

The Mail Pouch

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 11

November 2012

A Publication of the Edmonton Ostomy Association (EOA)

Join us on December 4th!

The Edmonton Ostomy Association (EOA) will be hosting its Annual Christmas Dinner and Auction on **Tuesday, December 4, 2012**, at the Chateau Louis Hotel and Conference Centre (please see below for further details). Join us to get an early start on celebrating the upcoming holiday season!

Please note that there is no meeting in January. Monthly meetings will resume on March 5, 2013, at St. Andrews.

The EOA meets on the first Tuesday of each month at the St. Andrew's Centre (12720-111 Avenue) starting at 7:30 pm, unless otherwise noted.



EOA Annual Christmas Dinner and Auction!

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Note: There will a signup sheet at the November meeting and you can pay at the door. If you can't make the meeting and would still like to attend, phone Peggy at (780) 434-9118 or Fred at (780) 463-4746.

Deadline for signing up is **Tuesday, November 26th.**

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Editor's Note

There are many people involved in bringing this issue of *The Mail Pouch* to our members.

Many thanks to Sharlene Baergen-Fladager, Liz Cloutier, Adeline Eggen, Gail Shkolny, Eileen Broberg, Peggy Thiessen, and Allie Korpesio for contributing articles and ideas to *The Mail Pouch*. My goal as editor has been to bring

And speaking of Allie, she has taken over the printing responsibilities for

the newsletter. Welcome news, as her uncle has agreed to print *The Mail Pouch* at no cost!

Thanks also to Angie Topilko, who manages the membership lists and prepares the mailing labels, and to Shirley Hladky, who stuffs envelopes and drops the newsletters off in the mail.

So as you can see, it definitely takes a village to bring you this issue of *The Mail Pouch*. Happy reading!

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Articles and information printed in this newsletter are not necessarily endorsed by the Edmonton Ostomy Association or the United Ostomy Association of Canada may not be applicable to everybody.

Please consult your own doctor or ET nurse for medical advice.

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Grey Nuns Community Hospital: Camille Ream, Rahimah Moosa

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The Red Deer Ostomy Association meets on the second Tuesday of every second month at Millerdale Pharmacy (5201-43 Street) at 7:30 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2012.



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It's Flu Season Again!

As they say, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”. Here are some tips to help you get through the flu season:

Get the flu shot (discuss with your physician). Check with your community health center, pharmacy or doctor regarding when and where shots are available.

Good hygiene – wash your hands regularly and thoroughly – scrub for 15 – 20 seconds or the length of time it takes to sing “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star”. If in a public washroom, use a paper towel to turn off the tap after rinsing, and use a towel to open the door.

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your arm, not your hand, when you cough. Use paper tissue rather than a reusable handkerchief. Throw the tissue out immediately after use.

Keep your hands away from your eyes and mouth as these are places that the virus can enter your body.

Reduce your stress levels.

Stop smoking and reduce your alcohol consumption.

Eat healthy foods, stay physically active and get plenty of rest to support your immune system.

If the flu is in your community avoid large gatherings, and only visit people with the flu if necessary—keep your distance and wash your hands!

If you are sick, stay home to avoid spreading the flu to others.

If someone in your household has the flu clean surfaces such as light switches, telephones, computer keyboards etc.

Stay away from people who have the flu. They are contagious from the day before symptoms appear to 5 – 7 days into the illness.

Be prepared if you should get the flu. Have non-perishable foods and beverages on hand that you would be interested in eating when you are sick. Keep tissues, cleaning supplies, flu medication as well as your regular medications on hand so you don't have to worry about running out. This includes your ostomy supplies, even if you get your supplies delivered, have extra on hand just in case.

Seek medical attention immediately if you experience : difficulty in breathing, shortness of breath, purple or blue discoloration of the lips, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, seizures or worsening symptoms.

If after taking all the precautions you still get the flu – drink plenty of fluids, rest, stay home and monitor your fever. There are over the counter medications you can take to help treat the symptoms such as cough, aches and fever. Discuss with your pharmacist or physician. If you have any concerns contact Health Links at 780-408-5465 or toll free 1-866-408-5465.

