

Welcome to the third annual issue of the DietCompLyf study newsletter.

The DietCompLyf study will now be based at the **University of Westminster**. Our research will continue as normal and the data that you have consented to will now be held there. As we send out our questionnaire packs to hospitals months in advance, some of our freepost envelopes will still have our old UCL address. This is fine as we will be collecting our post from UCL regularly.

Thank you for taking part in our study again this year. You are helping us to investigate the effects of dietary factors, and lifestyle habits on breast cancer. DietCompLyf is the largest study of its kind within the UK and among the largest in the world.



### Recruitment

Recruitment is now complete! We are very happy to have reached this stage and would like to thank you for your continued efforts. Our main focus will now be on obtaining follow-up information for all remaining participants. Again, we are grateful for your contribution!

### Study Update:

**2,800 women** have joined DietCompLyf in the past 5 years

**56 collaborating NHS hospitals** nationwide are currently involved in the study.

**Over 10,000 blood & urine samples** have been collected for analysis.

**Recruitment has now finished!**

### How we protect your data:

We want to assure you that we adhere to the highest standards in the safekeeping and use of your data:

Only authorised study personnel are granted access to your personal information.

All files are stored in locked cupboards, located in a secured room.

All patients are identified solely by their unique study number and initials when data is handled.

Furthermore, all the data we receive is transferred onto a protected computer drive that only study staff have access to.

### Article References:

1. [www.nih.ac.uk/research/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.nih.ac.uk/research/Pages/default.aspx)
2. [www.nhs.uk/conditions/clinical-trials/pages/introduction.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/clinical-trials/pages/introduction.aspx)
3. [www.peopleinresearch.org/](http://www.peopleinresearch.org/)
4. [www.nhs.uk/Livewell/preventing-cancer/Pages/diet-and-cancer.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/preventing-cancer/Pages/diet-and-cancer.aspx)

## What is Research? And why do we need it?

### What is medical research?

Research is a continuous process of improving health care by trying to increase our understanding of diseases and how to treat them.

### What are clinical trials?

Clinical trials are studies that are designed to carry out research on human beings and can be set up for a variety of reasons. Trials can involve patients, people who are in good health, or both. A trial can be *interventional*, where treatments or other therapies are tested to see how well they work compared to current practices. Another type of trial is an *observational* trial where no treatments are tested and the individuals are observed for a number of factors over a certain period of time. Our study is an observational trial looking at diet and lifestyle in patients after breast cancer diagnosis.

### Why do we need it?

Evidence from research is needed in order for health professionals to give the best treatments available and lifestyle advice. If advice or treatment is given without this evidence this could potentially put a patient at risk. There are many rules and regulations which are set out to ensure that all research is carried out in a safe manner for patients. Research finds out if treatments are safe, have side effects, and if new



treatments are better than available standard treatments. It is useful for preventing illness, detecting or diagnosing illnesses by testing a scan or blood test. Results from research can find out the best way to provide psychological support and help people control their symptoms or improve their quality of life.

### Diet, Cancer and Research

The link between diet and breast cancer has not been greatly researched. There have been indications that certain foods could affect the chances of preventing or developing some cancers. As there are many different vitamins, minerals, and chemicals contained in someone's diet, it is difficult to pin-point one nutrient as a causing or risk-reducing factor in developing cancer. Diet research relies heavily on large studies that provide vast amounts of data to make sound recommendations. This is very much a focus in current research and we hope for continuous progress in this area.



