



## Bolder generation

### Carefree Baby Boomers lead to a shock rise in STDs

Page 27



## Coeliac epidemic

### Adverse reaction to gluten now affects 1 in 100 in UK

Pages 28-29

## Now she is supporting others

**HELP:** Katie has launched The Katie Piper Foundation, which aims to raise £1.5 million for burns sufferers

try to pretend that everything was OK when all the time we were treading on eggshells – them so that they didn't hurt or upset me, and me because it is all too easy to lash out at those you are closest to,' says Katie.

In August 2008, Mr Jawad told Katie about a special burns rehabilitation unit, Centre Ster in France. Because there is no facility like it in the UK and due to the extent of her injuries, she was given funding for five three-week therapy sessions.

**E**ndermologie machines, usually used to get rid of cellulite, have rollers that provide deep-tissue massage. They were used around Katie's eyes and nose as well as on her neck and hands to help align scar formation and soften the scar. She also had hydrotherapy, using a high-pressure jet of water on her scars to reduce the vivid red scarring that is common to all burns victims.

Gym sessions, stretches and facial exercises also helped bring back elasticity to her damaged skin. 'It was a nine-to-five regime and it not only gave me a new lease of life, I firmly believe that it, combined with Mr Jawad's pioneering surgery, gave me my smile back and facial expressions,' she says. 'The results were amazing. My skin looked paler and smoother and more like normal skin.'

'Psychologically it gave me my confidence back, too. I never thought I'd wear a bikini again, but I was with other people like me who were disfigured and I didn't feel out of place. I felt normal. For the first time in months I didn't feel embarrassed.'

'I was incredibly lucky to get the help and funding that I did but I know better than anyone that it isn't enough just to have brilliant surgeons for burns victims. Therapy is also vital and can change people's lives. They may never be as perfect as they once were but they can be the best they can possibly be.'

With the help of Simon Cowell, who has become patron, The Katie Piper Foundation aims to raise £1.5 million to start a clinic, similar to Centre Ster, in Britain.

For Katie, the operations to her oesophagus continue but now every eight weeks instead of every two. 'I want to eat but it is like having reflux. The scar tissue won't allow even little bits of food to go down so I have to rely on protein shakes for nourishment when it's really bad.'

For her scars, she uses a shop-bought massager and moisturises her skin with an aqueous cream twice daily to help keep it pliable.

In January last year, Mr Jawad and colleague Professor Erol injected microfat graft cells from Katie's inner thighs into her face around the cheeks, eyes and lips to make the face appear fuller and smoother. The effect is permanent.

She says: 'What happened to me made me a different but a better person and I have a role to play in helping others. If I can do that, the suffering my family and I have been through won't have been in vain.'

● [www.katiepiperfoundation.org.uk](http://www.katiepiperfoundation.org.uk), [www.nipntucksurgery.com](http://www.nipntucksurgery.com)

## For a purple patch, try a blackcurrant burst of goodness

They may not be as sexy as the strawberry or as trendy as its 'superfood' cousin the blueberry, but when it comes to health-boosting benefits, the humble blackcurrant is bursting with goodness.

Containing more antioxidants and Vitamin C than any other soft fruit, this little indigo berry is also packed with anthocyanins – purple pigments that are believed to help protect us against a whole host of illnesses.

Britain's blackcurrant farmers usually produce around 14,000 tons of the fruit annually and, thanks to a cold winter and warm summer, these bountiful berries are hitting the shops in particular abundance this year.

Grown in Britain for more than 500 years, the blackcurrant was being used by herbalists as far back as the Middle Ages to treat bladder stones, liver disorders and coughs and colds.

Today, research suggests that the berries may help to prevent conditions that include Alzheimer's, heart disease, asthma and cataracts.

'Blackcurrants are often a forgotten fruit because they have such a short harvest, from July to August,' says dietician Juliette Kellow.

'But they're a nutritional powerhouse. Each 80g serving provides 160mcg of Vitamin C, which is twice the recommended daily amount and three times more than an orange. They're also high in fibre, low in fat and can even help with hydration. For every 100g you eat, you'll be taking in nearly 75ml of water.'

So how can blackcurrants help against a range of illnesses?

### ASTHMA

Earlier this year researchers in New Zealand uncovered a compound in the blackcurrant, epigallocatechin, that may help breathing in some types of asthma. Preliminary studies have shown that it reduces inflammation in the lung tissue in allergy-induced asthma.

### URINARY TRACT INFECTION

While the juice of cranberries has long been thought to help against UTI, scientists now believe the juice of blackcurrants may be just as beneficial. Substances called proanthocyanidins found in blackcurrants stop bacteria sticking to the walls of the urinary tract and causing infection. In one study, blackcurrant juice was given to elderly volunteers in a nursing home and it was shown to alleviate some of the symptoms of a UTI.

### HEART DISEASE

Blackcurrants are a rich source of flavonoids, which have been found to reduce the rate at which bad cholesterol forms in the body. When a mixture of blackcurrants,



lingonberries and bilberries was eaten by 20 men in a Finnish study, scientists observed the rate of bad cholesterol formation was slightly reduced.

In another study, blackcurrant juice was found to help the function of blood vessels in rats.

### ALZHEIMER'S

British scientists are currently working on a three-year investigation into how blackcurrants may hold the key in helping to slow the progression of Alzheimer's.

Evidence suggests that brains suffering from the disease have undergone intense oxidative stress (cell damage caused by oxygen). Blackcurrants, with their high antioxidant content, may be able to prevent that.

Dr Susanne Sorensen, head of research at the Alzheimer's Society, said: 'Early research suggests that certain compounds in blackcurrants may be particularly helpful in reducing your risk. However, it is too early to say how beneficial these compounds are in the fight against dementia.'

### CATARACTS

Antioxidants play an important role in maintaining eye health, and Vitamin C in particular has been found to reduce the risk of cataracts, a common degenerative eye disease that often affects the elderly.

It is not yet known whether blackcurrant antioxidants offer this protection but, in a scientific study on humans, blackcurrant juice containing anthocyanins helped the volunteers' eyes to adjust to darkness better – whereas a similar study using bilberry anthocyanins did not produce the same results.

Jill Foster

I held up the mirror I thought someone had given me a broken one or put a silly face on it as a joke,' she says. 'I knew that they'd taken my face away and that it was put somewhere in a bin, but in my head I assumed I'd look like the old Katie, just with a few red blotches.'

'I was so embarrassed that people had seen me like this. I wanted to tear the whole thing off and make it go away. There was nothing about me that I recognised. My identity as I knew it had gone.'

After being discharged from hospital in May 2008, Katie returned to her parents' home in Hampshire and relied on the support of mum Diane, dad David, 60, a businessman, and sister Suzy, 23, a student. To try

to even out the scar tissue, Katie had to wear pressure garments 24 hours a day to cover her burns, including a balaclava-style mask.

After a year she began wearing a clear plastic mask during the day.

'They were uncomfortable and I didn't want to wear them, but there is a two-year window of opportunity to work on scar-management after a burn and I knew that I had to do whatever I could to help myself.'

'It was difficult, not just for me but for my family. They would take it in turns to moisturise my skin and massage me four times a day to try to flatten the skin. If a drop of cream fell on to my skin unexpectedly, I would scream as it reminded me of the acid dripping down me. We'd all