



NO LIMITS

The magazine for young people with arthritis Issue 19 December 2006/January 2007

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Dear Denise

Paying the price of fame

Ever wished you were a celebrity with a six-figure bank balance, a gang of A-list mates and a wardrobe to match? It might look like fun from the gossip mags, but it isn't all glamour, as **Catherine Osborn** finds out...

If they aren't being snapped by the paparazzi entering rehab in a haze of drugs and booze, celebrities are slated for being too fat or too thin, and dieting themselves to invisibility. Nicole Ritchie, for one, recently confessed to being unhappy with the way she looks. It's official: being a celebrity is bad for your health.

Take super-stud Jared Leto, famous for his role in teen drama *My So-Called Life* and a string of hit films including *Fight Club* and *Requiem for a Dream*, not to

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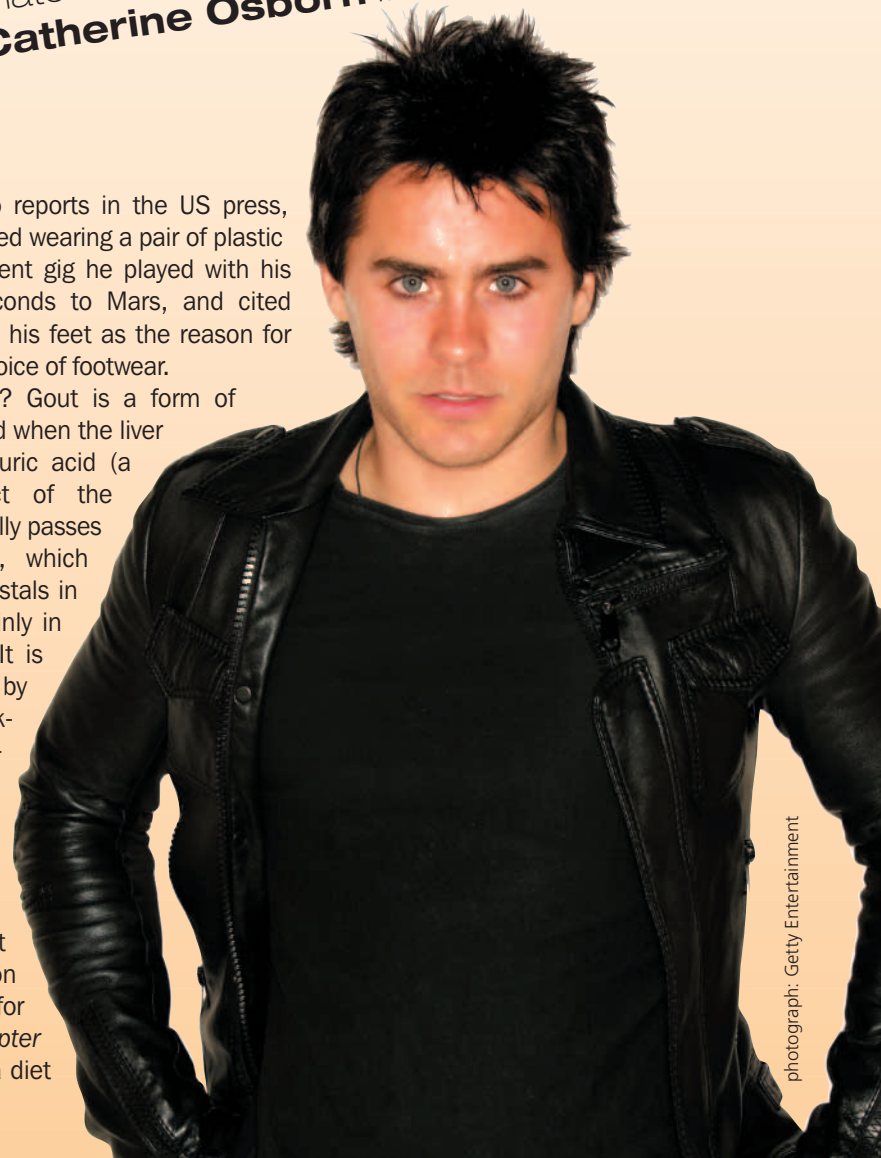
mention his stunning arm-candy (Jessica Simpson, Scarlett Johansson... need we say more?). After putting on weight for the role of John Lennon's assassin, Mark Chapman, in the film *Chapter 27*, and then losing it equally rapidly for another part, the 35-year-old star recently developed gout.

