



October 2010 • NS Edition

## The Cancer Club

*“We would talk over different fears that we would have, whereas I wouldn’t talk about them with friends who hadn’t gone through that situation... I find you can talk to people like that and say ... this is natural to feel this way you know, there’s nothing wrong with feeling that way.”*

- Excerpted from “The Role of Identity in Adjustment Among Survivors of Oesophageal Cancer, reported on page 3.

## WELCOME TO NOVA SCOTIA

CPOP is in the process of building communities of practice that bring together community-based organizations, researchers and health care practitioners, with the objective of ex-



changing and translating knowledge from one group to another. As most of you know, one of the mechanisms we’re using to do that is the website hosted at the CancerView site. We are, perhaps not surprisingly, experiencing growing pains with CPOPonline. Virtual communities of practice (CoP) are in their infancy, and we still have a great deal to learn about how those work and how to support their development. To help us sort that out, we’re focusing on building a community of practice in Nova Scotia, with the expectation that lessons learned in the region can be translated to other regions. Nova Scotia is a leader in knowledge translation and exchange and is ideally suited to push forward the virtual CoP phenomenon. We invite everyone to contribute to the development of better knowledge exchange strategies, which will ultimately improve the health and quality of life of Nova Scotians impacted by cancer.

Warm regards,

*Lynne*

Lynne Robinson

October 2010

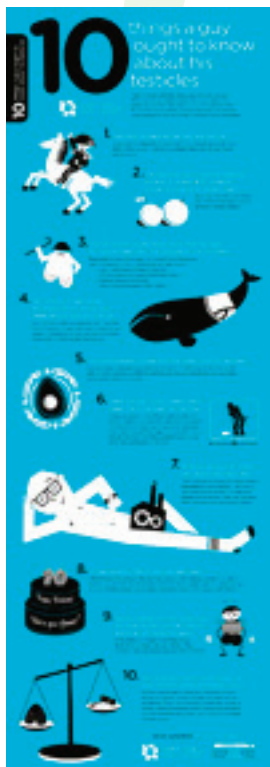
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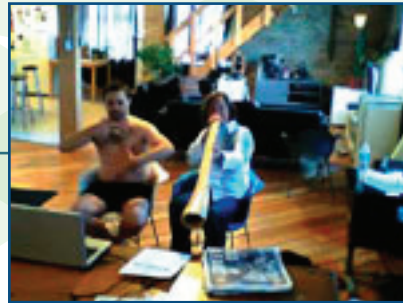
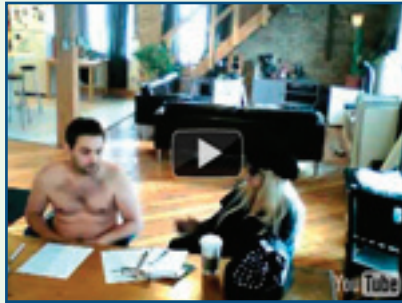
## A Nut Fact

“There are over 15,000 videos listed under ‘hit in the balls’ on YouTube. Unless you were in one of them, testicle pain isn’t normal. Neither is an abnormal, persistent backache, or a dull ache or heaviness in your lower abdomen. If you notice any of these signs, do yourself a favour and get checked. Catching a problem early is way better than getting hit in the balls.”

- Excerpted from *10 Things a Guy Ought to Know About His Testicles*, Canadian Cancer Society pamphlet. At [cancer.ca/nutfacts](http://cancer.ca/nutfacts).



## Guy at home in his underwear



Days 1, 2 and 3 of 25.

On October 6, Nova Scotia-based Stanfield's Ltd. launched a testicular cancer awareness program in which Mark, a survivor of testicular cancer, lives on camera for 25 days, doesn't leave home, and wears nothing but Stanfield's underwear – a different pair every day, with the obvious marketing tie-in. At the start of the campaign Stanfield's said it would donate \$1, up to \$25,000, to the Canadian Cancer Society for every Facebook follower. Funds will go toward testicular cancer awareness activities. However, by day 7, Mark had more than 25,000 followers, and Stanfield's increased the 'Follower' goal to 50,000, for \$50,000. Visit him at [www.guyathome.com](http://www.guyathome.com).

