



THE STROKE AID SOCIETY
P O BOX 51283, RAEDENE, 2124

PBO 930018543

Chairman: Mrs Sheila Haydock, Tel: 011.488.3548/728.5403
PRO/Office Manager: Mrs Sandra Colombick, Tel: 011.485.4149
[www:strokeaid.org](http://www.strokeaid.org)

NEWSLETTER - MARCH/APRIL 2007

Hi there

Easter and Pesach have passed – I hope you all enjoyed the season and the holidays!

Jack Frost is nipping at our heels and it is time to get out the woollies and drink hot cocoa before going to bed. (*See item on cocoa*)

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

I am sorry that I gave you the wrong information regarding the subscriptions to be paid by members attending the Tuesday morning meetings. The subscription should be **R30** and not **R25** as indicated in the last newsletter. I hope that no embarrassment or inconvenience was caused. *Thank you for understanding.*

WELCOME TO SANDRA COLOMBICK:

Sandra joined us officially on 1st April as our new PRO/Office Manager. Some of you have already met her at the Tuesday morning meetings, where she helps out as a volunteer in addition to her other duties. Initially she will be working from home as PRO/Office Manager on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 8h30 to 13h30, until such time as we are able to set up an office for her. Hopefully it will be soon – we are in negotiations to get a Container parked in the Paterson Park Recreation Centre grounds that can be used for our books and library area and also for a small storage area for equipment and files. We then hope to use our existing Therapy room as our office. In the meantime, Sandra can be reached on her Home telephone - 011.485.4149 or her Cell - 082.558.1443 during Office hours.

Sandra, we extend a warm welcome to you and hope that you will spend a long and happy time with us.

NEW MEMBERS:

We welcome the following new members – MRS MONICA HOWARD, MRS MAUREEN JONES AND MRS LYNETTE SIMMONDS.

BANKING DETAILS: First National Bank, President Street West
ACCOUNT NO: 50420026996 BRANCH CODE: 250-705

COCOA – A WONDER FOOD:



Cocoa could cut the risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes to less than 10%, scientists say. They studied the Kuna tribe in Panama who drank 40 cups a week, and found that **epicatechin**, a compound in cocoa, sharply reduces their chances of developing major illnesses – ananova.com reports. *Sunday Times Health*

WHAT A BUTTERFLY AND A STROKE HAVE IN COMMON:

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole.

Then it seemed to stop making any progress.

It appeared as if it had gone as far as it could and could go no further.

So the man decided to help the butterfly.

He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of cocoon.

The butterfly then emerged easily.

but it had a swollen body and small shrivelled wings.

He continued to watch the butterfly, because he expected that at any moment the wings would enlarge and expand to support the body, which would contract in time.

Neither happened;

In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shrivelled wings.

It was never able to fly.

The man did not understand that in his well-intentioned kindness he had changed the order of things.

He was unaware that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required to get through the tiny opening were Nature's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved freedom from the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in life. If we were allowed to go through life without obstacles, it would cripple us.

We would not be as strong as we should have been and we would never fly.

So have a great day. Have a great life and struggle a little.

Then fly!

The real moral to the story is "LET PEOPLE DO AS MUCH AS THEY SAFELY CAN ON THEIR OWN OR THEY WILL NEVER AGAIN BE INDEPENDENT".

Stroke Association Queensland Newsletter

CHESS:

Our member HENRY ROSENHEIM is willing to teach other members to play Chess. If you would like to learn, please speak to him at the Tuesday morning meetings.

PREVENT PRESSURE! By Dr Rob Campbell

[\(rob@aurorahospital.co.za\)](mailto:rob@aurorahospital.co.za)

Foundations of Good Skin Care in your Chair from the Bottom up!

Pressure ulcers, probably the most feared complication of neurological impairments, are viewed by 'patients', family members and care professionals as completely preventable – and, well they are – but only if you actually stick with the very strict and unforgiving programme of constant prevention and early management.

