



HOPE

C.A.T.S

**CUMBRIA ADVISORY THYROID SERVICE
GIVING HOPE TO THYROID PATIENTS EVERYWHERE**

C.A.T.S. are back again

Hello Everyone

We would like to give everyone a special big warm welcome to our first newsletter of this year. Apologies to everyone who was expecting to receive our Christmas edition. Unfortunately, we were unable to publish the Christmas newsletter this year. As the calendar flips over to 2026, we would like to wish all our members, supporters and friends a very happy healthy new year. The last 2 years have been difficult for Gill and myself resulting in some of C.A.T.S. services having to be put on hold, but we are glad to say that things are now returning to normal and we are looking forward to continuing with our Thyroid support work during 2026

In May 2026, C.A.T.S. support group will have been working within the community for 29 years supporting Thyroid patients in our local community and surrounding areas. This is a wonderful achievement for a small group like C.A.T.S. and it's hard to believe that almost 29 years ago a lovely lady called June Kasaven spoke on Cumbria Radio about a Thyroid support group she was thinking of starting and would anyone be interested. The response June got was unbelievable and following on from there 8 ladies sat around June's kitchen table discussing ideas about how to start the group. This was the start of C.A.T.S. and although June is no longer here. Her memory and the work she started still lives on and hopefully will do for many years to come

NEW YEAR 2026 EDITION

Changes at C.A.T.S.

In 2004, Gill and I took over the running of C.A.T.S. after June retired from the group and moved to Manchester to be near her family and our group relocated to Ulverston. Over the years we have successfully run our group and have been able to help hundreds of patients by providing up to date information, advice and support to them. We have also tried to keep as up to date as possible with the changes taking place as our world evolves with new technology into a new normal, we could have never visualised even just a few years ago. Over the last few months Gill and I have realised in order to keep C.A.T.S. running as a successful group we have to make a few changes. Gill and I will be continuing as trustees with Gill as group co-ordinator along with myself as group leader of C.A.T.S. along with continuing our roles of advisors. Debbie who trained as an advisor under June's guidance and is very knowledgeable about Thyroid issues will be taking on the role of our internet helpline advisor. Rachael will be helping me with the office/ admin jobs and we also have a new advisor who will be joining us soon and will take on a support role when we host our coffee meetings etc. All these changes should allow our group to continue as a viable group and continue with the important work we do. We will also be continuing to publish our usual newsletters and hope to restart our coffee shop meetings again in April. I will be giving more details about the changes we are making in our next newsletter at the end of March. Along with these changes we will also be updating our website with some new information sheets very soon. We hope everyone will continue to support us in any way possible as we do need a good support network to continue raising awareness of Thyroid problems. Many support groups have had to close down because of lack of support please don't let that happen to C.A.T.S.

Mental Health and Thyroid Connection

I have often mentioned the close link between mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and panic attacks and mood swings etc and Thyroid dysfunction. In fact, one of the first signs that you have Thyroid problems can be developing one of the many health problems that now come under the mental health umbrella. This is especially true amongst our male population and we would like to see more of the male population being checked for Thyroid problems rather than just being told you are depressed. Thyroid problems are considered to be a woman's problem because of the hormone link but in actual fact anyone of any age group can develop Thyroid problems. Don't forget that every part of your body needs Thyroid hormones to work properly, so if our levels are low you can start to experience symptoms anywhere in the body.

In October C.A.T.S were delighted to be invited to a benefit concert to support the Cumbria charity "Every Life Matters " <https://www.every-life-matters.org.uk> This local charity supports people with mental health and suicidal issues so please contact them if you are struggling with your mental health. The event was held in memory of an Ulverston teenager who had an undiagnosed Under-active Thyroid and sadly died after being overwhelmed by mental health problems. This highlights how important it is to get a Thyroid diagnosis as soon as possible as the longer it takes the more chance there is of other health conditions developing. We would like to see more routine testing done as its very sad when patients do go undiagnosed for many years If you want more information about Thyroid problems please visit our website www.cumbriancats.co.uk I have also got a new information sheet (not available on the website yet) that explains the mental health connection in more detail so if you would like a copy please let me know

Hormone Disrupters

We are often asked why patients develop Thyroid problems. There are many reasons this can happen such as a genetic connection within the family history, there's also the aging factor as many patients do develop Thyroid problems as a natural aging process. Anti-body activity can also be a cause, high stress levels along with traumatic events in your life such as a redundancy, divorce, viral infections, deaths of close family or friends and even having surgery or even being involved in a traffic accident can all impact on our endocrine system and send it out of balance. Along with this we also have to consider other health conditions that can pre-dispose us to develop Thyroid conditions

However, there are other causes which many people do not think about. Over the last few years more research has shown the effect that hormone disrupters can have on our body. These disrupters are tiny particles of chemicals and other substances that have a toxic effect on our body and are in the air we breathe, our food products, the environment, toiletries and cleaning products and many more other sources. The main effect these disrupters have is over a period of time they will prevent our body from working properly and disrupt our hormone system. Some of the things you may not be aware of that can cause problems are high caffeine drinks, high calcium foods, soya foods, fluoride toothpaste and fluoridated water and high iron containing foods. Preservatives and additives in many of the medications available can also have a toxic effect. In Cumbria we also have the toxic effect from the various industries in this area.

