

Breathe Easy

Monday 23rd June 2008

Sutton Coldfield

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breatheeasy
BRITISH LUNG FOUNDATION SUPPORT NETWORK

Dear Member,

Welcome to the June newsletter. I have recently returned from a holiday in Tunisia where I saw plenty of sunshine, which I am glad to say is continuing here and as we can now get 'out and about' I think our next speaker will help to tune us up! The speaker for July is Wendy Penny, who, amongst her other duties is responsible for COPD exercise training for the British Lung Foundation. We all know how important exercise is when you suffer from a lung condition, but it must be the correct exercise, which I expect Wendy will show us I look forward to seeing you all on the 26th Ed.

Last Month's Speaker

There has been a great deal of discussion recently, in the press and on television, about diseases such as MRSA and C-diff which is affecting our hospitals, so we were pleased to welcome Avril Hamilton who is an infection control nurse at Good Hope hospital, to talk about the fight against infection. Ed.



Unfortunately we had a small technical problem with equipment showing slides, but this having been solved Avril started her talk. She explained that the team consisted of 5 nurses who cover three hospital sites besides the Birmingham

ham Chest Clinic, namely, Good Hope, Solihull and Heartlands. She went on to say that these infections affect 1 in 10 patients and cost the NHS about a billion pounds a year. Media interest is always there and it can be quite frightening when you read about what's going on in the news.

The infection control team have produced a strategy to help reduce infection rates. A Government document has been produced outlining target percentages and a time scale by which infection can be reduced. Unfortunately there is not enough room here to report all the figures.

The main aim of the team is to educate staff in the correct procedures in dealing with infection and providing written guidelines, because they may be needed at night or at weekends.

Slides were shown displaying infection rates and numbers, but as I can't report these in detail, I will give the points that affect us as patients and the precautions that Avril recommends we should all take to ensure that infection does not spread. Avril emphasised that there has been a reduction of the diseases over the last few years despite some press reports. Every effort is made to isolate patients who are infected and at Heartlands a ward is dedicated to patients who contract infections. This is also being considered at Good Hope, but may take some time to come into being. →

→ As from January 2008 patients attending hospital for surgery are being screened for MRSA on arrival so that they may be treated before their operation, and in answer to a question from Joyce Dyke about emergency patients, Avril said from 19th June these people will also be screened. In fact very shortly every patient that comes through the doors will be screened for infection.

Hand Hygiene was next on the list and Avril stressed how important this is in the fight against infection.

Frequent washing of hands with soap and water as well as use of the gel provided at the door, and by the patient's bed is recommended. Of course scrupulous washing of hands is of enormous importance after using the toilet as the infection may be present in the bowl and can spread rapidly. So, personal hygiene is hugely important in the control of these diseases and we could say "The answer's in **your** hands"

At this point Avril gave a short description on how infection was first discovered, when some doctors were doing mortuary work as well attending patients in hospital and there was a higher mortality rate amongst the patients of these doctors, than those who didn't carry out this work. It was obvious that infection was being spread in this way.

Some of us are a little subdued when we are in hospital and don't like to cause any fuss, but Avril stressed that you have the right to ask a nurse if she has washed her hands when she is dealing with wound dressing or perhaps just food, and report any incidence where you think this has not been carried out. None of us want to accuse hard working nurses of any problems, but it is in your own interests to take care of yourself and look after your own hygiene, as well as expecting the staff will look after theirs. There are a number of posters throughout the hospital showing how to wash your hands and as Avril pointed out people very often say "I learnt to wash my hands when I was 4 years old", but that was not as thorough as it should have been, and certainly would not be good enough to eradicate all germs.

Obviously I have not been able to cover all the information that Avril spoke about in this short résumé, but I am sure we all learnt a lot about Infection Control and we thank her for an excellent talk. Ed.

Breathe Easy

A Parent's Worst Nightmare!

A father entered his daughter's bedroom and saw a letter on the bed. With the worst premonition he read it with trembling hands.

Dear Mum and Dad,

It is with great regret and sorrow that I'm telling you that I've eloped with my new boyfriend. I've found real love and he is so nice, especially with all his piercings, scars, tattoos, and his big motorcycle. But it is not only that, I'm pregnant and Ahmed said that we will be very happy in his trailer in the woods. He wants to have many more children with me and that is one of my dreams.

I've learned that marijuana doesn't hurt anyone and we'll be growing it for us and his friends. They're the ones providing us with all the cocaine and ecstasy we could ever want.