While this may seem like a boring and mundane topic for a column, the fact that pressure ulcers still develop – both at home and in hospitals (yes that's right), means that there is a need for regular reviews of your skin care programme, so bear with me.

No matter how long you have been in a chair, I want to remind you of the basics and redefine the components of a Skin Care Programme.

The clock is ticking

Lying or sitting in one position for extended periods restricts the blood supply to the areas of skin, connective tissue and muscle that are trapped between the surface you are on and the underlying bones. This cuts down on the amount of oxygen and nutrients that can be supplied to the trapped cells and leads to a build-up of poisonous waste products. If this situation goes on for a prolonged period of time, cells start to become sick and may die off.

If enough cells die off, the skin will become inflamed, blister and break open – resulting in a pressure ulcer. As more time passes, the pressure ulcer may increase in size and depth. The longer you lie or sit, the worse it gets. The good news is that relieving pressure allows the circulation to temporarily return to these areas, providing the cells with oxygen and nutrients. Doing this

regularly allows the skin, connective tissue and muscle to remain healthy.

Sadly, there are no off-days, half-times or time-outs. However unfair or inconvenient, the clock starts ticking the moment you settle into any one position – and only you can manage its effects.

Good Skin Care

1. Check that the whole length of both your thighs is well supported by the surface you are sitting on. This may mean checking the height of your wheelchair's footplates. If your thighs are well supported, your weight will be distributed over the largest possible surface area. This means that no single area is exposed to excessive pressure.
2. Ensure that your wheelchair cushion and seat are long enough to support your thighs adequately, without putting pressure over the back of your calves.
3. Always be aware of your posture, especially when you transfer into your wheelchair. The higher the level of your injury, the less you are able to actively maintain a good posture – and the more you will need extra support from your chair. If you are concerned that your posture is not up to scratch, speak to your physio, OT or seating specialist. Poor posture leads to unbalanced sitting and to pressure being carried in an unbalanced way – leaving you exposed to pressure ulcers.
4. Relieve pressure as often as you can. Whether you lift or lean, you need to get it right and do it for at least 60 seconds to re-supply the skin and tissue that you have been depriving of blood, oxygen and nutrients.

Pressure relief

While some people believe that an expensive cushion (gel or air cushion) allows you to do pressure relief at intervals of up to 60 minutes, I don't agree. "Able bodies" are constantly shifting their weight and position every 7 minutes – and there is little doubt that while this would be ideal, you should be doing pressure relief every 15-20 minutes.

5. Ensure that your cushion and wheelchair are both in good condition. Have your chair seen to at least every year, and don't leave problems to brew. If you use a foam cushion it should be replaced every 6-12 months, while gel and air cushions should be checked every 12 months by a professional.
6. Make sure that you check your skin at least twice a day (yes that's right), particularly straight after you have been sitting or lying for some time. If you find that you have any redness over pressure points, take note of its position, check whether the redness blanches (goes white when pressed in) and time how long it takes to fade back to

normal skin colour. If any redness lasts longer than 20-30 minutes, or if the skin does not "blanch", this means that skin damage has probably occurred – and it would be wise to get help or advice from someone who knows about caring for pressure-related changes. Work out what caused the problem, don't wait for it to happen again. Get professional help.

7. Never sit on red skin, broken skin or on any area where there is hardening underneath the skin. If this is present, you need to "rest your skin" and avoid sitting on the affected area. It would be best to consult a professional if you are unsure about how to handle this situation.

Take time to think these points through. Research shows that 10-20% of everyone who has a spinal cord injury, severe brain injury or other paralysing condition will develop a pressure ulcer in the next 5 years. You could make sure you're not in the group by sticking to these rules at all times. *ROLLING inspiration – March/April 2007*



FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

DANCE: Our next dance is to be held on Saturday, 9th June 2007. Please support Trevor and the dancers.

PET THERAPY: Julie Bezuidenhout will visit the Centre on 12th June with her dogs. It promises to be a very interesting morning. Please come

Until next time – keep smiling

Yvonne Thomé
SECRETARY

