

# Breathe Easy

## Sutton Coldfield

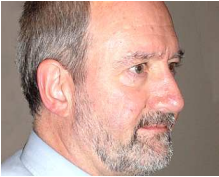
Monday 25th May 2009



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Dear Member,

Welcome to the May newsletter. I have nothing to say about the weather at this point unless it improves! Below is a résumé of the talk given at our last meeting by Colin Smith, who is outreach Manager of the Disability and Pensions department in Birmingham. Our speaker for the next meeting is Pat Court from the Osteoporosis Society. I look forward to seeing you all on the 28th Ed.



We were pleased to welcome back Colin Smith, to help keep us on track with regard to claims we make for financial help from the government, when we have the misfortune to suffer from a disability.

Before I continue let me say that Colin has been kind enough to supply a copy of his presentation which includes slides and text, to pass on to anyone who would like a copy. I will send this out via e-mail.

Colin started his talk by saying that the centre in Birmingham where he works is one of a number of centres around the country dealing with Disability Allowance and Attendance Allowance. These two benefits were instituted by government to look at the effects of disability on a persons life. These benefits cover all kinds of disabilities not only physical but mental, as well as sight and hearing disorders..

The centre in Birmingham receives claims for all across the Midlands, this can result in about 3,000 claims being received in a week. The service exists to put cash in peoples pockets to cope with their disability. A very important point is these benefits are not means tested in any way. You can be in employment and still receive benefit because the scheme is about how you are affected in your day to day life, irrespective of whether you work or not.

Colin went on to point out that some people do not apply for help either because of pride, or embarrassment, and the case of some older people, because they convince themselves that they do not need any help. The benefits are there to make life better for all who suffer ill health that affect their daily lives. Moving on, the screen shows the three different allowances, which are,

- DLA, Disability living Allowance,
- AA, Attendance allowance
- CA, Carers Allowance

There is one more payment and that is for Vaccine damage, which means if you can prove that a vaccine given to a person has caused ill health in later life, a one off payment of something in the order of £120000

may be made. Colin stated that this criteria may be very hard to prove.

We now moved on to details about the **DLA Disability living Allowance**. Colin explained, that if a person was granted a payment and because that person was suffering from a complaint by which they were unable to communicate, then under certain circumstances, the money may be paid to a third party. DLA payments are tax free and you do not have to pay into National Insurance over your working life to qualify. The benefits in this category are for the help someone *needs* not for the help someone *gets*. When a person makes a claim they must have had the problems they claim for, for at least 3 months and they must expect those problems to last at least 6 months. Now the point a lot of people do not know, and that is, **you must be under the age of 65 to make a claim in this category**. However, a child as young as 3 months old could be claimed for. There are 2 different rates of payment and Colin went on to explain these in detail, unfortunately space does not allow me to print them here, but I hope I have recorded the salient features of this claim.

Now, on to **Attendance allowance**. To make a claim in this category you must be **65 years old at least** when you apply. AA is similar to DLA but, only looks at personal care and not your mobility out of doors. Colin agreed that this seems a bit discriminatory and asked why there should be one benefit for the under 65's and another one for those over 65? The unfortunate thing is, that people like ourselves, who, due to breathing problems have difficulty walking out of doors, **can only apply for DLA, and must be under 65 years old**. This seems very unfair and Colin said, he is surprised this has not been challenged before now. With this claim whatever you receive, **does not** affect your pension or pension credit, or your savings, but you have to have had your disability for 6 months. Again, there are two levels of payment for this claim which Colin went on to detail, but unfortunately not enough space to print here.

**To obtain a DLA/AA claim pack**, please contact the Disability Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL) on 0800 88 22 00 Textphone 0800 24 33 55 (7.30am to 6.30 pm Monday to Friday and 9.00 am to 1.00 pm Saturday) or visit, [www.direct.gov.co.uk](http://www.direct.gov.co.uk) →

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—> If you ring the enquiry line number 0800 88 22 00 you can get help with filling in the form. You can even get an official to come to your own home to help with this. The forms can be quite long and complicated but if you need help please ask. There is another way, by telephone. The department will ring you (at their expense) and will fill in the form for you as you answer the questions. Once this is complete, the form is sent to your home for you to sign and then returned to the office. The 0880 24 33 55 is to check on claims already made.