In the meantime, we'll pray for science to find the AIDS cure so Ahmed gets better. He deserves it. Don't worry about money, Ahmed has arranged for me to be in films that his friends Leroy and Jamal make in their basement.

Apparently I can earn £50 a scene and I get a £50 bonus if there are more than three men in the scene, and an extra £100 if they use a horse. Don't worry Mum, now I'm 15 years old I know how to take care of myself.

Someday I'll visit you and Dad so that you can meet your grandchildren.

Your loving daughter,
Aimee

P.S. Dad, it's not true, I'm at a neighbour's house. I just wanted to show you that there are worse things in life

Neighbourhood Watch

A man puts down the phone after taking a call.

His wife asks "who was that?"

"The neighbourhood watch man" he replies.

"What does he want?" she asks?

"He rang to tell me that your Mother is coming up the street!!"

Breathe Easy Sutton Coldfield

Continue to



To promote awareness during Breathe Easy Week we set up a table in the restaurant

on lung disease

area at Good Hope hospital and attracted quite a few people who were interested in the leaflets and information.



I attended in the morning and found Graham Dolan, (L) Catherine Fairey and Stuart Thomson already setting up the stand, although in the picture they seem to be, just admiring their own handiwork. However, the day was a great success and as well as promoting BLF we have managed to attract more people to our regular monthly meeting.

Coping with Depression

It is entirely understandable that around half of all people with chronic lung disease are depressed. Dependency on others, loss of self-esteem, preoccupation with their breathing, and fear of the future all play their part.

One way to combat this is to aim for the sky; to be as energetic as possible, and to aim to return to as many normal activities as possible. Any improvement may be simply the result of using your muscles more effectively, rather than an actual improvement in your lungs, but this does not matter because you will feel better, regardless of the cause of this feeling.

It is important to exercise every day until you reach a state of breathlessness. It will not do your lungs any harm and it is encouraging to find that you will have to exercise more, week by week, in order to become breathless.

If, despite such efforts, you cannot shake off your depression, your doctor may prescribe an antidepressant drug that will not make you drowsy or weaken your ability to breathe, such as desipramine or fluvoxamine.

Breathe Easy

Chit

Chairman's
Chat



Did you know that ordinary everyday items such as air fresheners, polishes, hairsprays, deodorants, etc., etc., propelled by gas could cause problems with your breathing? It is much better to use the "pump action" variety

Do you suffer with a sore mouth and throat because of inhaler use? It is advisable to rinse your mouth with water after use, however the soreness can be relieved by eating Natural Organic Probiotic Yogurt. I tend to take a mouthful and hold it in my mouth, then into my throat prior to swallowing. It work fine!

I read somewhere that if you have a chesty cough that curried, sautéed onions contain quercetin and sulphur compounds which break up mucus and loosen phlegm. Sautee two onions with a teaspoon of curry powder and two tablespoons of olive oil until soft, then eat to relieve your cough. I haven't tried it yet. Good luck - ANN

Below is a copy of an E-mail that I received back in April after Ann Fenoughty's article. Thank you Janet.

Dear Peter I have been feeling very low these last few weeks but when April's newsletter came today Ann Fenoughty's article on 'Me and my chest' gave me such a lot of support. I too have severe COPD and since last December have needed long term oxygen. I have suffered with chest problems since I was a child and had rheumatic fever, age 3. Since then I have suffered various other chest complaints too numerous to mention.

I too went to a rehabilitation programme which is where I first met Ann and as a member, found it helped me very much. Also you were with other people in the same boat that you could talk to. Just knowing you are not alone makes you feel less isolated. Like Ann I have had several admissions to Good hope on ward 8.

I have a mobility scooter so when I am feeling OK I pop into Tamworth to the library and also get a few odds and ends that I need. On bad days, like Ann I just wait for the good, and try so hard to keep positive. Usually I can, but as I said recently I have felt so despondent. I too smoked, but was never a big smoker but like Ann I was made to feel very guilty although I stopped smoking in 1985. However, as age creeps on my condition gets worse, but to keep it on a happier note, what I am trying to say is Ann's letter couldn't have come at a better time. Just knowing you are not the only one, has helped me so much so thank you Ann and the other subscribers to breathe easy as it does throw some light in a very dark tunnel that I am sure we all find at times. Thank you once again, Janet Coggins

Forthcoming Events

We are again having a table at Sutton Coldfield Fire Station 'open day. The event takes place on August 23rd. As always we are asking for volunteers to help on the day.



