

Good Health

# I did some mad things during my 'menopause'

## How well do you sleep?

**PRETTY** well. Whenever I travel, I take my firm, foam pillow — it's an old friend — so I don't wake up with a cricked neck. I also like to catnap for five minutes in the day — and wake up totally refreshed.

## Worst pain/illness?

**ON TOUR**, I developed a pain in my jaw and my whole face swelled up. I was virtually eating painkillers and had to admit myself to hospital in Tokyo. A salivary gland was blocked with a calcium stone (formed from the salts found in saliva). Everything behind it was infected, the pain was so bad I was put on a morphine drip and spent the night in hospital.

I've never cancelled a concert and, somehow, managed to stumble on stage the next evening still high on morphine. I was told the salivary duct needed removing and would leave a hole, so I'd need plastic surgery. Fortunately, when I returned home, I was told massaging the duct could help break down the stones. Fifteen years later, the gland still gets swollen, so I have to massage it regularly.

## Ever called an ambulance?

**YES**, twice, after passing road accidents. But the most dramatic ambulance call was made by someone else when my wife broke her neck nearly 15 years ago.

Diane was thrown off a horse and heard the snap as her neck went. She broke the same bone that eventually killed Christopher Reeve and spent six weeks on her back with bolts in her neck before having a brace.

For six months we didn't know what the outcome would be. It was very traumatic. But apart from not being able to turn her head fully, she's not suffered any lasting effects.

## Are supplements a waste of money?

**I DON'T** think I need them — I believe instead that the body can heal itself with 'visualisation' and self-belief. I regularly 'visualise' my body from head to toe, and 'wait for' it to tell me if there's anything wrong. Three weeks ago, I felt my lungs tickling — and sure enough, I came down with flu.

## NHS or private?

**PRIVATE** for the convenience.

## When were you healthiest?

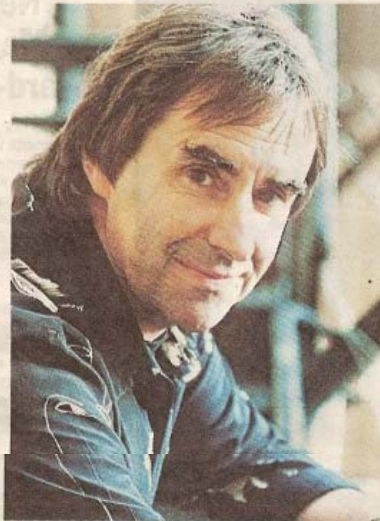
**I REACHED** my sexual peak at 18. Physically, I was healthiest between 15 and 18, when I had my mum's home cooking and good school food as a boarder at Marlborough College, Wiltshire.

## Have you ever felt depressed?

**NO**, BUT I used to feel low as I tried to make my name. A negative story in the papers would really upset me in the early days. But after a few hours I would spring back.

## Do you use alternative treatments?

**I DON'T** use them myself, but I do believe in them. In my 20s, I got into giving people massages and realised I was able to encourage their bodies to heal by passing my hands over them. I'd never describe myself as a



Picture: CAMERA PRESS

things [In 1994, he was reported to have had an affair with his babysitter] but that's behind me now. I don't regret anything I have done. I like the person I've become.

## How do you relax?

**THROUGH** singing.

## Lentils or beefburgers?

**I'M NOT** a great meat eater — I eat it twice a week. But I can't stand fish — my mother says it's because I got a fish bone stuck in my throat when I was little.

## Is exercising worth it?

**IT MAKES** me feel terrific. I like to get out and walk and swim lengths in our pool every day when I'm at home.

## How often do you have check-ups?

**I BELIEVE** in the old Chinese proverb that you need to see a doctor only when you're well — that way, I make sure I don't get sick. I have a major full body check-up about every three years.

## How important is sex to a healthy lifestyle?

**A HEALTHY** sex life is like a segment of an orange — it's part of the whole relationship with my wife.

Diane and I started trying to have children as soon as we married, but four years later Diane had an ectopic pregnancy that nearly killed her. She was told she had only a 5 per cent chance of becoming pregnant, yet within two years we were cradling our first child, Rosanna. You can understand why I felt so elated the night she was crowned Miss World in 2003.

