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# Your health

INSIDE: Wise food for kids • Coffee horrors  
• Baldness cures? • Radio waves fix for sig

*JUSTINE lives in Chelmsford, Essex, with fiancé Jon Kohn, 28. She has the extremely rare lung condition lymphangioleiomyomatosis (LAM), which affects only 75 women in the UK*

**U**NTIL just over a year ago, I led a very full life. I worked in a health club, danced five times a week, was a children's entertainer and had a very active social life. Jon and I were planning our wedding and I was looking forward to the future. I looked and felt fit and healthy – I had no idea I was a walking time bomb.

When I was 21, my lung collapsed and I needed surgery to prevent it happening again. At the time, the doctors told me it wasn't unusual for this to happen to someone tall, thin and athletic like me, though they didn't know why it occurred. Over the next 10 years I sometimes had chest pains but this, I was assured, was caused by the nerve ends healing. In fact, it was a warning sign.

One afternoon, in April 2005, I was at work when I felt very weak and breathless and noticed a sharp pain in my chest. When I almost collapsed, I joked with my colleagues that perhaps my lung was collapsing, just as it had 10 years before. But when my parents came to pick me up they knew something was seriously wrong and that I needed to go to hospital. By the time we arrived I could barely breathe. I was rushed straight through to have checks for my heart and then an X-ray. The doctor said my other lung had collapsed. Remembering how painful the treatment to re-inflate my lung by inserting a tube through my ribs had been 10 years before, I bawled my eyes out. When, after various tests, lots of doctors gathered around my bed, I knew the news wouldn't be good. I was told I had a very rare illness called LAM, which causes excessive growth of smooth muscle tissue in the lungs and only affects women. Nobody knew what caused it.

As a result, my lungs were barely working and I would need a lung transplant within three to six months. I was also told that because of the damage to my lungs, I would never be able to have children.

Hearing that I might have only three months to live and that I would never be a mother was devastating. I saw Jon cry for the first time. Later we discussed getting married in hospital but decided against it. Our relationship was strong enough, we'd be optimistic and wait until I recovered, so we could have the wedding we'd dreamed of.

**A**FTER a painful chest drain was put in to re-inflate my lung – something I would get used to, as my lung would collapse a further 13 times over the following year – I was referred to Harfield Hospital, Middlessex, where my diagnosis was confirmed. I did some research into the condition and everything I read said there was no cure for LAM. My consultant told me I was at the end stage of the disease: the 10 years were actually signs that cysts were growing on my lung.

I learned that only 50 per cent of people waiting for a lung transplant survived. I decided that I would be one of them. I was going to fight. In May 2005, I set up my own website to raise awareness of LAM and the issue of organ

# AT LAST I CAN BREATHE AGAIN

**Justine Laymond, 33, has had several brushes with death since last year, when her lungs failed. But a transplant saved her life and now she campaigns for people to donate organs, as HILARY FREEMAN reports**



DESPAIR: Justine during treatment

transplantation. Since then, my website has had five million hits from people all over the world. The website kept me going when I was at my lowest, giving me hope for the future.

Six months went by and, despite the doctors' predictions, I was still alive. I remained at home, on oxygen, going back into hospital only when my lung collapsed. But in January 2006 my health really began to deteriorate. I had three lung collapses within a week and everyone saying goodbye to everyone – I was in so much pain I could hardly bear to carry on. Miraculously, I pulled through and was airlifted to Harfield Hospital. This time I was told I would need emergency surgery to take away my lung lining, in the hope the lung would stick to my ribs. My chances of surviving this operation were just 40 per cent. But, without it, I would die anyway.

The operation didn't work. Afterwards, I spent three weeks unconscious on a life support machine and also contracted MRSA, a serious eye infection and a chest infection. When I came round, I had a tube in my neck and couldn't talk or walk.

I couldn't even communicate by writing, as my muscles had wasted and I began to suffer from panic attacks. Worst of all, I was suspended from the transplant list because I was so ill. The only thing keeping me alive was a machine.

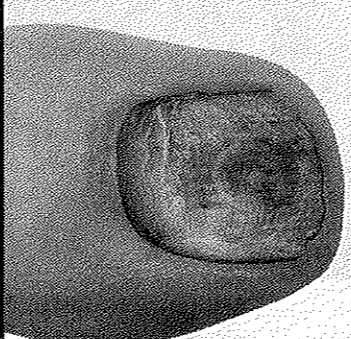
But I was determined to recover enough to have my transplant. I refused to believe I would die. Over the next few months there were three false alarms – calls to say lungs had been found for me – but the operations didn't go ahead either because the lungs turned out not to be suitable or because I had infections.