If you are willing to participate please contact a member of the committee. Those of you who attended the last event will remember what a great day out this was.



Also in August, on the 30th, there will be a garden party which will be held at Joyce Dyke's house, which is at 7 Vesey Road, Sutton Coldfield.

This will be a fund raising event and there will be light refreshments available on the day. The party starts at 2pm until 6pm. As usual we require volunteers to help on the day. Please contact Ann Feoughty or Joyce Dyke if you can help.

A.G.M.

Please Note!

The AGM which normally takes place in September, has been changed to August 28th, which is a normal meeting date.

Food Awareness

Tip!

It is, perhaps, a good idea to make a note of the daily intake of our food. The awareness, of what we eat and drink may help in maintaining a better stability and well being.

Could it be that the liking of too many dairy products or an insatiable need of sweet things, that tips the balance, and leaves us feeling unwell from time to time.

In my experience it has proved beneficial to keep a diary of what I eat and drink. Often it will give me an understanding of why I may not be feeling so well, or on the other hand, perhaps why I feel better than usual.

It is good to have an awareness of the types of food and drink that makes us feel **unwell** so that these may be avoided.

Each of us are individuals and therefore can really only follow our own guidelines and needs.

WARM SMILES,

PAULINE MACAVOY.

Breathe Easy

The Day we went to Ascot

8Am Tuesday - A group of people gathered together at our house, laden down with chairs, umbrellas, Macintoshes, photographic equipment - you name it - we had it; we were off to the races.



After a stop for a substantial breakfast at a country hotel where we could see the deer in the park opposite we eventually joined the motorway. Taking a break for bucks fizz on the way we finally joined the queues of large cars and stretch limos moving towards the parking area at Ascot race course.

Not for us the Silver Ring or the Grandstand; we were for the heath where if you can get to the rails (which we did) there is an uninterrupted view of the course.

Excitement grew - the Royal procession was on its way from Windsor castle. It is an emotional moment to see the Royal family come up the course in their coaches. We waved to the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh and were sure they waved back.... to us alone!

The big problem of the day was would it rain? Well, the sun shone, the clouds gathered, the sun pushed its way through them, the breeze was stiff but thankfully, no rain.

For me it was spectacle enough to see the race horses - beautiful creatures together with the bright colours of the jockeys silks atop them, and to hear the thunder of the hooves as they came up the course. Police horses were also there looking heavier than their race cousins, but so well groomed and patient.

Then there were the hats, big, feathered or beribboned, and the toppers, black and shiny, but how did they stay on in the breeze? Was it sellotape, elastic, or bluetack, or just sheer willpower? The day was sheer poetry .

We stopped for dinner on the way back and it was a weary party that finally sorted out all the baggage on our return, but we all agreed that it was a great day out and it didn't rain! Did we win? No we did not!

Joyce Dyke

Theatre Trip

I think I can speak for us all when I say how much I enjoyed the play on Thursday evening. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between amateur and professional



Quiz Time

Time for Answers!

The Quick Quiz

Answers for last months Quiz

The answers are all 'Body Parts'

1. Rows of knit 1. Purl 1. ? Rib....
2. A branch of a tree? Limb.....
3. Type of tree? Palm.....
4. Ammunitions ? Arms.....

Here are this months questions

1. Shell fish?
2. Part of a saw?
3. Impudence?
4. A flower?
5. Parts of a chair?

Next month we have a new quiz, as I gather these questions were far too easy for you!

performances when you see a play such as 'Private Lives'. Our thanks goes to Tom our treasurer, for not only paying for the seats but supplying coffee and biscuits in a room where we could all meet, during the interval.

I gather, that for some of you, it was the first time you had visited Sutton Arts theatre and everyone I spoke to seemed very impressed. In fact, Joyce who organised the evening told me afterwards that she had supplied a number membership forms, it may become a regular meeting place for some of the members.

For those of you who would like to join or perhaps just see the occasional play here are some contact numbers.

Box-office Tel. 0121 355 5355

Website. < www.suttonartstheatre.co.uk

For submission of articles, comments or news, contact:- Peter Rubery at this address:- 18, Forest Close, Streetly, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B74 2JZ Telephone No. 0121 353 9623 or email <eponym@peterrubery.co.uk>

If you **do not** wish to receive the News Letter in future, please contact me and I will delete your details. Peter Rubery, Ed.