## Best health advice your mother ever gave you?

**TAKE** regular exercise — although she never had to spell it out. I was brought up on a farm and there was always something to be done. I had to get up early to milk the cows.

## Do you carry a donor card?

**NO**, AND that makes me ashamed. It's a good thing to give life to someone else.

## Dr Kildare or Dr Who?

**NEITHER**. I've no time for those bogus doctor dramas. I don't know what doctors feel about their profession being shown in such a light.

## Hangover cure?

**I DON'T** drink too much — at weekends, I like to have a glass of wine at night.

## I can't live without...

**ECHINACEA**. If I have a tour lined up, I take it to keep strong. It could be a placebo for all I know, but something is working.

Chris de Burgh's new compilation album, *Now And Then*, has just been released.

**INTERVIEW BY MOIRA PETTY**

## Health questionnaire

### Chris de Burgh

Singer-songwriter Chris de Burgh, 59, lives in Wicklow, Ireland, with his wife Diane and children, Rosanna, 23, Hubie, 19 and Michael, 17.

faith healer — it's just that if someone believes in this type of healing, I can help release whatever blockage it is that's preventing them healing themselves.

## When did you last see a doctor?

**TWO** months ago for a routine prostate check-up. Fortunately cancer doesn't run in the family. Keeping on top of your health is so important.

## Do you prefer male or female doctors?

**WOMEN** doctors are probably more aware of holistic health, which is a good thing, but I am very happy with my male GP.

## Have you ever been on a crash diet?

**WHEN** I was younger, I tried to go on a water-only

fast, but gave up after 24 hours when I was feeling rotten and had bad breath. I have weighed 70kg for years now — I'm 5ft 6in — but always think I should be a few kilos lighter.

Vanity is not high on my list of priorities. I look at the faces of the young women in my audiences, like flowers trying to attract bees. I know they wouldn't look at me twice ordinarily, but being a singer who touches people emotionally seems to make you very sexually attractive.

## Do you believe in the male menopause?

**I'M SURE** I had it. It's like a distant drum that sounds in your late 30s. You get to a stage when you realise you won't ever be any fitter or healthier. It's why men take motorcycle trips around the world or want to bonk everything that moves.

I probably did some mad

## My Lifesaver



**OLYMPIC** athlete and *Dancing On Ice* star Steve Backley, 39, says: 'I've had arthritis and a hip replacement, so I really try to look after my joints now. I take the supplement Lubramine, which reduces joint inflammation and makes me more flexible.' ■ AVAILABLE at Boots and Superdrug, £9.99 for 30 capsules [www.lubramine.com](http://www.lubramine.com)

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CONTAINS frankincense and peppermint (anti-inflammatory) with an organic form of sulphur to relieve joint and muscle pain. From independent pharmacies or [www.paineaze.com](http://www.paineaze.com)

**WellPatch Deep Freeze Cold Patch, £4.99 for a pack of four**  
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**Z-Gel, £6.95**  
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**Pain Ease Micro-Current Knee Wrap, £29.95**  
REGENERATES damaged tissue. A low-level micro-current delivers pain relief, improves circulation and reduces inflammation. Mail order: 0845 399 0035; [www.lifes2good.co.uk](http://www.lifes2good.co.uk)



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SOOTHES affected area with heat and uses electromagnetic energy to improve blood flow and speed up recovery. Stockists: 0161 947 7337; [www.canterburyNZ.com](http://www.canterburyNZ.com)



**Boots TENS Pain Relief Unit, £49.99**  
GENTLY stimulates the nerves to help the body produce natural pain relievers called endorphins. Boots nationwide.

**Biofreeze tube, £8.99**  
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**Wobbler Wobble Board, £36.99**  
IMPROVES your balance and helps rehabilitation after lower leg and ankle injuries. Good for children as it contains two games. Mail order: 08700 545050; [www.physiosupplies.com](http://www.physiosupplies.com)

**Pro Stretch PT100, £30.49**  
HOLDS the foot in the best position for stretching tight calf muscles. Use for 10-20 minutes every day or in rehabilitation. Mail order: 08452260530; [www.healthmatters4u.co.uk](http://www.healthmatters4u.co.uk)



# My Lifesaver



*OLYMPIC athlete  
and Dancing On Ice star  
Steve Backley, 39, says:*

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