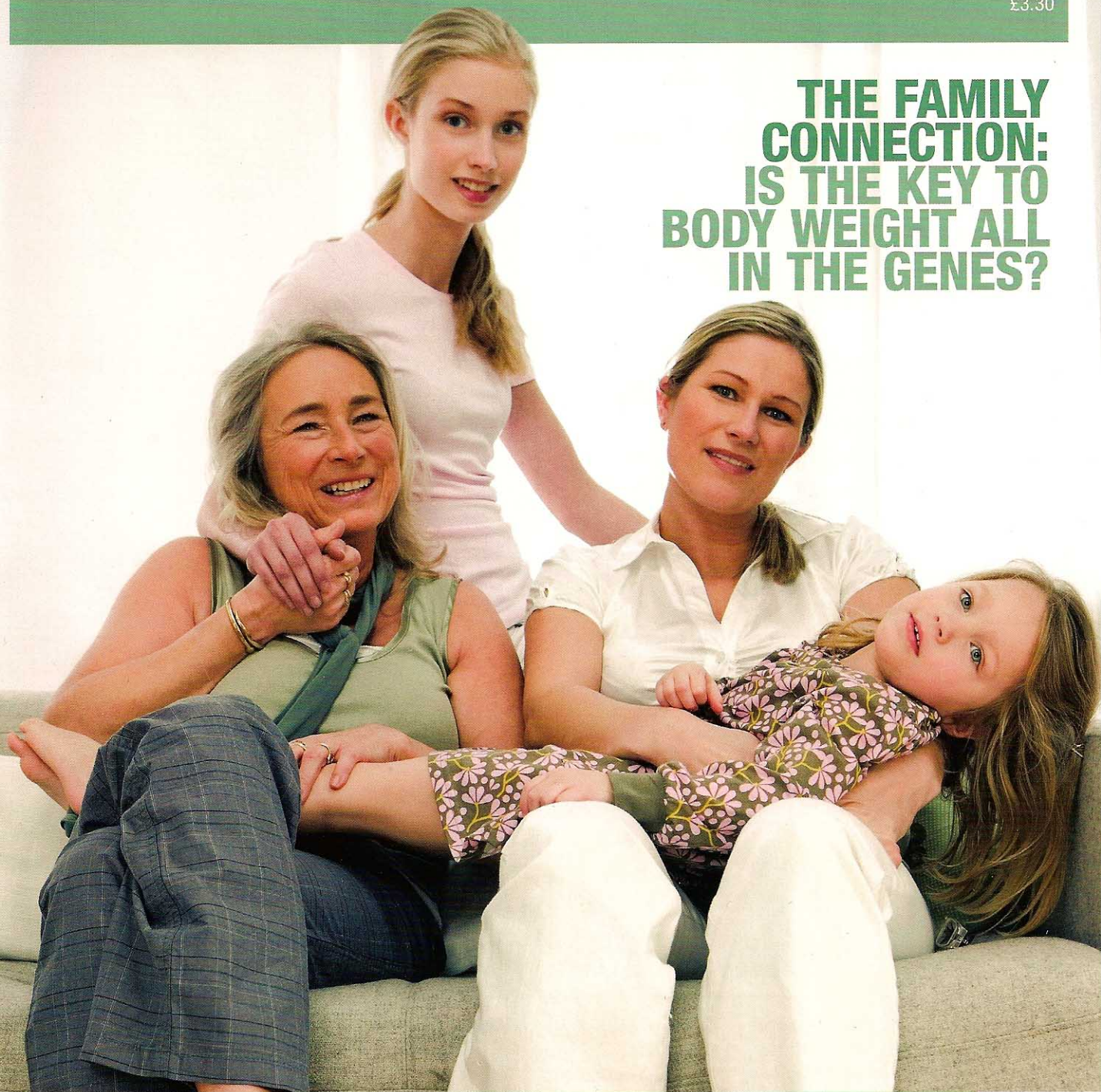


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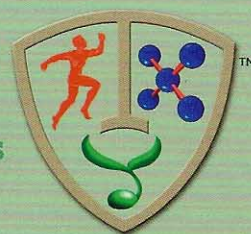
**THE FAMILY
CONNECTION:
IS THE KEY TO
BODY WEIGHT ALL
IN THE GENES?**



FESTIVE SPIRIT a discussion on drinking over the Christmas period and whether it is a cause for worry