Colostomates – refrain from irrigation during flu-related diarrhea. Then give your colon a few days to return to normal after the diarrhea has ceased before resuming irrigation.

Urostomates need to keep their electrolytes in balance by following the general instructions for flu treatment.

Ileostomates are at a higher risk from loss of electrolytes resulting in serious dehydration. It may be helpful to decrease your intake of solid foods, and increase your intake of potassium by drinking bouillon, Gatorade, or Pedialyte. Increase your sodium intake from saltine crackers, pretzels and tomato juice (if tolerated). Remember – drink lots of fluids including water, gingerale, tea, cranberry juice and orange juice. Take frequent sips of fluids throughout the day. Aim for at least 8 – 10 glasses of water a day (64-80 ounces – 2000 – 2500 mls).

And remember to get plenty of rest!

Source: Alberta Health (<http://www.health.alberta.ca/health-info/influenza-how-to-care.html>).



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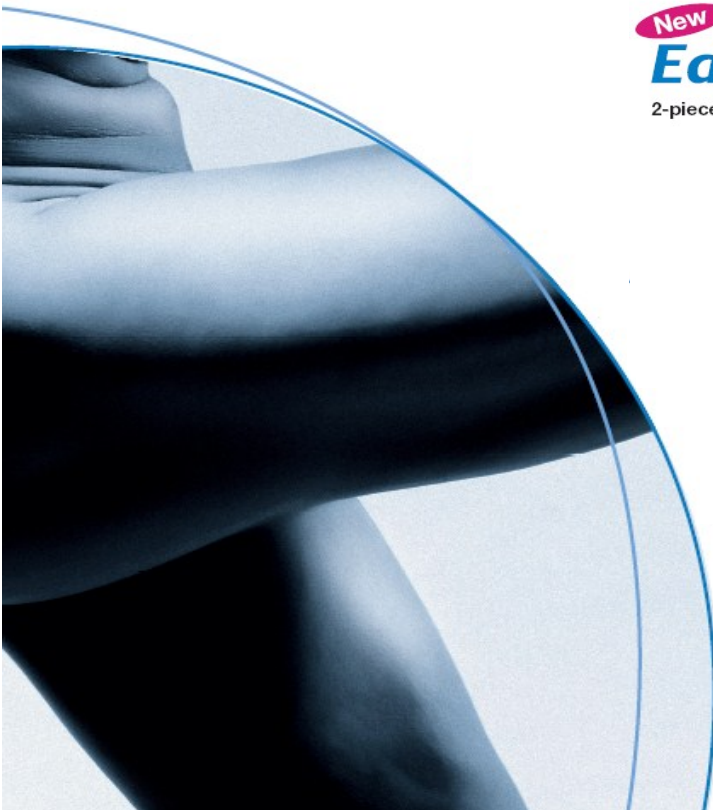
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President's Message *by Peggy Thiessen*

Greetings to All!

This has been whirlwind fall for me and the new executive. We are still cutting our teeth, but it is hard to believe that this is the last newsletter before Christmas. As I sit writing this today, we are getting a full dump of snow! ETS buses are not running and folks are being sent home early from work!

Our numbers were down a little at our last meeting but those who came got to enjoy the humour of our guest speaker and fellow ostomate, Robert Lang. Robert had us rolling on the floor with some of his anecdotal stories about his experiences as an ostomate. Most people in the room could relate to one experience or another. We are usually so serious about our guest speakers and the topics we wish them to talk about. Robert's talk was enjoyable and provided us all an opportunity to laugh at the situations and challenges ordinary life presents to an ostomate.

Christmas is soon upon us and we will be holding our annual Christmas Party and Auction on Dec 4th at the Chateau Louis. I encourage all our members to attend this function and bring your friends. In the past, we have always sold tickets for at least 100 plates. As of this writing, we have approximately 40 plates sold so please call Fred at (780) 463-4746 or Peggy at (780) 434-9118 to reserve your seats.