Now on to CA, Carers allowance. This benefit takes into account the carers income. This can be their state pension which may be above the £53.10 a week which is the amount paid at this time and the application will be turned down. Also, the carer may be earning money to be able to look after the person concerned and unfortunately this may block their request. If you are working and bring home, after stoppages, more than £95 a week then you are not entitled to this benefit. Colin again, said, he felt it was time to review this situation. His point was, you don't stop being a carer just because you get a pension, do you? We all agreed this seems grossly unfair and unless we voice our opinions this will never get changed. However, if you are an elderly person and your carer's allowance has been turned down because your pension is higher than £53.10 a week and you are receiving pension credit then there is an entitlement which will boost your pension credit by £30 a week by the payment of a carer's premium.

This completed the talk by Colin and we are very grateful for the time and effort he has made to come and talk to us. Our appreciation was shown in the usual way. As I mentioned earlier if you have a computer and would like the file to view at home, I will gladly send it on to you. My e-mail address is:-

<eponym@peterrubery.co.uk>

Ed.

## Breathe Easy Week in Sutton Coldfield

We will be celebrating B.E Week by staging two events during the week. The first is at Good Hope hospital on Wednesday 17th June where we will have a table and will be pleased to talk all who come along to learn more about breathing problems. Please come and see us, if just for a chat. Please note! We don't do pressure selling!



The information and the pamphlets are free. We will be in attendance at 9am until about 3pm.

Then on Friday 19th June we will be holding a big event in the Gracechurch centre Mall, which starts at 9am until 4pm.

Come along and have breathing check, carried out by a respiratory nurse. It only takes a short while and is performed by just blowing into a mouth piece, it may detect early signs of breathing problems, which could be treated *before* they become serious.

Sutton Coldfield's MP Andrew Mitchell will be in attendance from mid day. Please come along and support our group who give their time to help sufferers through Breathe easy.

Finally may I appeal to anyone who can spare some time (however short) to come along and help us on either of the two days mentioned above.

## The Theatre Trip



We thank Joyce for organising a great trip to the theatre on Thursday 7th May. There were 24 of us and I think I speak for everyone when I say the evening was most enjoyable. The tea, coffee and biscuits in the interval were an added treat. We must do this more often! Thank you again Joyce.

Ed.

### Please don't forget the garden Party

Breathe Easy Sutton Coldfield Invite You to a Fund Raising

**Garden Party**  
at  
**7 Vesey Road Sutton Coldfield**  
**Saturday 22nd August 2009**

Entrance £1.00  
Includes Raffle Ticket

Open 2pm till 5pm

In aid of  
The British Lung Foundation Nurses Fund

Bring & Buy Table

Plants for sale

Please come along and make this a great party, come rain or shine, as well as helping those who suffer with Lung Disease.

Donations to British Lung Foundation Gratefully received

Putting

Books & Jigsaws For sale

Cream Tea's






# Breathe Easy

## Children's Answers to Science Exam Questions

Q: Name the four seasons.

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q: Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink.

A: Flirtation makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutants like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists.

Q: How is dew formed?

A: The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

Q: What guarantees may a mortgage company insist on?

A: If you are buying a house, they will insist you are well endowed.

Q: What are steroids?

A: Things for keeping carpets still on the stairs.

Q: What happens to your body as you age?

A: When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental.

Q: What happens to a boy when he reaches puberty?

A: He says goodbye to his boyhood and looks forward to his adultery.

Q: Name a major disease associated with cigarettes.

A: Premature death.

Q: What is the Fibula?

A: A small lie.

Q: What does "varicose" mean?

A: Nearby.

According to the long range weather forecast we may be in for a good summer this year. This will inevitably make pollen counts shoot up and many people will suffer from hay-fever.

Pleasant, but what about Hay-fever?



