



May 2026

March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers

"I thought that spring must last forevermore; For I was young and loved, and it was May."
— Vera Brittain (Who once lived in Macclesfield)

Here is a message from Roger, Patricia and David White's son.

Hi Everyone,

I will be attempting the Yorkshire 3 Peaks Challenge in May to raise money for The ALEX Project that my mum attends every week.

The ALEX Project offers support to those with Parkinson's and their partners.

A link to my JustGiving page is below.

Any donations would be gratefully received and will help the project to continue their excellent work.

Please feel free to forward the link to anyone you think may like to donate.

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/alexproject3peaks>

<https://localsupport.parkinsons.org.uk/provider/alex-project-macclesfield-branch>

Best wishes and thank you,
Roger

A QUICK CRYPTIC PUZZLE.

Which part of your body is like an aristocrat who has received an honour?

(Answer on page 4)

To set up a standing order, or donate on-line please use the following details:

A/C name : Parkinson's UK Macclesfield Branch

Sort Code : 20 00 00

A/C No. : 43431150

Please remember to refer to "Parkinson's UK The ALEX Group" when you are raising funds through Just Giving.

Gut microbes may reveal Parkinson's risk years before symptoms

Researchers say analysis of the microbiome may help identify people at higher risk of the disease
Rhys Blakely, Science Editor Monday April 20 2026, **The Times**

Analysis of microbes in the gut can reveal whether a person faces an elevated risk of Parkinson's disease long before symptoms appear, a study suggests.

Scientists at University College London found that people with the condition have a distinctive makeup of gut microbes — the trillions of bacteria and other organisms that live in the digestive system.

The study also found evidence that those with a more balanced and varied diet were less likely to have a high-risk gut microbiome, suggesting that diet could potentially play a role in preventing the degenerative disease.

Parkinson's is a neurological condition caused by the loss of nerve cells in the brain that produce dopamine, an essential chemical for controlling movement. As these cells die, patients develop symptoms such as tremors, stiffness, slowed movement and balance problems. Many also experience depression, sleep disturbances and constipation.

Professor Anthony Schapira, of the UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology, who led the study, said that to develop effective treatments for Parkinson's, it was necessary to “develop the means for very early detection”.

In recent years scientists have increasingly recognised links between Parkinson's and the gut. “Here we have strengthened that evidence and shown that microbes in the gut can reveal signs of Parkinson's and may be an early warning signal of Parkinson's risk years before symptom onset,” Schapira said.

The study involved 271 people with Parkinson's, 43 carriers of a gene known as a GBA1 variant — which can increase the risk of Parkinson's up to 30-fold — who had no clinical symptoms, and 150 healthy participants.

Researchers found that more than a quarter of the gut microbiome — or 176 different species of microbes — differed between people with Parkinson's and healthy volunteers. Some microbes were more common in Parkinson's patients, while others were less so.

Most of these microbial changes were also seen in people who were carrying the high-risk gene but were not yet showing symptoms. Their gut bacteria formed an “in-between” pattern, sitting between healthy individuals and those with Parkinson's.

Schapira said: “For the first time we identify bacteria in the gut of people with Parkinson's that can also be found in those with a genetic risk for the disease, but before they develop symptoms. Importantly, these same changes can be found in a small proportion of the general population that may put them at increased risk.

Dr Mark Porter: Parkinson's disease – the game-changing future of early diagnosis

“This discovery opens the way not only to see if the bacteria are a way to identify those at risk of Parkinson's, but also to see if changing the bacterial population, through dietary changes or medication, can reduce a person's risk.”

The researchers cautioned that further long-term studies were needed to confirm whether these gut changes could reliably predict who would go on to develop the disease.

In the study, people with the abnormal microbiome signature ate more processed foods and saturated fats, rather than fruit, vegetables and fish.

Claire Bale, an associated director of research at Parkinson's UK, said: “The findings indicate that changes in the microbiome may occur in the very early stages of the condition and that the extent of these changes may correlate with disease progression.

“Over the past decade, we have seen the impact of physical activity on managing symptoms and potentially slowing the course of the condition. Our growing understanding of the gut microbiome offers similar hope that dietary modification could benefit those living with Parkinson's.”