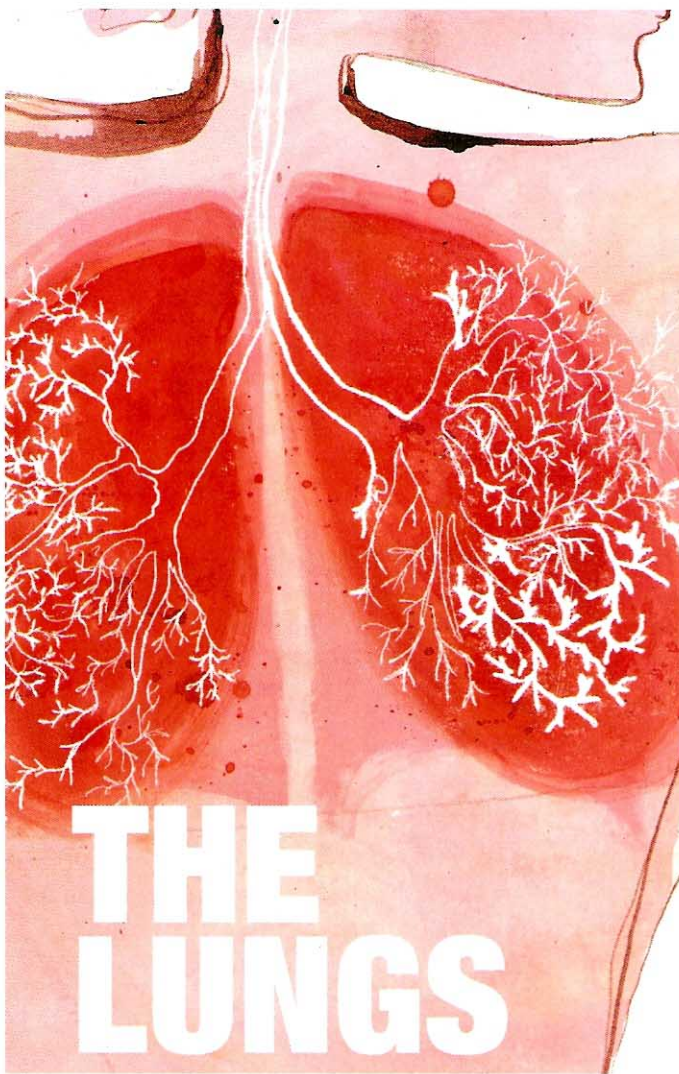
AGE CONCERNS anti-ageing specialist Dr Marios Kyriazis looks at the science behind the ageing process

CHRISTMAS TREATS delicious recipes for traditional festive puddings with metabolic syndrome in mind



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THE LUNGS

Taking a closer look inside our essential breathing apparatus

The lung on the left side of your body is a bit smaller than the lung on your right. This extra space on the left makes room for your heart.

The lungs reside within the pleural cavity and it's their job to deliver oxygen to the blood and remove carbon dioxide from it, as well as filtering out small blood clots, regulating blood pressure and moderating the blood's pH level.

Air is carried to and from the lungs via two bronchi (air tubes), which divide into 30,000 bronchioles. Bronchioles are just 1mm wide and supply air to between 400 and 600 million alveoli. These are the minute sacs where oxygen and carbon dioxide diffuse into and out of the blood via a network of capillaries.

The alveoli use a surface area approximately the size of a tennis court for this gas exchange.¹

The lungs inadvertently act as a shock absorber for the heart as they surround it.

One of the most common conditions to affect the respiratory system is asthma – there are 5.2 million sufferers in the UK.²

Other common conditions that affect the lungs – particularly during the winter – include coughs, colds, flu and bronchitis, an infection where the bronchi become irritated and inflamed.

Less common, but more serious, conditions affecting the lungs include cystic fibrosis, pleurisy, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pneumonia and tuberculosis.

The best ways to look after your lungs are to exercise, not smoke and to eat foods that keep the immune system healthy.

Boost immunity with squash, sweet potatoes and apricots, all rich in vitamin C.³

Another way to fight off viruses and boost immunity is with fenugreek or liquorice tea.⁴

Eat fresh fruit and vegetables, as the antioxidants seem to help protect the lung function.^{5,6}

Keep mucous membranes healthy with foods rich in vitamin A and beta-carotene,⁷ such as red peppers, carrots, mangoes and spinach.⁸

Eat kelp, almonds and wholegrains to boost magnesium, which may help reduce bronchial spasms.⁹

If you have a cold, avoid dairy, soya and bananas (all mucus forming) and alcohol, which can deplete immune function.¹⁰

Antibacterial propolis has been shown to shorten the duration of a cold¹¹ and reduces upper respiratory infections in children.¹²

Probiotics enhance immune function,^{13,14} and lower respiratory tract infections in children by 17 per cent.¹⁵