Items for the silent and live auction are most welcome. This is our only fund raiser for the whole year, so if you can, be generous.

Christmas is a happy time shared with family and friends. It is a time for fellowship and good will. While most of us enjoy the holidays with all the goodies and presents associated with it, there are some who are not so fortunate and instead of Christmas being a happy time, it becomes a sad and depressing time. Donations to the Food Bank and Santa's Anonymous help make their Christmas a little brighter.

To all our suppliers both local and national, on behalf of the Edmonton Ostomy Association, thank you for your support and kindness over the past year and we look forward to working with you in 2013.

Remember we do not host a meeting in January or February. The next meeting will be in March at the St. Andrews Centre in our regular room (the board room) to your left just inside the doors.

God Bless and stay healthy this festive season.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY HANUKKAH, HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL. MAY 2013 BE THE BEST YEAR EVER!

From your executive: Peggy, Allie, Angie, Eileen, Liz, Stella, and Fred



The Unsung Heroes Award



This month's Unsung Heroes Award goes to Joan and Diane Currah. These lovely ladies are the EOA's greeting committee—they're probably the first people you'll see when you walk into a meeting. Joan and Diane also keep the attendance of our meetings, hand out the tickets for the door prizes and set up the tables for the treasurer and themselves every meeting.

Thank you, Joan and Diane, for everything you do to help our meetings run smoothly!

Do you know someone who deserves an Unsung Hero Award?

Please email us at themailpouch@gmail.com with your nomination.

Let's show our wonderful volunteers how much we appreciate them!

November Meeting Highlights

by Eileen Broberg

- Angie Topilko will do the labels for the mailouts and take care of the membership lists. Allie Korpesio has made arrangements to have the printing done for free.
- Brochures have been given to the ET nurses. Dr. Robert Bailey still wants to be involved as our medical advisor.
- Shirley Hladky has made a suggestion box which will be available at the back of the room during meetings. A nomination box will be put out three or four months before executive elections.

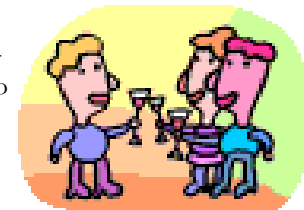


- Angie Topilko has taken over as webmaster for the EOA website and will keep it up to date.
 - Two new members were introduced. There have also been more requests for rides to the meeting by people who cannot drive anymore. Peggy Thiessen will put their names and phone numbers in the newsletter if they wish.
 - Memberships are due and may be paid to Angie Topilko or sent to the UOAC.
 - Janet Nichols looks after sending out sympathy and get-well cards.
 - Adeline Eggen gave a SASO report.
- Liz Cloutier reported on visits to ostomates at the Royal Alexandra Hospital: 3 male ileostomies, 1 female ileostomies, and 1 female colostomy.
 - Daryl Eggen reported on the donated ostomy and medical supplies being sorted, packaged and shipped.
 - Fred Hermary reported on the Christmas Party on December 4th at the Chateau Louis. The sign-up sheet will be at the back of the room. Please let Fred know if you have any dietary restrictions so that the Chateau Louis can make the appropriate meal arrangements. Thanks to Aspen Drugs, who is providing the wine. Gail and Henry Shkolny will help Fred with setting up the room.
 - Our guest speaker was Robert Lang, who gave us a very interesting talk about his life as an ostomate over the past 12 years. His adventures with air travel, accidents while talking to friends and many other incidents made us laugh. He was an inspiration and we'd love to have him join us again soon.
 - There will not be any meetings in January or February. Next meeting is in March, 2013.

ARE YOU BETWEEN 18 AND 40-SOMETHING?

This is a special invitation to the Christmas Party for all of you out there who are between the ages of 18 and 40 something (some of us are more than something!). Sharlene Baergen-Fladager will be heading up activities and special events for this group and she would love to meet as many of you as she can at the Christmas party. She says:

"I feel that this age group, myself included, are wanting something a little bit different from what the EOA is doing right now. Our lives can be busy with work and family, but if you are feeling like you need some support, and you are interested in meeting with other ostomates who are your age, this could be a good place to start. I am interested in what you would like to see from such a group. So please talk to me at the party, or if you are unable to attend please contact me through my email: Sbfladager@gmail.com. I hope to get a variety of responses that will help me plan things that will make a difference for you the members. I will reply to them all and I hope to arrange something before the next general meeting in March. Have a wonderful holiday season and I look forward to meeting many of you over the next few months!"