Billy Connolly: Humour With Parkinson's

Scottish stand-up comedian and actor Billy Connolly continued on with his career after his Parkinson's diagnosis in 2013 at age 70. Widely beloved for his off-the-cuff and profanity-laden comedy style, Connolly first found out he had Parkinson's during a chance meeting in a hotel lobby with a doctor who recognized his symptoms as early signs of the neurological disease. However, his diagnosis didn't deter him, and he continued to perform onstage and on-screen until finally retiring from live performances in 2018.



Speaking in October 2018 to *The Chris Evans Breakfast Show* Connolly was characteristically frank about his diagnosis and the struggle to remain optimistic.

"I had a Russian doctor in New York who said, 'You realize this is an incurable disease?'" he recounted. "And I said 'You have got to get a grip of yourself. Stop calling it an incurable disease; say we have yet to find the cure. Give the guy a light in the tunnel.'"



Do you look after someone?

If so, you could be entitled to emotional, practical and financial support.

0300 303 0208

enquiries@cheshireeastcarershubs.co.uk
www.cheshireeastcarershubs.co.uk

Coffee & Chat sessions:

Jun – Aug 2026

Congleton Congleton Library, Market Square, Congleton, CW12 1ET Every third Thursday of the month, 10.30am – 12.30pm: 25 Jun, 16 Jul, 20 Aug

Knutsford Curzon Cinema, Toft Road, Knutsford, WA16 0PE Every third Thursday of the month, 10.45am – 12.45pm: 18 Jun, 16 Jul, 20 Aug

Macclesfield The Hope Centre Cafe, 16-18 Park Green, Macclesfield, SK11 7NA Every third Tuesday of the month, 12pm – 2pm: 16 Jun, 21 Jul, 18 Aug

Poynton Civic Hall, Off Park Lane, Poynton, SK12 1RB Every fourth Tuesday of the month, 2pm – 4pm: 23 Jun, 28 Jul, 25 Aug

Wilmslow The Topiary, Wilmslow Garden Centre, Manchester Road, Wilmslow, SK9 2JN Every third Friday of the month, 2pm – 4pm: 26 Jun, 17 Jul, 21 Aug



Please, Please, Please Note....

Carers – We have been advised by Parkinson's UK, that as volunteers we should not assume any responsibility for the actions or needs of any individual. It is therefore strongly requested that anyone who needs any kind of support should have a carer with them **at all times**.



Help Needed

In order to ease the congestion on Wednesday mornings we would welcome anyone who can help us on the desk — if only for a short time. If you can help, please, please contact Marilyn, Graham or Grenville. No prior experience or training necessary!

Date	Time	Event	Contact/Notes/Comments
Mon 18th May	13:30	Monthly Meeting Quiz	Bollington Community Centre
Wed 20th May	09:30	ALEX	
Mon 25th May		Whit Monday – Spring Bank Holiday	
Tue 26th May	14:00	Singing with Helen	Cock & Pheasant
Wed 27th May	09:30	ALEX	
Wed 3rd Jun	09:30	ALEX	
Sun 12th Jul		Garden Party	Details to be announced
Thu 17th Dec		Christmas Lunch	The Plough at Eaton

SOME SOUND ADVICE FROM:-



Smoke alarms – They are life savers!

It is so important to fit smoke alarms and test them regularly. Working smoke alarms will give you early warning of a fire and extra time to escape. They could well save your life.

- You should have at least one smoke alarm on each floor of your home.
- Make sure you test them at least once a week by pressing the button in the middle of the smoke alarm.
- If you can't reach, use a broom, mop handle or something similar.
- If that fails, why not ask someone to help?

Answer to cryptic puzzle Your *Earlobe*. (Earl + OBE)

Please note the login details for all exercise classes

Monday 11.15, Lewis: dance class and stretching

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82845537950?pwd=cmpia2ttMW5JTUJoYTY0SzNyanJDdz09>

ID 828 4553 7950 Passcode 243991

Tuesday 10am, Laura: moderately aerobic, amplitude and strength training

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82845537950?pwd=cmpia2ttMW5JTUJoYTY0SzNyanJDdz09>

ID 828 4553 7950 Passcode 243991

Friday 10am, Emma: Stretching and Pilates/core work.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82845537950?pwd=cmpia2ttMW5JTUJoYTY0SzNyanJDdz09I>

ID 828 4553 7950 Passcode 243991

Email. Please email maccpds@gmail.com if you wish to contact us.