

December 2010

# East Coast Area News

Hello and welcome to the December issue of your East Coast Area News. It's hard to believe that once again the holiday season is upon us. Inside you will find some tips on how to cope through this festive, and sometimes stressful, time. We hope that you have been able to keep warm and comfortable during the recent cold snap. Inside we also have some tips for coping in these extreme conditions. All of us here at the East Coast Area office would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas, and a healthy, peaceful and happy New Year.

## Update: Emailing Newsletter

In our last issue we asked you to send us your email address if you wished to receive our newsletter and other information electronically. We have had a great response so far. If you haven't done so already and would like to receive all information in future by this method, email your address to: [eca@ms-society.ie](mailto:eca@ms-society.ie).

Your email address will only be used by MS Ireland and will not be passed on to any third party.

If you would prefer to receive information by post that is fine too.



## Wellness Day

Our Wellness Day for People with MS in the Glenview Hotel that we had to postpone in December due to the snow has been rescheduled to January 26th. We will be sending out details regarding this event closer to the time. All those that have sent in forms for the original date will be allocated places automatically.

## Mobile Phone Numbers

If you would like to give us your mobile phone number details please contact the office. We can then text you reminders of upcoming events.

## Disclaimer:

The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of MS Ireland. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, the editor is not responsible for any error or inaccuracy that may occur.

## Some Inspiration...



I will start by telling you I was diagnosed with MS in September 2006. Quite an eventful occasion really. I was referred to an Orthopaedic Surgeon in St Vincent's Hospital because I was having a dropped right foot occurring during times that I was out jogging. Because I had a history of having a back operation in 1992 which left two screws in my back, the surgeon was unable to accurately tell if the screws were causing the problem without an MRI and you've guessed it, to get a successful MRI of the area, we'd have to have surgery to take out the screws. They took them out, took the MRI and it had nothing to do with orthopaedics, so after recovering from the surgery I was sent to Prof. Tubridy in St Vincent's and a few months later, following the usual tests, he confirmed the MS diagnoses and it was relapsing remitting, which a couple of years later developed into primary progressive.

No surprise to any of you readers, the news was devastating. I came up with this thing years ago called my "10 minute rule", which I use when I run into some bad news (e.g. the plumber cancels, I broke my favourite coffee mug), I allow myself uncontrolled annoyance for 10 minutes (and lots of bad words), but after the 10 minutes, I have to get back into the human race again and get over it. I find this very cathartic – 'cause I've had my 'poor me' moment. But depending on the type of bad news, this 10 minute rule can be extended to 10 hours, 10 days, but with this MS diagnosis I allowed myself 10 weeks (I've never had a 10 week'er before.) So having cried a lot and blaming everybody etc and 'why did this happen to me' kinda stuff, I had to pick myself up and get on with it. The wallowing period was over (and frankly, I was glad, because I was bored with it.)

I had always been a sporty type and I made myself go back to the gym, knowing that this was good for the MS and because I also have Osteoporosis, I needed to continue with weight bearing exercise. Then I spotted, in the Irish Wheelchair Association magazine that they were looking for sporty types for trials in the Paralions. I turned up to DCU on the required day and I nearly turned back @ the door, when I saw everyone to be under 20 years of age and I was walking in there, aged 44!! Anyway, since I was there, sure I might as well have a look...thinking because of the weakness on my right side of my body, that perhaps swimming would be my only option. So while I was queuing to speak to them, I needed a rest, and the only seat I could see was a vacated rowing machine. So the coach invited me to have a go and it turns out that he was impressed enough to ask me to attend further training. Cutting a long story short, I got into a boat for the first time in late September 2009 and in October 2010, I flew to New Zealand as part of the mixed four coxed rowers to represent Ireland in the Rowing World Championships. Now...who would have thunk it! We succeeded in getting into the final and came in 5<sup>th</sup> in the World. Not bad, for an 'auld bird' who only stepped into a boat for the first time a year earlier. The team are allowed 2 weeks holiday from training, which I'm enjoying at the moment, but next week we return to training, for amongst other competitions, qualification next August for the Paralympics in London 2012. The training is extensive and takes over your life. You're either into it or not, there's no half way. During the peak of training, we train 7 days a week, often twice a day. So it's not for the faint hearted.