## What happens now?

Cancer Care Nova Scotia's most recent public Cancer Answers session was held on Oct. 5, with Tom McNeil talking about life after cancer treatment. Mr. McNeil, a social worker with the Cape Breton Cancer Centre, covered four approaches to recovery: physical, connected, creative, and contributing, and how those translate into actions. Connecting, for example, might mean spending more time with family – more specifically, four dinners together every week. "After Cancer Treatment" slides can be found at [www.cancercare.ns.ca/site-cc/media/cancercare/Treatment%20%20final.pdf](http://www.cancercare.ns.ca/site-cc/media/cancercare/Treatment%20%20final.pdf). Eastlink Television is broadcasting the presentation from Oct. 14-21 on Podium TV, and nine libraries in Nova Scotia have the lecture on DVD. Other Cancer Answers lectures can be found at [www.cancercare.ns.ca](http://www.cancercare.ns.ca), in the Patients & Families section, Education & Resources, Cancer Answers Lecture Series.

## Thyroid cancer patients say...

The Thyroid Cancer Alliance recently surveyed nearly 2,400 patients from 40 countries about their experiences with treatment and support; 274 of those patients were Canadian. The findings were presented in poster format at the September 2010 International Thyroid Conference in Paris. Patients said the most difficult time was the diagnostic stage, and that they wanted more information - about the disease and support groups - early in the process. Most people looked for information on the Internet. The study is at [www.thyroidcancercanada.org/international-survey-results.php](http://www.thyroidcancercanada.org/international-survey-results.php). The *London Free Press* and the *Globe & Mail* reported on the results; links to both are on the Thyroid Cancer Canada site.

## The Lodge that Gives

The Canadian Cancer Society recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of its patient accommodation facility on South Street in Halifax: festivities were held at Palooka's Boxing Club on September 20. The lodge, a beloved home-away-from-home for patients and their caregivers, hosted 1,100 grateful guests in 2009. That number will rise once the facility, to be renamed Daffodil Place, is expanded. That will likely be in 2014.



## Exercise helps, if it happens

Close to 600 young adult cancer survivors across Canada were surveyed using the Leisure Time Exercise Questionnaire, Medical Outcomes Study and several psychosocial scales, with physical activity measures of prime importance. While the findings show that physical activity is associated with health-related quality of life, 23% of respondents were completely sedentary, 25% were insufficiently active, 22% were within public health guidelines, and 29% were above guidelines.

Source: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20857227](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20857227)

## When cancer spurs personal growth - and when it doesn't

A researcher at the University of Texas has tracked the personal growth of cancer survivors as well as people without cancer over a 10-year period. Using MIDUS data (National Survey of Midlife Development in the US) collected in 1994-95 and in 2004-6, Tetyana Pudrovska has found that personal growth declines, for everyone, with age. However, the decline is slower for cancer survivors compared to individuals who do not have cancer, but only for survivors born in the 1940s, 50s or 60s. Those who were born in the 1930s experienced the same decline as people without cancer. Those born in the 1920s declined faster than people without cancer.

The author suggests that people born in the 1920s are more likely to believe that they are powerless against cancer, that cancer is contagious and incurable, and that treatment is worse than the disease; these were the sentiments that prevailed in magazine stories and educational films of that era. Public discourse, says the author, has changed since then, with a greater focus on fighting the disease: "Cancer has become a challenge, a battle, and people grow stronger in the process...."

Source: <http://hsb.sagepub.com/content/51/3/260.abstract>

## Adjusting to oesophageal cancer

A qualitative study of five survivors of oesophageal cancer in Ireland has shown the researchers that patients had to adjust their eating patterns, sometimes dramatically,

and that eating was no longer pleasurable, given how restricted their diet had become and how much planning and organization was required. Some foods stick to the scar tissue, which blocks breathing, for instance. "I get a sort of blockage, an air lock, and that causes me to be very sick, violently sick, and of course no breathing," said one participant. People also said that they would have appreciated talking to oesophageal cancer survivors at the time of diagnosis and just after surgery, for reassurance that their feelings weren't unusual and that there was hope. Participants reported personal growth as a result of the cancer experience, with one person deciding to stop hunting rabbits and to take up painting and playing music instead.

