

# benefit health



**LIFESAVER:** A Breast Check service is finally on the way for Cork in 2007 after years of lobbying

## Top ten health priorities for Cork

**1** Breast Check screening service. A €7million breast screening facility is set to open adjacent to the South Infirmery Victoria Hospital in September 2007. Breast Check was established by the Department of Health in 1998, with the objective of maximising the number of breast cancer detections at the earliest possible stage. The service has hitherto only been available to those living in the east and midlands of the country. The vital Cork service will offer 80,000 women between the ages of 50 and 64 a free X-ray every two years.

**2** A branch of the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Cork. Former Minister for Health Micheál Martin promised such a branch would be located in the grounds of St Mary's Orthopedic Hospital in Gurrabraher in 2001. To date, the centre has not come to fruition.

**3** A new Blood Transfusion centre to replace the Munster Regional Transfusion Centre at St Finbarr's Hospital. Plans for the new blood centre were delayed because under new finance rules, any State capital project

costed at more than €30million has to be independently evaluated. The Cork plan was costed by the IBTS at €32million in 2003. An independent evaluation has since been completed but now further calls to develop the centre have been made.

**4** A new dedicated cancer ward at Cork University Hospital. Construction of a new €70million cardio-renal unit is set to begin in the coming weeks. The unit will include a 30 bed oncology (cancer treatment) ward and will be the first and only public cancer unit in the Cork-Kerry region.

**5** A multi-disciplinary paediatric unit at CUH which will include a specialised diabetes treatment facility and out-patient and day-care facilities.

**6** A dedicated Cystic-Fibrosis unit. The HSE has pledged to staff and maintain operation of a new €1million cystic-fibrosis unit to treat over 180 adults and children at CUH if the Cork and Kerry branches of the Cystic Fibrosis Association (CFA) raise the money for provision of the unit.

**7** Improved mental health services within hospitals and the community. A child psychiatric unit has been called for in Cork. Funding is required to increase staffing of multi-disciplinary teams to support people with mental health issues. €950million has been earmarked by the Government and HSE to implement the new national mental health strategy, A Vision for Change, which was launched last January.

**8** Improved Orthodontic services. Calls have been made for the appointment of consultants to fill vacant orthodontic posts, to reduce the 1,000-long waiting list for treatment. Children in the Cork-Kerry region wait up to four years for an appointment.

**9** Implementation of the nationwide Primary Care Strategy, which proposes the delivery of a range of medical services in the community at primary care level.

**10** Urgent calls have been made for adolescent residential treatment centres for young people struggling with addiction problems.



**ROBERT O'SHEA**

THE erosion of civil liberties is something we should all be worried about. In fact, we should be worried about all forms of erosion, especially if we live near a coastal area.

Anyway, at Naples airport last week, a man was caught trying to sneak buffalo mozzarella — which was immersed in whey — on board a flight.

Mozzarella, as we well know, is the main killer of pilots in modern-day Europe, buffalo mozzarella being a particularly lethal strain of the cheese.

Last weekend, I found myself being accused of trying to smuggle dangerous liquids on to an aeroplane. But my case was nothing like the dangerous madman's in Italy; no, I was carrying nothing more harmful than triple-striped toothpaste.

It was late last Friday night and I was taking my first flight since the introduction of the stern laws by the European Union at the beginning of the month, that protect civil aviation against the threat of homemade liquid explosives.

First, can I state I had no idea that new rules were being introduced; I must have been busy buying cosmetics at the time.

At the check-in I was asked the usual questions only a maniac would answer wrongly.

● Did you pack the bag yourself?

No.

● Are there any sharp objects in your bag?

Several.

● Have you left your bag unattended at any time?

"What bag? Oh yeah right." And walk over to a bag 20 metres away.

Actually, I answered the questions as any sane person would, then visited the bar to settle my pre-flight nerves — I love flying, I'm just terrified of shops selling over-sized chocolate bars — and then left the bar and approached the security cordon.

I was approached by a woman who asked me to fill a small plastic bag with liquids of 100ml.

My bladder is more than 100ml full of dangerous liquids. Ha! But I thought the better of saying this, so I stuffed my hand into my bag and fished out aftershave, shaving foam and toothpaste and put them into my plastic bag.

On I walked towards the security guards and their x-ray machine.

"You can't bring this

through," says the security guard, fishing my shaving foam from the plastic bag.

"And there's more stuff in the bag," he adds.

"Stuff?"

"Do you have more liquids in your bag?"

I open my bag again and find a can of deodorant. Is deodorant a liquid? I thought it was a gas.

"120ml." He holds the label in front of me. He takes my RightGuard away.

"Wait, I've used more than 50% of it so there's probably less than the 100ml left."

He looks at me as if I have sprayed the offending article into his face. "The capacity of the container is all that matters."

"Could I spray some on right now?" I ask.

"You're holding up the line."

We look back and there is no one behind me. No go, I will smell less nice once I arrive to my destination.

I pass through security, unarrested and liquid-depleted.

But hey, hey what's this? Look at all these liquids in duty free, well over 100ml. What luck!

Some people may be happy the EU have stepped up their hunt for terrorists. But when you have been on as many flights as I have you worry more about your ears popping than the plane crashing. I would prefer the reintroduction of free sweets to increased vigilance.

If terrorists wish to take control of aircrafts again they will work their way around the current draconian regulations.

Liquid explosives have never been used in an attempt to hijack a plane in the air. Even if they were brought on they would take hours to brew and need to be kept at a constant low temperature.

But, we live in the democracy of fear, and Ireland is now included.

On opening my bag later last Friday, I discovered I had got some hair gel through. An innocent enough product, yes, but I was thinking of malevolently styling the captain's hair.

A quick straw poll. Hands up if you agree with your civil liberties being taken away from you?

Exactly.

And while you've got your hands up, hope you don't mind while we frisk you because, while we have no proof, we think you may be a terrorist.