So why am I writing this piece? Well, Jennifer in the Regional Office felt that this story might be 'inspirational' to others with MS. But I say to each one of you, that when you think your body has given you the most it can give...it's lying...push it and you'll be amazed at the advances you can achieve, even it means only lifting your arm higher than you did yesterday. Surround yourself with positive people and if they're not, be polite, but remove yourself from their company. I guarantee that you'll feel better for doing this. Don't let any Medic tell you what you are capable of...YOU tell them. Read positive books....I personally highly recommend '*The Secret*' which got me to the World Championships! My name is Anne-Marie McDaid and at 45 years of age I represented my country in a sporting event and hope to partake in the Paralympics, which I would NOT have been able to do UNLESS I had MS.

## Tips on Surviving the Stresses of Christmas

Christmas can be one of the most stressful times of year. Not only do you have the stress of finding the right presents, but you have the stress of paying for Christmas and the stress of Christmas parties, seeing family or the stress of being alone at a time which is traditionally centred around family. It is a time to be merry and not a time to be stressed. The following tips may help you to beat stress this Christmas and enjoy the holiday period even more.

### **Tip 1 - Establish a Christmas Budget At The Start Of The Holiday Season**

Christmas is a time when you can overspend and then spend the rest of the year worrying about it and how you are going to pay it off. At the start of the season, make a list of everyone you need to buy presents for and set yourself an affordable budget. Stick to your budget, you will thank yourself in a few months time. Set yourself a budget for food, travel and everything else over Christmas to ensure that you are not stressing about money.

### **Tip 2 - Get Yourself Organised**

Christmas is a very hectic time so make sure you are organised. Make yourself lists of all the people you need to buy for, all the food you need and places to go. Start your Christmas shopping early, write your cards early and be organised. Being able to start December with most of your Christmas shopping done will really reduce your stress levels.

### **Tip 3 - Know Family Arrangements**

Family can be one of the biggest sources of stress during the festive season. Whether it is due to clashes within the family or the sheer logistics and travelling required to get together, it can be a very serious source of stress. Make sure you know your family arrangements well in advance. Don't leave it to the last minute, start planning as early as you need to. This will reduce your stress because you will know what you are doing, where you are going and when it is all happening.

### **Tip 4 - Avoid People Who Create Stress**

There are always people you feel you should visit over Christmas which cause you or your family stress. These are people who are best avoided as it is not worth getting stressed and spoiling Christmas. Visit people because you want to, not because you feel you ought to. Spend the Christmas season with people you want to be with.

### **Tip 5 - Make Up With People**

Life is too short to hold grudges and the time comes when it is just too late to make up. Take some time out over Christmas to heal past grudges and arguments between you and some of the people around you. Often these arguments are a source of stress and by healing them you can reduce it.

Christmas is a time for merriment and enjoyment. Take some time out and reduce your stress levels so that you can really enjoy the festive season.

## Coping in Winter Weather

### How do I prepare for heavy snow and icy roads?

When snow or icy roads are forecast people should adjust their driving to suit the conditions. Black ice isn't always visible and so can be an even greater hazard for both motorists and pedestrians. Black ice may be formed when rain or drizzle fall on a road surface which is at a temperature below zero.

#### Before snow or ice

If you have to make a journey when snow is forecast, make sure you have warm clothes, food, water, boots, a torch and spade, and let someone know when you expect to arrive and your route. Try to wait until the roads have been gritted before travelling. Put grit or cat litter on paths and driveways to lessen the risk of slipping on compacted snow. Check on vulnerable neighbours.

#### During snow or ice

- Avoid travel if possible.
- If you must drive check the Highway Code for advice on driving in ice and snowy weather. A summary of the advice is: Take care around gritters. Don't be tempted to overtake. Slow down; it can take 10 times longer to stop in snowy or icy conditions, so allow extra room. Use the highest gear possible to avoid wheel spin. Manoeuvre gently and avoid harsh braking and acceleration. If you start to skid, gently ease off the accelerator and avoid braking. If braking is necessary, pump the brakes don't slam them on. If you get stuck, stay with your car and tie something brightly coloured to your aerial.
- If you go outside wear several layers of clothing and keep dry to prevent loss of body heat. Watch out for signs of hypothermia such as uncontrollable shivering, slow/slurred speech, memory lapse and drowsiness; and frostbite with loss of feeling in and pale appearance of fingers, toes, nose and ear lobes. Keep moving your arms and legs to help the blood circulate.

