



Xmas newsletter 2020

Newsletter no 9

22 December 2020

I hope everyone is keeping safe and well.

And those who are not so well, I hope you are feeling better soon and have someone caring for you.

Please feel free to phone or email me at any time over the festive period, including Xmas day, if you would like to reach out to someone. Or if you need help.



And this will be me seeing in the New Year with a glass of bubbly. I will raise it at midnight to toast absent friends.

Zoom meetings

We are next having a virtual meeting at **11am on Tuesday 5 January**.

I will send the email link nearer the time.

I have scheduled monthly meetings. The next ones are 11am on Tuesday **2 February** and **2 March**. Do put them in your diary.

Tier 4

If you live in a Tier 4 area, you must follow the rules from 20 December. This means that you cannot meet other people indoors, including over the Christmas period, unless you live with them, or they are part of your existing support bubble. Outdoors, you can only meet one person from another household. These rules will not be relaxed for Christmas.

Every lockdown has had slightly different rules which can be confusing. I have only just noted that there is a change re meeting one other person outside. Previously, a household could do that - now it is only **on your own** that you can meet one other person.

All of us, as we are in the critically vulnerable group, have been told to follow a stricter regime and to *shield*. Stay at home and take only essential journeys. Only go out to exercise.

The full guidance is on the govt website.

Thankfully, those of us living on our own can continue with our existing support bubble and may be with them at Xmas and stay overnight.

There is no relaxation for New Year's Eve. In fact, when the restrictions are reviewed on 30 December, we may find ourselves facing tighter restrictions, if that is possible. Certainly we can expect Tier 4 restrictions to continue.

So this strange and challenging year will end on a bleak note and with a grim January ahead, compounded by the fallout from Brexit.

Coping strategies

So how do we deal with all this gloom and doom? How do we, despite everything, stay *cheerful*?

All the advice I have read, and my own personal experience this last year, tells me that the one essential element for a *positive* mindset is to feel *thankful*.

I do believe that all the physical and mental hardships we have been through on our individual cancer journeys, gives us *resilience*.

Every day that I wake up and I am not in pain, I feel blessed.

*Enjoy the small comforts - that hot shower, that first mug of coffee, a healthy breakfast, a walk outside, the birdsong....

*Be mindful: live in the moment and focus on what you *can* control and what you *can* do.

*Reach out to friends and family.

I speak to my twin brother in Norfolk every morning at 8am.

We started that when I was in hospital and have continued ever since. It is a great way to begin the day, and we always have a laugh.

But we all have uncertain futures and inevitably have had setbacks or are at times are feeling pretty down physically and mentally. But we can hope that, with new drugs coming on stream all the time, and the nursing team's caring support, we can get through most things.

Sorry if I sound like Pollyanna. Though that dates me - you younger ones probably don't know who I am talking about!



I do like this pic, which somebody sent me. Though I should add I only allow myself an occasional glass - alcohol doesn't go with my medication. So I am not encouraging anyone else to go down that route!

Covid jobs

I am waiting to hear from my GP and am not expecting anything very soon. Do let me know when you have yours, which has to be followed up by a second job three weeks later. I hope, as critically vulnerable, we are in a priority group and will be offered jobs by the end of January.

Vitamin D

We should all have had the government letter of 27 November. As well as advice about keeping safe at Xmas, it contains a section on Vitamin D supplements. It is offering a free 4 month supply in January. A link is provided to register, which must be by 4 January.

www.nhs.uk/get-vitamin-d

However, **Myeloma** patients receiving active treatment should check with the Unit. I have consulted Lesley. The Unit will do blood tests for Vitamin D for Myeloma patients who receive Zoledronic Acid bone infusions. This is because there may already be enough (or, possibly, too much) calcium in their blood.

For others, the normal route is through the GP, or you might like to avail yourself of the government offer.



I had my calcium levels checked on Monday when I went in for my routine blood tests and bone infusion. I am slightly low so have been given a one off 7 weeks' supply. Just one small tablet a day in the morning, with or without food.

AmazonSmile

I try to support local businesses where I can but for lots of every day deliveries and gifts, I have to rely on Amazon.

I have recently discovered **AmazonSmile** and have switched all my purchases to this website.

Amazon automatically donates 0.5% of the net purchasing price, excluding VAT, to the charity of your choice.

It works in exactly the same way as your ordinary Amazon account. But you must log on to AmazonSmile when making your purchases.

Visit smile.amazon.co.uk to get started.

I have chosen **Macmillan Cancer Support**.

I just wish someone had told me about it *before* I did all my Xmas shopping!

And, finally, these are the lovely Xmas decorations in the Day Unit.



Wishing you a safe and happy Xmas and a better 2021.

Regards

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