On July 9, 2006, I finally got lucky. I was happy, terrified and overwhelmed. The operation went well. I was in intensive care for only a couple of days and in hospital for five weeks. I did get MRSA again, plus stingles and a chest infection, but I'm now recovering at home. It's incredible to be able to breathe freely again after a year and a half when I could only gasp for air.

I feel I've been given a second chance. I will have to take 40 tablets a day for the rest of my life to stop me rejecting my new lungs but it's worth it. Nobody knows how long my lungs will last but whether I get an extra five, 10 or 20 years, I will make the most of every day.

Jon and I have set a date for our wedding – August 2007. I plan to keep

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# Briefly...

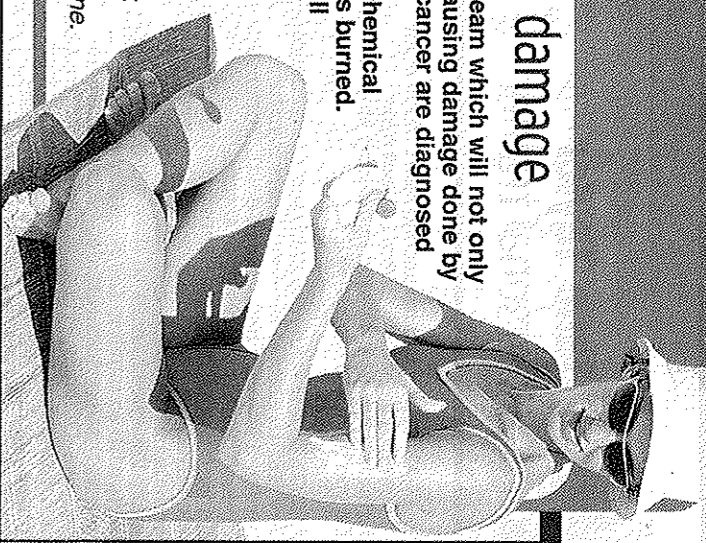
## Suncream that will repair skin damage

UK SCIENTISTS are developing a new form of suncream which will not only help to shield skin but also help repair the cancer-causing damage done by the sun's rays. More than 70,000 new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed in the UK every year.

The new product works by absorbing free iron, a chemical which the body naturally releases when the skin gets burned. The scientists at the University of Bath say that it will reduce the inflammation and pain of sunburn and also prevent the build up of free radicals – harmful molecules which are generated by exposure to sunlight and which can lead to the development of skin cancers.

In a separate study at the University of California, researchers found that suncream must be applied at least every two hours to be effective.

● **Source:** *University of Bath and New Scientist magazine.*



NS & PICTURES

someone had to die to give me back my life but I appreciate that gift more than words can say.

● *For more information about Justine see: [www.justinelamond.com](http://www.justinelamond.com), LAM Action: [www.lamaction.org.uk](http://www.lamaction.org.uk), to support organ donation: [www.livebelongivetolive.co.uk](http://www.livebelongivetolive.co.uk)*

campaigning for LAM and organ donation and I'd love to be a TV presenter one day.  
I'm not the same person I used to be – I'm much more appreciative of the simple things in life. Before my illness I didn't carry a donor card, I do now and so do all my family and friends. It is sad to know that

## HOW TO JOIN THE ORGAN REGISTER

EVERY year hundreds of people die while waiting for a transplant. There is a serious shortage of donated organs. Currently more than 8,000 people in the UK need a transplant but fewer than 3,000 transplants are done each year due to the shortage. One organ donor can save the lives of up to eight people. They can also enhance many more lives through tissue donation – for example, one donor can restore the sight of two others by donating their corneas.

If you want to donate, the best way to record your wish is by joining the NHS Organ Donor Register. This secure and confidential database is

operated by NHS UK Transplant and is available for medical staff to check your wishes, 24 hours a day.