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New Urine Test Developed for Preventing Colon Cancer Deaths

(Published in The Edmonton Journal on May 18, 2012, summarized by Adeline Eggen)

Researchers at the University of Alberta in Edmonton have developed a simple urine test to detect pre-cancerous polyps in the colon that could revolutionize screening programs around the world and save thousands of lives. For the past 50 years or so, the standard test for detection of microscopic tracts of blood caused by such polyps has been by fecal test. These test actually have fairly low accuracy rates (3 to 5%) because they can also detect blood from the stomach or esophagus and therefore can result in false positives.

Now Dr. Richard Fedorak, a gastroenterologist, and Dr. Haili Wang, a colorectal surgeon at University Hospital have developed a new metabolomics medical technology that can detect molecules in a urine sample that indicates polyps have formed in the colon. The first version of this new method was tested on 1,200 patients and had an accuracy rate of 82 %, Dr Fedorak stated. A second version tested with 97 % accuracy. Once the polyps are removed, a follow up urine test can confirm it if all the polyps are gone.

Dr Fedorak feels that this will fundamentally change the colon cancer screening programs. He states that their research labs are the world leaders in metabolomics. He has presented his findings recently at a conference for medical gastroenterologists in the U.S.

At present Dr. Fedorak and his team are preparing a pilot project to run in Lethbridge to see if frozen urine samples sent to the specialized lab in Edmonton will remain viable for testing which requires a sophisticated machine.

In Alberta , each year approximately 1,200 people are diagnosed with colon cancer and 600 die from the disease.

If you would like to read the entire article, please contact Adeline Eggen at 780-418-2028 for a copy.

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Tips for Enjoying the Holiday Season with an Ostomy

For some people out there it will be your first major holiday season with an ostomy. Hopefully this also means that you are feeling healthier than past holidays. Your first Christmas can raise many questions about how to survive the hustle and bustle of the season and of course all the special foods. Christmas can be stressful enough without worrying about how your ostomy will act. So here are some tips that may help you reduce your stress and increase your enjoyment of this holiday season.

Continue to eat regularly, so that you know what output to expect. This may mean having a small snack before a Christmas party rather than going hours without eating. Skipping meals also leads to overeating which leads to increased output, not to mention weight gain over the season.

If a food or drink doesn't agree with you the other 11 months of the year, don't think you can get away with it for one night.

Worried about a bulging appliance, avoid the carbonated drinks and foods that cause gas. Some people swear by taking beano prior to a meal and others suggest eating a couple of marshmallows ahead of time. I have never tried these, but it might be worth trying BEFORE your Christmas party.

Worried about diarrhea, avoid (or cut back on) high sugar foods, such as regular pop (straight or as a mix), and any other foods and beverages that cause you diarrhea. Some people find that rice, cooked pumpkin (not pie filling) or bananas may help to "thicken" things up. There are also medications, prescription and over the counter – But ALWAYS check with your physician before using any anti-diarrheal medications.

Carry in your purse, pocket, partner's purse or pocket, a roll of medical tape. If you think a leak is happening, tape can often hold you together for a few more hours. (I've heard that duct tape can work in a pinch)

Wear clothes that you are comfortable in and look HOT in! Women – a wrap or a clutch purse is a great "bulge" hider on your way to empty your appliance. Using a New bag with a filter can also help reduce the bulge, but try ahead of time to see how it works for you.

If you are going to have foods that don't agree with you as much as others, have the foods that you can only get at Christmas instead of the treats that are around all year round. And ENJOY quilt free!

Above all – ENJOY! Don't worry too much about your appliance (really how many people are staring at your abdomen??) and think of all the things you can do this year that you couldn't do before your surgery. For me not being in the hospital for Christmas is always my highlight.