According to reports in the US press, Leto was spotted wearing a pair of plastic clogs at a recent gig he played with his band, 30 Seconds to Mars, and cited painful gout in his feet as the reason for his unusual choice of footwear.

What's gout? Gout is a form of arthritis caused when the liver overproduces uric acid (a waste product of the body that usually passes out in urine), which then forms crystals in the joints, mainly in the big toes. It is often triggered by excessive drinking or a particularly rich diet and can be extremely painful.

Reports claimed that Jared piled on the pounds for his role in *Chapter 27* by eating a diet

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photograph: Getty Entertainment

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All about gout

- Cutting down on red meat, seafood and alcohol may reduce the risk of gout.
- Prolonged stress, crash dieting or excess weight gain can trigger gout.
- Gout is the most common cause of inflammatory joint disease in men over 40, but can also affect women and younger people.
- There is no cure for gout, but doctors recommend drinking 8-10 glasses of water a day to reduce the risk of flare-ups.
- Got gout? You're in good company - Henry VII, Nostradamus, Isaac Newton and Rubens all had it too.
- Contact the UK Gout Society for more information: www.ukgoutsociety.org

of pizza, pasta and bowls of chocolate ice-cream smothered in olive oil. Rather him than us...

Leto is not alone. Comedian, Johnny Vegas, who also has gout, has had to cancel stand-up gigs due to flare-ups of his condition. True to form, the funny man maintains that drinking alcohol isn't the problem, though he has also told BBC online that playing drunks is his forte. He recently played Krook, an eccentric drunkard, in the BBC's production of *Bleak House*: 'I actually had gout when I went for the part of Krook', he said. 'I limped into the audition with a bottle of cooking sherry.'

The original footballer's wife, Victoria Beckham, has also hit the headlines recently for health reasons. It seems that all those years of tottering around in killer heels have finally taken their toll on the poshest of ex-Spice Girls. The diminutive celebrity has reportedly told friends she's considering an operation to remove painful bunions caused by years of wearing six-inch stilettos.

What are bunions? Bunions are bony bulges on the feet caused by the big toe leaning towards the second toe too much, forcing the metatarsal bone to stick out of the side of the foot. This is often covered with a blister-like sac of fluid which can be irritated by tight or ill-fitting shoes.

According to the *Daily Mail*, Mrs B has told friends she's worried her painful feet will severely restrict her mobility by the time she's 40, and that she is considering a 'bunionectomy' to chip the bump off the side of her big toe. Doctors advise people with bunions to wear flat, comfortable shoes to ease the

pain, but I doubt we'll see Posh swapping her beloved Jimmy Choos for a pair of flatties.

Supermodel Naomi Campbell also has a penchant for high-heels and is rumoured to be developing bunions. She famously fell over on the catwalk while modelling a pair of 9" Vivienne Westwood platforms at one of the designer's shows.

The tabloid press sucks, cruelly rejoicing in Posh's predicament and splashing close-ups of her feet all over their pages. But, I guess, the flipside is it can be reassuring to know that celebrities are people just like us - many of them learning to live with health problems and the worry and insecurities they can bring. ■

Know your bunions

- People with flatter feet and low arches are more prone to bunions.
- Waitresses, factory workers, dancers and athletes are prone to developing bunions as these occupations put extra stress on the feet.
- Doctors advise wearing flat, well-fitting shoes to prevent bunions.
- Bunions are most common in older people, but younger people can also develop them if they wear tight or ill-fitting shoes.



photograph: Getty Entertainment