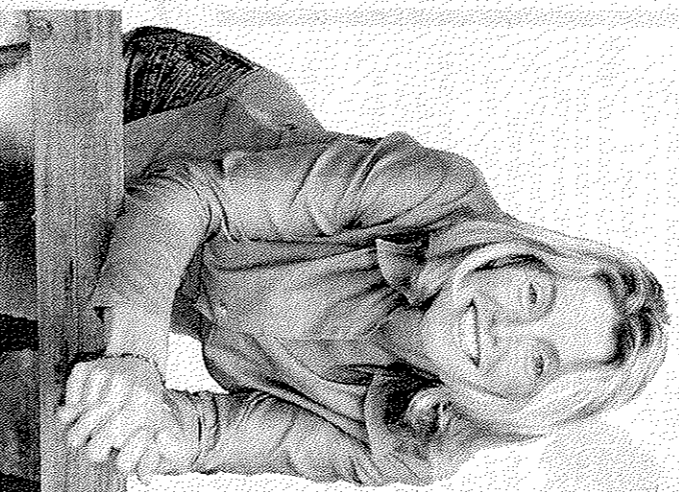
It's easy to sign up. You can do so online at [www.uktransplant.org.uk](http://www.uktransplant.org.uk), or by phoning the Organ Donor Line on 0845 6060 400. Or use one of the leaflets available from your local GP's surgery, library or chemist.

It is important to join the register even if you already have a Donor Card. Cards can be lost or damaged, and people don't always carry them.

It's also vital that you discuss your wish to donate with your family. Next of kin are much more likely to object if they don't know your wishes.

# The 250 Volt Charge that Relieves Pain

Advertising feature



**Caroline Harrison, 40,** suffered years of pain after a cycling accident when she was 18 leaving her with a broken collar bone that did not heal properly.

Caroline, from Somerset, began to suffer constant pain which she learned to live with by taking painkillers, but aggravated the injury recently when she fell off her horse.

She says, "I landed on my shoulder and it just triggered off a lot more problems."

"I went to the doctor and he suggested breaking the collar bone again to try to fix it properly. This involved shaving off excess bone that had grown around the injury and putting a plate in. But there was no guarantee it would stop the pain and I would need several weeks off work. So I turned it down."

Caroline went back to a diet of painkillers, but had to live with a constant throbbing in her neck and shoulders. One day at work last year she felt that she would not be able to drive home because of the pain, so a friend lent her a new electronic neurostimulator called Acticare.

"I started to feel the benefit within a few minutes," she says. "The first time I used it for

an hour and the pain melted away. I'm quite sceptical and never really believed there was a good alternative to the drugs. But this really worked and it was quite amazing. I drove home that day without pain."

"I used it the next day and the day after that. Now I only need it occasionally when I feel the pain coming on again."

Invented and patented by Bristol based pain researcher Dr Alex Macdonald and physiologist Dr Tim Coates, Acticare is a drug free therapy that provides symptomatic relief from many types of pain.

Arthritis affects 8 million people in the UK and four out of five adults will experience back pain.

Many users have been impressed by its effectiveness. A survey of 324 patients found that 72% of responders said their pain levels were reduced by more than half.

The handheld Acticare device generates a high voltage, high frequency electronic pulse that has ten times the power output of TENS machines, but because of the very short pulses it causes only a mild tingling sensation.

Unlike most TENS machines where adhesive pads are placed at the site of the pain, Acticare's adhesive electrodes are placed at the top and bottom of your spine for pain originating from legs, hips and back, or at either side of the neck for pain found in the shoulders, arms, neck and head. This means that Acticare may help provide relief for multiple

pains simultaneously, rather than just treating one part of your body at a time.

Inventor Dr Tim Coates says that "Acticare is a drug-free therapy which is safe to use in the home and alongside medication. We have monitored its use in more than 5,000 patients in the UK, and have recorded no serious side effects or interaction with medication".

Assessed recently by the back pain charity Backcare, Acticare is now listed by the northern branch of the charity on their internet shop which can be found at [www.care4backs.com](http://www.care4backs.com).

Tony Eaton, a Backcare helpline advisor comments: "I suffer from bouts of disabling Sciatica, but Acticare helps me get mobile again whenever I have a relapse and has enabled me to live my life to the full again. Acticare gave me the confidence to get remarried last year at 72".

New drug free treatments for pain relief are becoming increasingly popular as people seek alternatives to long term drug use. Acticare is now in regular use in a number of Hospitals and pain clinics.

The device costs £199, but is currently on offer at £169 on the website: [www.acticare.com](http://www.acticare.com), and comes with a 28 day money back guarantee.

While Acticare is safe to use in the home, it may mask the pain of an underlying condition so it should not be used to treat undiagnosed pains. It is recommended that you consult your doctor before varying your pain medication or for the treatment of anything other than minor aches and pains.

A free information pack is available from 0800 028 1400 (Mon to Fri 9-6pm), or visit the website: [www.acticare.com](http://www.acticare.com).

Alternatively you can write to: Acticare, Flyepost NAT9030, Bristol BS8 4BR.