**Lisa Miles, 36 from Kent, tried a number of different treatments before she found the right one for her. She tells how she relieves her hay-fever symptoms.**

“When I first got hay fever, I already had asthma and I just thought my symptoms were connected to this. My head and nose felt very congested. My eyes would feel very sore, red and itchy, especially near flowers. It was during a routine check with my GP that my hay-fever was diagnosed.

“My symptoms tend to flare up from February until September. Hay fever can also make my asthma worse. I used to have problems sleeping too. It’s like trying to go to sleep with a bad cold. Luckily, the medication I take has helped me to get to sleep.

“I take antihistamines prescribed by my doctor regularly throughout the hay-fever season. These are non-drowsy so they don’t affect my day-to-day life. I also use eye drops. I find that this treatment helps a lot. It doesn’t get rid of my symptoms completely but it makes them manageable.

“I’ve also had to make a few lifestyle changes. I now avoid cutting the grass. If I really have to then I do it late in the evening when pollen counts are lower. I always keep my windows shut too. I try not to sit outside when pollen counts are high in the morning and late afternoon. Taking medication before the hay-fever season starts has really helped as well.

“My advice to anyone else with hay fever is to try a different antihistamine if the one you are prescribed is not effective. I tried several different antihistamines before I found one that really helped my symptoms. So don’t feel shy about going back to your doctor and asking for a different one if your symptoms aren’t relieved.”

This article was taken from the NHS Choices Website. For more information go to:-

< [www.nhs.uk/conditions/hay-fever/Pages/Introduction.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hay-fever/Pages/Introduction.aspx) >

# Breathe Easy

## What is the Expert Patients Programme?

### self-management - moving from patient to person

The Expert Patients Programme (EPP) is an NHS self-management programme delivered by lay people for anyone living with any long term health condition(s).

Groups of 8-16 participants, with a mix of different conditions, meet over six weekly sessions and are led through a structured course by trained tutors who are also living with a long-term condition. Each session (lasting two and a half hours) looks at ways to manage the effects of their long-term condition such as:

- dealing with pain and extreme tiredness
- coping with feelings of depression
- relaxation techniques and exercise
- healthy eating
- communicating with family, friends and health professionals
- planning for the future.

There is a strong emphasis on participants setting practical, achievable goals which are monitored each week. Core skills such as problem solving, decision making, being resourceful and behavioural changes are also developed throughout the six weeks.

The EPP does not provide health information or treatment, nor does it look at clinical needs. The aim of the EPP is to give participants the confidence to take responsibility for their own care, while also encouraging them to work in partnership with health and social care professionals

#### How does the EPP help patients?

People who have taken part in an EPP course have reported that it has helped them, to:

- manage their condition and treatment more effectively together with health care professionals
- feel confident and more in control of their life

## Quiz Time

Time for Answers!

### The Quick Quiz

#### Answers for last months Quiz

1. 40 D and N of the G F?....40 Days and Nights Of the Great Flood.
2. 24 B B in a P ? ...24 Black Birds in a Pie.
3. 3B M? ...3 Blind Mice.
4. 2001 S O?.....2001 Space Odyssey.

#### This Month's Questions

1. 22 Y in a CP? .....
2. Lb at 40? .....
3. 70 MPH M S L on MW? .....
4. . 7 D of W? .....

- develop effective relationships with healthcare Professionals
- be realistic about the impact of their condition on themselves and their family
- use their skills and knowledge to lead a full life
- take their medication effectively by reporting problems when they arise

#### Useful resources

For more information about the Expert Patients Programme and self-management you may find the following resources useful.

Expert Patients Programme website - [www.expertpatients.nhs.uk](http://www.expertpatients.nhs.uk)

Department of Health website -

[www.dh.gov.uk/selfcare](http://www.dh.gov.uk/selfcare)

Long-term Medical Conditions Alliance (LMCA) website - [www.lmca.org.uk](http://www.lmca.org.uk)

Supporting Expert Patients: How to develop lay led self-management programmes for people with long-term condition medical conditions. Can be downloaded from [www.lmca.org.uk](http://www.lmca.org.uk)

The NHS Improvement Plan can be downloaded from [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.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](mailto: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.