity in the Relaxin group showed significantly greater improvements in recovery.

The Relaxin group also showed greater improvements in cognitive function and global function.

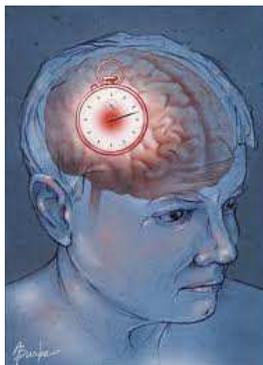
#### **Conclusion:**

Relaxin shows efficacy as a novel therapy for improving functional recovery after stroke.

"This is the first trial with Relaxin on stroke patients," said co-author Mario Bigazzi, MD, an internist with the Prosperius Institute, in Florence, Italy. "I think this could prove to be an incredible tool in improving function in these patients."

"Considering the present clinical results and our previous experimental studies, we believe that relaxin is a very important, if not the most important, cardiovascular hormone, he said.

SOURCE: Medscape Medical News © 2012 WebMD, LLC



## Stroke Survivors May Benefit From Yoga

In a small pilot study published online on 26 July 2012, it was found that 8 weeks of modified yoga exercises led to clinically meaningful improvements in balance in patients with a history of stroke who had completed rehabilitative care.

Yoga participants also experienced improvement in motor function, independence, and quality of life.

47 adults who had suffered a stroke more than 6 months earlier, had completed all stroke-related rehabilitation and were able to stand with or without a device at the outset participated in the study.

- 19 were randomly allocated to twice-weekly yoga groups for 8 weeks,
- 18 to yoga groups plus at-home yoga/relaxation audio recordings.
- 10 to a control group.

The yoga classes were taught by a registered yoga therapist and included modified yoga postures, relaxation, and meditation. The classes grew more challenging each week.

Dr. Schmid (PhD) who led the study said:

"We focused on hip and ankle range of motion and strength as we wished to improve balance. We developed a standardized protocol, so everyone received the same intervention. All yoga participants were physically able to do all planned yoga activities, and no injuries were sustained."

At 8 weeks, fewer patients in the yoga group said they were worried or concerned about falling, and a significant increase was seen in the number of patients identified as "independent"

***"Yoga is a mind-body approach and thus may fit well into rehab efforts and stroke recovery," Arlene A. Schmid, PhD, told Medscape Medical News.***

SOURCE: Medscape Medical News © 2012 WebMD, LLC



## SOMETHING OF INTEREST

From: Sandra Colombick

### Pass the Banana

A professor at CCNY for a physiological psych class told his class about bananas. He said the expression 'going bananas' is from the effects of bananas on the brain.

**Read on:**

Never, put your banana in the refrigerator!!!

**This is interesting.**

After reading this, you'll never look at a banana in the same way again.

Bananas contain three natural sugars - sucrose, fructose and glucose combined with fiber. A banana gives an instant, sustained and substantial boost of energy. Research has proven that just two bananas provide enough energy for a strenuous 90-minute workout. No wonder the banana is the number one fruit with the world's leading athletes.

But energy isn't the only way a banana can help us keep fit. It can also help overcome or prevent a substantial number of illnesses and conditions, making it a must to add to our daily diet.

**Depression:** According to a recent survey undertaken by MIND amongst people suffering from depression, many felt much better after eating a banana. This is because bananas contain tryptophan, a type of protein that the body converts into serotonin, known to make you relax, improve your mood and generally make you feel happier.

**PMS:** Forget the pills - eat a banana. The vitamin B6 it contains regulates blood glucose levels, which can affect your mood.

**Anemia :** High in iron, bananas can stimulate the production of hemoglobin in the blood and so helps in cases of anemia.

**Blood Pressure:** This unique tropical fruit is extremely high in potassium yet low in salt, making it perfect to beat blood pressure. So much so, the US Food and Drug Administration have just allowed the banana industry to make official claims for the fruit's ability to reduce the risk of blood pressure and stroke.

**Brain Power:** 200 students at a Twickenham (Middlesex) school ( England ) were helped through their exams this year by eating bananas at breakfast, break, and lunch in a bid to boost their brain power. Research has shown that the potassium-packed fruit can assist learning by making pupils more alert.

**Constipation:** High in fiber, including bananas in the diet can help restore normal bowel action, helping to overcome the problem without resorting to laxatives.

**Hangovers:** One of the quickest ways of curing a hangover is to make a banana milkshake, sweetened with honey.. The banana calms the stomach and, with the help of the honey, builds up depleted blood sugar levels, while the milk soothes and re-hydrates your system.

**Heartburn:** Bananas have a natural antacid effect in the body, so if you suffer from heartburn, try eating a banana for soothing relief.

**Morning Sickness:** Snacking on bananas between meals helps to keep blood sugar levels up and avoid morning sickness.

**Mosquito bites:** Before reaching for the insect bite cream, try rubbing the affected area with the inside of a banana skin. Many people find it amazingly successful at reducing swelling and irritation.

**Nerves:** Bananas are high in B vitamins that help calm the nervous system.

#### **Overweight and at work?**

Studies at the Institute of Psychology in Austria found pressure at work leads to gorging on comfort food like chocolate and chips. Looking at 5,000 hospital patients, researchers found the most obese were more likely to be in high-pressure jobs. The report concluded that, to avoid panic-induced food cravings, we need to control our blood sugar levels by snacking on high carbohydrate foods every two hours to keep levels steady.

**Ulcers:** The banana is used as the dietary food against intestinal disorders because of its soft texture and smoothness. It is the only raw fruit that can be eaten without distress in over-chronicler cases. It also neutralizes over-acidity and reduces irritation by coating the lining of the stomach.

**Temperature control:** Many other cultures see bananas as a 'cooling' fruit that can lower both the physical and emotional temperature of expectant mothers. InThailand , for example, pregnant women eat bananas to ensure their baby is born with a cool temperature.

**Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD):** Bananas can help SAD sufferers because they contain the natural mood Enhancer tryptophan.

**Smoking & Tobacco Use:** Bananas can also help people trying to give up smoking. The B6, B12 they contain, as well as the potassium and magnesium found in them, help the body recover from the effects of nicotine withdrawal.

**Stress:** Potassium is a vital mineral, which helps normalize the heartbeat, sends oxygen to the brain and regulates your body's water balance. When we are stressed, our metabolic rate rises, thereby reducing our potassium levels. These can be rebalanced with the help of a high-potassium banana snack.

**Strokes:** According to research in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, eating bananas as part of a regular diet can cut the risk of death by strokes by as much as 40%!

**Warts:** Those keen on natural alternatives swear that if you want to kill off a wart, take a piece of banana skin and place it on the wart, with the yellow side out. Carefully hold the skin in place with a plaster or surgical tape!

*So, a banana really is a natural remedy for many ills. When you compare it to an apple, it has four times the protein, twice the carbohydrate, three times the phosphorus, five times the vitamin A and iron, and twice the other vitamins and minerals.*

*It is also rich in potassium and is one of the best value foods around So maybe it's time to change that well-known phrase so that we say, 'A banana a day keeps the doctor away!'*

*PS: Bananas must be the reason monkeys are so happy all the time!*

*I will add one here; want a quick shine on our shoes??*

*Take the INSIDE of the banana skin, and rub directly on the shoe...polish with dry cloth.*

*Amazing fruit !!!*

Cheers, until next time.

Sharlene Zinman





**PS:**

**To all our Jewish Members and Friends, and their families.**

**Wishing you all a Shanah Tovah (*Good Year*) and well over the Fast.**

**May you all have a prosperous new year filled with health and many blessings.**

**Love from  
The Stroke Aid Team**