Source: <http://hpq.sagepub.com/content/early/2010/10/01/1359105310368448>

## Rural women's weight concerns after breast cancer

Women who live in rural areas and who have survived breast cancer are more likely to be obese than women living in urban centres. In exploring the psychosocial factors around weight gain, researchers at the University of Kansas Medical Center found that 61% of the women who were overweight or obese were attempting to lose weight, mostly by dieting on their own. Factors related to weight gain since diagnosis: depression, fear of cancer recurrence, less physical strength, body image concerns, changes in relationships, and financial stress.

Source: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20734339](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20734339)

## Correction

The program attributed to Canadian Virtual Hospice in the August 2010 edition of the newsletter is not a CVH project. CancerChatCanada.com is headed by Dr. Joanne Stephen of the BC Cancer Agency. CVH has helped raise awareness of this service but does not operate it. We apologize for the error.

# EVENTS

October 2010

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## October 12–November 16

Cancer Transitions, Halifax  
4 pm – 6:30 pm  
Six-session program for cancer survivors covering exercise, nutrition, emotional well-being

YMCA of Greater Halifax–Dartmouth  
1565 South Park St.  
Halifax

*For More Information: (902) 473-8241*

## October 20

Breast Cancer Action Nova Scotia  
Open house and video launch of five stories about living with breast cancer

*FMI: (902) 465-2685*

## October 27

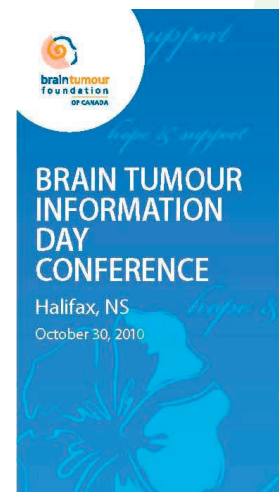
Support for the caregiver  
7 pm – 9 pm  
Canadian Cancer Society, Nova Scotia Division  
The Lodge That Gives  
5826 South Street  
Halifax

*FMI: (902) 423-6183 or supportservices@ns.cancer.ca*

## October 29–30

Ways to Wellness – Two Days of Hoping and Coping  
8 am – 4 pm  
Cape Breton Cancer Centre

*FMI: Kelly, (902) 567-8074*



## October 30

Brain Tumour Information Day Conference  
8:45 am – 4:30 pm  
Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel  
1919 Upper Water Street  
Halifax

*FMI: Jennifer McIntosh, Education & Volunteer Services Specialist, 1-800-265-5106 ext. 231, jmcintosh@braintumour.ca*

## November 3

Cancer Day of Action  
Halifax  
Outside Province House starting at 10:30 am

*FMI: Joanne Parker at joannep@c2cc.ca, or www.controlcancer.ca*

## November 9

Cancer Answers  
“Talking to Children About Cancer: When a Parent or Grandparent has Cancer”

7 pm – 8:30 pm  
Halifax Infirmary  
Royal Bank Theatre  
1796 Summer Street (Level 1)  
Halifax - Telehealth province-wide

*FMI: 1-866-599-2267*

## November 12–14

Skills for Healing Retreat  
Rothesay, NB

*FMI: Nancy Baker at (506)849-1697 or nancyjanebaker@hotmail.com, or www.itsnotjustonething.com*

To list an event or suggest a news story or feature, please contact [jan.d.matthews@gmail.com](mailto:jan.d.matthews@gmail.com) with details.

We are only able to deliver this issue of the newsletter in English at the moment. We welcome reports and events in French and are looking at other ways to increase the French language content of these newsletters. We welcome any suggestions or help with this.

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