



CROYDON EPILEPSY SOCIETY

Spring 2021 NEWSLETTER

Since sending out our Autumn Newsletter we have gone through a **second lock down** starting in December which we hope will be relaxed in mid April.

Apologies for not sending out a Winter Newsletter but I was undergoing medical treatment at the end of last year but thankfully I am now fully recovered. I actually had to have surgery at Croydon University Hospital but was relieved to find a covid free building had been allocated for surgery. I would like to send a special thank you to all those doctors and nursing staff working so hard during this crisis not only in the hospital but across the borough. It is important not to delay seeking medical advice on non covid issues as help is out there and strict guidelines are in place.

Hopefully, as the year progresses we can begin to see life gradually getting back to normal. Schools have opened again this week with children having to be tested on a regular basis.

Many people are still working at home and the advice is still to carry on with doing this at present. It is hoped that non essential shops will be able to reopen in April. It is still not possible to meet up with friends in groups although it has just been announced that you are now allowed to meet up with one other person in an outdoor environment.

It is good that the **vaccine programme** is continuing to be rolled out. I actually had mine a week ago at Parkway medical centre in New Addington. Thankfully it all went well and was well organised without any long queuing. I also experienced no side effects. If you are having reservations and have not had your vaccination yet please discuss with your doctor for reassurance and who can answer your queries.

A number of **lateral flow test centres** have been set up in the borough with four libraries carrying out these tests at present including Croydon Central Library. These will be in place until the end of March 2021. It is a testing programme initially for frontline council staff, helping to protect them and those they work with from Covid-19.

<https://new.croydon.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-and-service-updates/test-and-trace-keeping-croydon-safe/keeping-croydon-safe/rapid-lateral-flow-testing>

In October 2020, a study by the British Medical Journal was published about COVID-19 and its effects on certain groups of people. The evidence suggested that there

was a small increase in the risk of hospital admissions and deaths resulting from COVID19 in both men and women with epilepsy. However, Dr Ryhs Thomas, neurologist at the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals Foundation Trust said that this risk is not big enough to ask people with epilepsy to strictly shield. However, it is enough to show the importance of continuing to wear masks, keep a safe distance from others and wash our hands as advised.

There is more information about epilepsy and COVID-19 on the Epilepsy Action website at [epilepsy.org.uk/COVID](https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/COVID)

It is difficult to keep up with all the government update so please visit the government site for further information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary>

Purple Day is on Friday 26th March 2021. Purple day is a time to get people talking about epilepsy, raise awareness of the condition and raise vital funds.



GET TALKING ABOUT EPILEPSY

National Epilepsy Week is from the 20th to 25th May 2021 .

Our **AGM** in May 2020 was cancelled. Due to covid 19 and continued restrictions it is unlikely that we will hold an AGM in public again this year.

But the society will try and hold a zoom meeting this year during National Epilepsy Week. The date we are considering is Thursday 20th May 2021 at 7pm. Please contact us by email if you would like to be sent an invite.

Due to the lockdown many charities have suffered reduced income however, our finances are in a good state and we have decided to make the decision not to charge a membership fee this year. If you still wanted to donate some funds to help those with epilepsy please consider making a donation to the two main epilepsy charities instead. These being Epilepsy Action <https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/> and Epilepsy Society. <https://epilepsysociety.org.uk/>

Stay Positive

It is difficult not to be affected by COVID19 and the restrictions put on all areas of our lives . However, it is important to stay positive and think ahead to better times.

The last few months have been awful for so many people, with millions dealing with grief, stress, financial difficulties, job losses and isolation caused by the pandemic.

On the BBC website I came across an article about five ways to stay positive through lockdown. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55264224>

Get moving, Stop over thinking, set a new target , talk it over and do it badly.

Optimists live longer, have better relationships and better immune systems, says Olivia Remes of Cambridge University. And the good news is you can cultivate optimism: an inner sense that you can make a difference to your life, and that it's not all down to things outside your control. How? Her number one tip is the principle of **"do it badly"**.

In other words don't wait to do things perfectly at the right time on the right day. That's even more important in winter when gloomy weather might make you think twice about doing something.

"Our inner voice of criticism continually stops us from doing worthwhile things", she says. "Jump straight into action. Do things and accept that they might initially be done badly. When you do that, most of the time the results are actually not that bad - and they're almost always better than doing nothing."

I would like to leave you with this poem:

Beauty of the Month of March both Winter and Spring

As winter's cold days and longer nights end, and the last of snow and ice melt away, there is a short window of time, a month that shares itself with winter and spring, March. Although it only has 31 days, so much change happens to the earth, weather and nature. March makes her presence known, with her high pitch song of whistling winds, the wild gusty breezes, her clouds and sky become full of white like fleece set in deep blue sky, shorter days, longer nights. March sings out, waking Spring!

If you need urgent support

If you are living on your own and are still unable to get out to buy food and other essentials like medications please contact local help agencies such as Help the Aged or your local council. See below for Croydon Council details.

The council continues to have a dedicated helpline for residents who need urgent help as a result of COVID-19. Call: 020 8604 7787 – open Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm. <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/public/coronavirus-covid-19-message-us>

Other information can be found on-line:

<https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/daily-life/safety/coronavirus-covid-19>

Useful Information:

Croydon Health Services Neurology Department:

If you are a local support group requesting more information on epilepsy and for a speaker to come to your group to talk about epilepsy and the support available to those who may have epilepsy or be a carer for someone who has the condition - please email for general enquiries ch-trspecialistmedicine1@nhs.net.

There is an Epilepsy Nurse Hotline/Advice telephone number which is open to GP's and patients (who are already known to the Epilepsy Service). If you are registered with a Croydon GP and under the care of a Croydon Neurologist and feel this service would benefit you please discuss with your GP who would be able to provide you with the telephone number.

The Croydon Carers Support Centre drop in, in George Street, Croydon is currently not open to provide support to carers. However they can still be contacted by phone on 020 8649 9339,option1 or email at info@carersinfo.org.uk
<https://www.whitgiftfoundation.co.uk/content/carers-support-centre>

Croydon Age UK normally offers a range of practical home services for everyone living in the local area, especially those in later life. However, these services may be reduced at present due to the corona virus so please contact Tel no: 0208 683 7120, or email homeservices@ageukcroydon.org.uk, www.ageukcroydon.org.uk
There is also a Helpline no 0208 686 0066 for general enquiries.

Croydon Epilepsy Society Contact Details

Please contact us by phone or email. Please leave a message on our mobile no or text us and we will get back to you asap.

Further information can be provided by the following national support groups if you need urgent support:

Epilepsy Action www.epilepsy.org.uk Helpline 0808 800 5050
Epilepsy Society www.epilepsysociety.org.uk Helpline 01494 60140

Address: 64 Newlands Woods, Bardolph Avenue, Croydon CRO 9JR.
Mobile No: 07926372711

Email Address: croydonepilepsy@gmail.com

Visit our Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/croydonepilepsysociety

Web Site: www.croydonepilepsysociety.org

Twitter: Follow us @croydonepilepsy (<https://twitter.com/croydonepilepsy>)

Elected Members

President

Professor F M C Besag, FRCP, FRCPsych, FRCPCH.

Vice - Presidents

Yvonne Green

Honorary Vice - Presidents

Dr P B C Fenwick

Mrs Rosemary Aselford

Mrs Rita Richmond

Committee Members

Mr Marco Valencia Chairman

Ms Dawn Gibbons Honorary Secretary

Mr Richard Ruffell Honorary Treasurer

Don't Hesitate Vaccinate Now!