To all ostomates, whether this is your first or your 31st Christmas enjoy your time with family and friends, and I hope to see you all at the Edmonton Ostomy Association Christmas party to try out your Christmas plans in a safe and friendly environment.

May you all have a wonderful holiday season!

OSTOMY ON THE INTERNET: GIRLS WITH GUTS!

"Girls With Guts" is a collaborative effort of two, confident IBD survivors. Charis and Jackie met through their online blogs which chronicle their lives as they live and fight IBD. Although they have two very different stories and journeys, these ladies have found common ground with their goal to encourage women with IBD to be proud of who they are, regardless of how their disease is affecting their lives. After living through the highs and lows of IBD, Girls With Guts knows how having an Inflammatory Bowel Disease can hinder confidence. Their goal is to teach girls and women of all ages that you can still be beautiful with a butt disease. You can find the blog at www.girls-with-guts.org.

Our own Allie Korpesio, EOA Vice-president, has been a contributor to the "Girls With Guts" blog. Her posting, entitled "Celebrating Oscar D. Ostomy with Allie", which tells the story of the party she threw for all her family and friends to welcome "Oscar", her ostomy, to the world. You can find her article [here](#). You can also visit Allie's own blog, "The Adventures of Oscar the Ostomy", at oscartheostomy.blogspot.ca.

Twenty-two Questions with Gail Shkoly

Let's get to know Gail Shkolny, one of our members, a little better:

1. *Name:* Gail Shkolny
2. *Family:* 1 husband, 1 daughter, 1 son and 3 cats
3. *Member of the Edmonton Ostomy Association (EOA) since:* 2003
4. *Type of surgery and underlying condition:* I have an ileostomy due to ulcerative colitis. After 16 years of serious flare-ups, I reached the point where there was no longer any choice.
5. *Why did you join the EOA?* I joined the association to meet others like me. Now I go to meetings with the hope of helping others
6. *Best thing about having an ostomy:* I no longer have the disease.
7. *Knowing what I know now, what would I tell myself before having the surgery?* Do not be so afraid.
8. *Words I live by:* Make a difference !
9. *People would be surprised to know that I..* walked on crunchy lava in Iceland..
10. *What do you do for a living?* I am a retired teacher.
11. *What do you do in your spare time?* I read and vacuum up cat hair. Now I am going to be researching articles for the newsletter. (Editor's note: YES!)
12. *Favourite travel destination or memory:* Boston, where our daughter lives.
13. *Most vivid childhood memory:* Not a happy one –the fire that took our farm house and everything we had.
14. *If I had \$10 million dollars, I'd... collapse in shock*
15. *What three things would you take with you if you were on a deserted island?* A diary, my iPad for Scrabble and a rescue flare
16. *Are you an early bird or a night owl?* Night owl
17. *First thing you said to yourself when you woke up this morning?* What do I have to look forward to today?
18. *Last thing you said to yourself last night before you fell asleep?* It was a good day.
19. *If I had my life to live over again, I would...* travel more.
20. *If I could be anything at all, I'd be...* a good curler.
21. *I would love to have dinner with...* Burton Cummings
22. *My greatest blessing is...* my family.

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The Back End (The Christmas Edition)



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- ◆ *Unsung
Heroes*

EDMONTON OSTOMY ASSOCIATION (EOA) - 2013 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership fees are \$30.00 per year and include 9 newsletters.
Please make cheque payable to "The Edmonton Ostomy Association".

Membership Status:

- New Member
 Renewal
 Change of Address

Type of Surgery:

- Colostomy
 Ileostomy
 Ileo Conduit

Special Groups:

- 20/40
 Spouses and Significant Others (SASO)
 Parents of Children with Ostomies

Would you like to receive *The Mail Pouch* by email?

- Yes—Email only
 No—Print only
 Both

Comments?

Name

Address

Phone & Email

Please detach & return to Angie Topilko, #144, 3-11 Bellerose Drive, St Albert AB T8N 5C9 Thank you.