

# Is cow's colostrum a miracle cure?

A former teacher with MS and an ex-rugby star reveal how milk supplement has changed their lives as a study finds it could help at-risk groups like elderly

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**BIG FAN Rugby star Phil Greening STRONGER Liz Rostand has MS but says the milk keeps her active**

THERE is no doubt that the first milk a mother produces gives her baby the best start in life.

Studies show this colostrum – a thicker, golden yellow fluid produced in the first few days after birth before the “mature” milk comes in – is rich in nutrients and

antibodies that prevent infection, help develop the baby's immune system and organs, and supports their digestion.

But can a supplement made from bovine colostrum provide similar health benefits?

Former England rugby player Phil Greening, 45, is convinced bovine colostrum helped him train harder because it prevented the short-term dips in immunity associated with strenuous exercise.

“The benefits for me have been so long standing, even after my career I still continue to take it,” he said. A study led by Dr Arwel Jones at the Lincoln University Institute for Health supports this.

It found that adults who worked out regularly reported 38 per cent fewer upper respiratory tract infections when they took bovine colostrum. There was also a 44 per cent reduction in the duration of symptoms if they did pick up infections.

While acknowledging there were limitations to the findings, Dr Jones thought further studies were needed to find out if colostrum could help

other at-risk groups such as the elderly or people whose immune systems don't work properly.

There's certainly evidence it might. Animal studies at the University of California discovered that a sugar found in mother's milk can repair myelin, the protective sheath that becomes damaged when people develop multiple sclerosis.

Blood tests confirm people with some forms of MS have low levels of this sugar and lead researcher, Professor Michael Dementriou said:

“Our findings open new potential avenues to identify patients at risk of disease progression.”

Former teacher Liz Rostand was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis almost 40 years ago, and has no doubt that bovine colostrum is keeping her active and mobile.

Liz, 58, has relapsing remitting MS, which is characterised by inflammatory flare-ups that damage the myelin sheath protecting nerve fibres.

Symptoms vary, depending on where the myelin is degraded, and how much repair takes place. But



## HEALTH BENEFITS Cow's colostrum

common problems include fatigue, numbness, impaired vision and reduced mobility.

At the time Liz was diagnosed, there was little doctors could do. There were none of the specialist teams who now provide care and the first effective treatments for MS were not available on the NHS until 2000

Four years ago, she and Freddie moved to Frome, in Somerset, and after a chance meeting with a woman who said her own MS symptoms had improved after taking bovine colostrum, Liz figured she had nothing to lose.

Within days of taking it, she began

to feel steadier and stronger and can now enjoy long walks with Freddie and their dog, Maddie.

The couple have now set up their own company, IgBioScience ([igbio-science.co.uk](http://igbio-science.co.uk)) to source and supply colostrum.

“You become quite evangelical about it,” she admitted. “It's quite extraordinary what it does.”

However, Professor Gavin Giovannoni, professor of neurology at the Queen Mary University of London, is more cautious.

He said: “In a lot of diseases, we talk about a virtuous cycle, where people get to a positive frame of mind and start making lifestyle changes, that feeds back and makes them feel better.”

“It's linked to neurochemistry and brain metabolism – functional MRI scans show the impact of exercise, the impact of mood, the impact of the placebo effect.”

“It may have nothing to do with colostrum. It could simply be due to natural fluctuations in the disease and the fact she is more active now, and more proactive about looking after herself.”

He advises speaking to your MS team before trying non-medical therapy.