#### After snow and ice

- Be careful when walking or driving on compacted snow; it may have turned to ice.
- Take care when shovelling snow. Cold air makes it harder to work and breathe, which adds some extra strain on the body and can be the cause of heart attacks in the vulnerable.

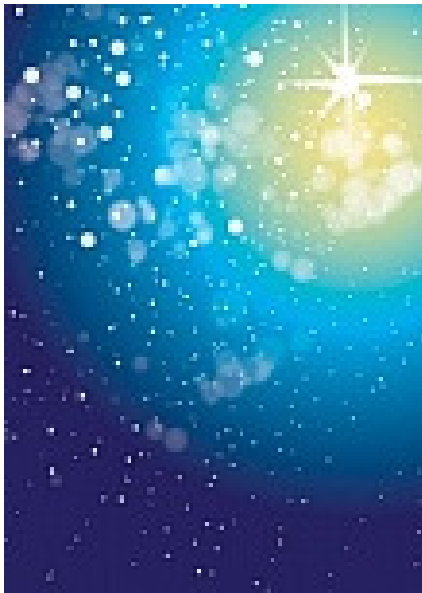
## Male Fertility & MS

We received this note from one of our members, who wanted to share this news. After experiencing some fertility issues, he tried out this equipment and is now happily expecting a new arrival to his family in the coming months!

### **Male Fertility**

*"Male readers seeking further information on fertility options may be interested in the 'FERTI CARE@personal' medical device, available through [www.Multicept.com](http://www.Multicept.com), which aims to support the right of men with disabilities to have children or enjoy a healthy sex life. The website contains information on medical research and the product, which is recommended for use under medical advice.*

*Use of the device takes a little practice, trial and error, patience and fortitude, but we all have this in spades, given what we deal with to get to where we are today!! I really want to get the word out there for men with MS that there is a choice, and it does work."*



### Rescheduled East Wicklow Branch Lunch

The East Wicklow Branch Christmas lunch has been rearranged and they will reconvene in the Glenview hotel, on Saturday January 15th at 12.45pm for a one o'clock sitting. The Branch will send out invites shortly to its members. However if anyone would like to confirm their place in the meantime they can contact the branch secretary, Tommy Tallant on 2824074 or e-mail [tjtallant@eircom.net](mailto:tjtallant@eircom.net).

### Christmas Cards

MS Ireland Christmas Cards are available from our National Office on 01-6781600 or from our Bray Shop, 01-2861913

### For Sale

Viafor Electro Magnetic Mattress. Helps increase energy and mobility, reduce pain, improve bladder control. Also helps improve mood and well-being. As new. €2,750. Contact Kevin on 01 4148091.

### Used Scooter For Sale

Freerider Companion Scooter for sale  
Four years old, recently serviced, new battery  
Price: €600 Please contact Angela on (087) 7800408

## Programme of Events 2011

26th Jan	Wellness Day
Jan	Carers' Coffee & Chat (see attached)
Feb	Coffee & Chat every Tues PwMS (see attached)
4th Feb	Yoga - Shankill begins
Feb	Carers' Coffee & Chat (see attached)
7th Feb	Yoga - Mount Merrion begins
March	Carers' Coffee & Chat (see attached)
April	Carers' Coffee & Chat (see attached)
Apr/May	Wellness Day
May	Carers & PwMS Coffee & Chat
May	Coffee & Chat every Thurs PwMS (see attached)
June	Carers Day
June	Carers' Coffee & Chat
July	Teenagers with a Family Member with MS Activity Break
July	Young Persons with a Family Member with MS
	Summer Activity Day
	Wellness Day

### For Sale

Adapted Renault Kangoo 1.2 petrol. 48k miles. 5 door 3 seats. Ramp to back door & wheelchair anchor straps fitted etc. Price €5000 o.n.o. Call 087 9118200

### New Shop Opens

MS Ireland Toy Discount Store is now open in Wicklow Town. Come on in...

MS Ireland is selling off a quantity of unclaimed gifts that have accrued from our annual MS READaTHON Campaign, as well as our range of Christmas cards and novelty gifts. Fantastic value for stocking fillers with huge reductions on many items as all stock must go. So support Ireland's National Charity for People with Multiple Sclerosis and bag a bargain into the bargain! All of the proceeds of this venture will be used to support the services of the MS Ireland, The shop is located on Abbey Street, Wicklow Town (next to AIB Bank) and will be open from Wednesday to Saturday 10am - 5pm.

**Open all week Christmas Week.**