

LWO Christmas Newsletter 2015

Hi to all you lovely members of LWO online support group. This is the season to be jolly, for caring and sharing. Today, 1st December 2015, I ask myself, where this year has gone. This time last year the website had 32,500 viewings and the online support group has 271 members. By Christmas this year the website will have had 90,000 viewings, amazing. The online support group continues to go from strength to strength. Christmas 2014 we had 271 members and as of today we have 664 members. A big thank you to all of you who have found an online home with LWO and for all your contributions that has made us this successful.

There are exciting new changes that LWO will be put in place in January 2016 that will make us stronger and will ensure we continue to raise the profile of lymphoedema. Big thank you to Chris Hunter and Karen Taft for all their hard work on the online support group. With the continued help of our online support team LWO is also putting in place a team that can help with Admin, Finance and Support this will take an immense amount of pressure off me. Thank you to those of you who have donated to LWO, please remember that there is a donate button on the website support group page. LWO is now at a stage that without funding we cannot move forward. If any member in the New Year would like to hold a fund raising event for us, this would be greatly appreciated.

Donate - www.lymph-what-oedema.com/support-group right hand column, scroll down.

We have all shared our anxieties, knowledge, thoughts, and vented our frustrations. Importantly we have all learnt that we are not alone. Now as we turn our thoughts to planning Christmas we must also make plans to cope with our lymphoedema without it spoiling our enjoyment and fun. Preparation is everything so that we can have a stress free time.

Here are my tips;

- Buy some bubbles so you can practice deep breathing exercises not only will this open up your lymphatic system it is a great stress buster.
- Have your favourite music on hand and if you feel you are getting stressed, blast out the music, have a dance or sing-a-long, guaranteed to lift your mood.
- Plan as much as you can in advance so that you don't get stressed, remember stress is not good for your lymphoedema.
- Don't try to cram everything into one day.
- Plan over several days, if it helps make lists.
- Delegate ask your family and friends for help.
- Watch your alcohol intake as it is not good for your lymphoedema.
- Drink plenty of water it really helps to move your lymphatic fluid.
- If you are going to spend a lot of time curled up in front of the television watching all those old films, shift your position every 30 minutes. Especially those legs.
- Keep moving. Movement of lymph fluid depends on muscle movement (exercise).
- Remember there are exercises on the website.
- Rest when you feel the need.
- Sleep when you feel the need.
- Remember that GP services will be on reduced opening times at this time of year. Christmas day is on a Friday, surgeries won't open until Monday.

- Check you GP's opening times.
- Accident and Emergency departments are overstretched.
- However, if you have an infection do not leave it untreated.
- Make a note of your GP opening times for Christmas and the New Year.
- Check in advance that you know where your nearest walk-in centre is situated.
- Use your Pharmacist they will often be able to provide solutions. Smaller chemists will probably be closed, however supermarkets often have a chemist and will only be closed Christmas Day.
- Check to see if there is an emergency chemist in your area.
- Check prescriptions are up to date.
- Make sure you don't run out of medication.

We now turn our thoughts to our Christmas first aid kit. Planning and being prepared is absolutely essential.

CHRISTMAS FIRST AID KIT

- Antibiotics
- Anti-fungal Cream
- Antiseptic Cream
- Alcohol Wipes
- Anti-histamine tablet
- Roll of tape
- If you use tape Compression garments at least two, one to wear and a spare
- Indigestion medication
- Diarrhoea Medication
- Pain Killers
- Assortment of plasters
- Marker pen so that, if you are unfortunate enough to develop cellulitis over the festive season, then you can mark the area to show your GP/Health-care professional where it started and how far it has spread.

I often find when I am reasonably well prepared, I often don't need these things, and then I can put things to the back of my mind and enjoy my family and friends at this wonderful time of year. If you need someone to talk to over the festive season this online support group operates 365 days of the year. Replies might be slower than usual but, I am sure where you can, you will look after each other.

Have a lovely Christmas

The team at LWO

Wish each & every one of you

Peace, health and happiness