### Our Research: Diet and Lifestyle study

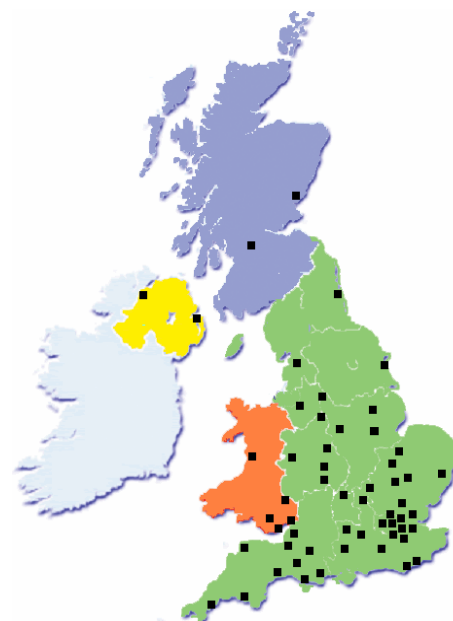
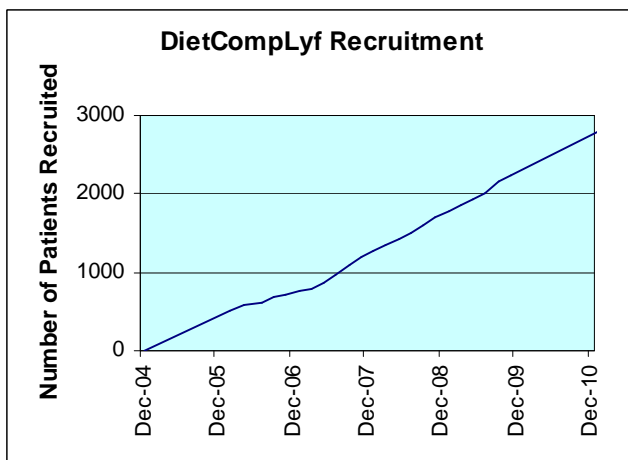
Currently there is evidence to suggest that diet may play a role in breast cancer prognosis. Due to research, breast cancer prognosis has improved over the last 10 years. In order to improve life after diagnosis and decrease the risk of recurrence and developing secondary cancers more research is needed. Our study is an observational clinical trial looking at diet and lifestyle in patients after diagnosis. The majority of research has focused on the risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer and unfortunately little is known about the ways diet and lifestyle can affect cancer recurrence and prognosis. There have also not been many studies looking at diet and lifestyle after diagnosis specifically in the UK. In our study, once all data is obtained and analysed it is hoped that dietary and lifestyle recommendations from healthcare providers can be made in order to improve life after diagnosis which would hopefully improve breast cancer prognosis even more. It is also important that the best recommendations are available for patients in order to decrease the risk of developing secondary cancers as well as other chronic diseases, such as diabetes, osteoporosis, and cardiovascular disease.

If you have reached year 5 on the study and would like to receive further annual newsletters with the study results, please provide us with your address on the form included in the year 5 questionnaire pack and return this with your questionnaires.

The current newsletter and earlier issues are available on the DietCompLyf website under 'patient newsletters'.

### Recruitment has now finished!

Recruitment figures increased rapidly during 2010. We now have enough participants to start analysing our data and samples. Pictured to the right is a map of the UK showing the distribution of hospitals taking part in DietCompLyf.



## Patients' Questions & Comments

**Q: The week that I fill in my food diary is not a usual week (e.g birthday events, Christmas parties, Easter time), does this matter?**

A: The DietCompLyf study uses the information you provide in the food diary simply as a reference and comparison to the substances that are analysed in your urine sample. We do not analyse and judge your diet as either 'healthy' or 'unhealthy', as we are only interested in how well it corresponds to chemicals measured in your sample. So the more accurate and in-depth information you provide us with, the better.

**Q: Why do I have to fill in the same questionnaires annually?**

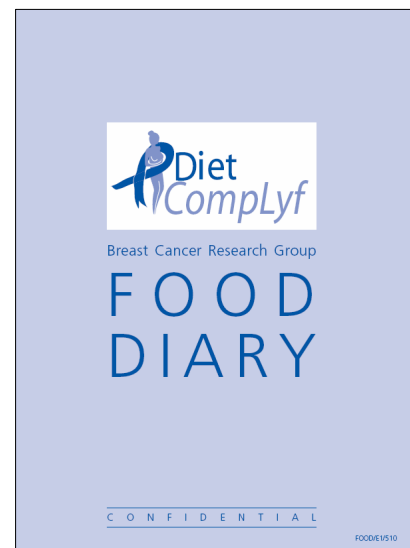
A: We ask patients to fill in the same questionnaires annually so we can monitor any changes in diet or lifestyle choices from year to year.

**Q: I have had a stressful year. I don't feel I can take part this year in completing the questionnaires or having samples taken. However, I don't want to completely withdraw from the study. Is this OK?**

A: It is perfectly OK to take a break from the study. Just let your research nurse aware of this at your hospital.

**Q: Why do you need so much information of the vitamins I take?**

A: Vitamin and other dietary supplements can differ widely in their composition and strength depending on their brand and the actual amount of active ingredients contained. This is why we would like you provide as much information as possible about your supplements.



Please note that these are now the new covers of the Food Diaries.



**We are pleased to announce...** that some early results from our study have been accepted for publication. The paper looks at dietary changes that breast cancer patients involved in DietCompLyf have made following diagnosis. This is an area that has been very little researched in the past. Using the food frequency questionnaires that were completed to indicate food intake before diagnosis and at the first study visit following diagnosis, changes that have been made to food choices and overall nutrient intake have been recorded. Results show significant increases in fruit and vegetable intake, wholegrain foods, cereals, poultry, fish and seafood, legumes, soya meat substitutes, nuts, tea and milk. Significant decreases were observed for full-fat dairy foods, red and processed meats, chips, pizza, desserts, chocolate, butter, most alcoholic drinks, high-energy drinks, coffee, white bread and pasta. An overall increase in the use of supplements was also found to be a significant result. Continued follow-up of study participants will allow us to assess the effects of these changes on disease-free survival and possible beneficial effects on other illnesses. This information is invaluable in the development and implementation of recommendations for breast cancer patients.

Our research is supported by Against Breast Cancer