Over the Counter Products

Don't forget some over the counter cold and flu products can react with your Thyroid medication. So always check with a pharmacist to make sure it is safe for you to take

Weight Loss Jabs and Thyroid Problems

Many Thyroid patients struggle to lose weight, so the introduction of weight loss drugs available on the NHS sounds like a dream come true for many patients. Especially when excess weight can lead to other problems such as heart disease and diabetes. However, we need to look at the whole picture before we can decide if this is something we want to try.

These drugs work by slowing down our metabolism making food pass through our digestive systems slowly and making us feel full for longer, so we eat less and lose weight. However most under-active Thyroid patients already have a slow metabolism and poor appetites so to cut down on our food intake even more could cause us to become deficient of certain nutrients. I would also like to point out that anything that slows down your body's metabolism can also slow down your Thyroid gland resulting in your Thyroid not being able to produce as much T4. If this happens you would need an increase in medication to bring your T4 levels back to normal.

Many Thyroid patients already have gastric issues such as Constipation, IBS, Gastritis, Acid reflux or low digestive acid levels, Leaky Gut, Hiatus Hernia or Diverticulosis. Most of these issues stem from a slow metabolism allowing toxins to build up in our digestive systems causing an inflammatory process within our body so if we already have problems with our gastric systems or any inflammatory issues, they could get worse if you are prescribed the weight loss drugs.

As you can see being prescribed weight loss drugs as a Thyroid patient raises some issues that need to be considered before you make a decision about treatment. I haven't had time to do much research yet but intend looking into this subject more as soon as I have the time to do so, meanwhile if you have a Thyroid diagnosis and have successfully lost weight by using the weight loss drugs, please let me know as I would like to do a follow up article on this subject. I have spoken to some patients who don't have Thyroid problems and they are delighted that the weight loss medication works so well for them after struggling for years trying to lose weight. However, it is important that patients have regular health checks to make sure that the medication is working as it should and is not causing any unwanted side effects.

Gold Stars/Thyroid Friends

Our Thyroid Friends club was set up in 2005 to give a little bit of extra support to Thyroid patients. Membership of the club cost just £6.00 per year (many groups charge much more than this but our aim is to always keep prices as low as we can) this is our main source of income so please continue to support us if you can do. We have a good database of members and supporters at the moment, but are always open to new members joining us.

*** Don't forget if you see a gold star in your newsletter this indicates your membership subscription is now due.

Taking Care in Winter

**Thyroid patients generally feel the cold so it is important to wear several layers in winter to keep us warm, several thin layers work better than one thick one.

** Don't forget to keep at least one room in your house heated to between 18c and 21c and stay in that room as much as possible

** Don't sit down too long as getting up and walking around the room helps stimulate our circulation

** Eating hot meals such as warm stews, casseroles and soups help maintain your body core temperature and they are easy to prepare

** Wearing gloves, hats or even an extra pair of socks indoors can also help to stop our vital body heat escaping

Passing Thoughts

Be Kind

You never know the impact you have on those around you

You never know how much someone needed that smile you gave them

You never know how much your kindness changed someone's life

You never know how much someone needed a little chat or a hug

So don't wait to be kind, don't wait for someone to be kind first

Don't wait for circumstances to change or someone else to change

Just be kind because you never know how much someone needs it

Anon

That's all for now Folks

Sadly, we have come to the end of our newsletter, we hope you all enjoy reading the articles in this edition. We do try to vary the content of the newsletters and also the subjects we cover. C.A.T.S. is a community group and we want our members to take an active part in the group, so if you have any ideas about what you want in the newsletters, or new ideas for the group please let me know. We will be back again at the end of March with an Easter update. Until then take care and stay safe

Thank You

Just before we go, we would like say a massive big **"Thank You"** to everyone who have supported us in any way during the last year. Everyone who renewed their membership subscriptions, sent donations for our funds. The new volunteers who have stepped up to help Gill and myself with running our group. George and all the staff of HSP Milners for all their help with the newsletters and everyone else who have helped and supported us in so many ways. Without this help and support we would not be able to continue with C.A.T.S. so a big thank you to everyone.

C.A.T.S. GIVING THYROID SUPPORT TO PATIENTS FOR OVER 25 YEARS

Contacting us

There are a few ways to contact us

By telephone: **01229 869705**

By post: **The C.A.T.S. Office, The Old Cottage, Garden Terrace,
Baycliffe, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 9RP.**

By email: **moyramm@yahoo.co.uk**

Or by our website: **www.cumbriancats.co.uk.**

And use the contact us button

Best Wishes

Moyra x

C.A.T.S. information guidelines

Please note that all information supplied to C.A.T.S. will be used in the strictest of confidence and will not be passed on to any other source

ALL C.A.T.S. VOLUNTEERS WORK TO STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY RULES AT ALL TIMES

Any information produced in this newsletter is to help those people suffering with Thyroid disease.

Whilst every effort is made to provide accurate information, it is impossible to ensure that all information is relevant to every individual. No responsibility is accepted by C.A.T.S. and it is recommended and essential that if in any doubt about your condition that you should always consult your doctor, specialist physician or surgeon to seek medical advice.

C.A.T.S. recommends that you always seek your doctor's advice

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