

**EBOP Asthma/COPD Support Group**  
**Newsletter April 2010**

**Message from Vicki Seamark, Interim COPD Liaison Officer.**

Hi Everyone,

Thank you for your warm welcome at the Support groups in March. For those who were unable to attend, I will briefly introduce myself, so when I phone you during the time that Gisela is away, I will not be a total stranger.

I have started working at the DRCT on a short term contract, standing in for Gisela Sonntag, your regular COPD Liaison Officer, so we can provide the usual service for you. I am a qualified Counselor, having worked previously for the Salvation Army in Hamilton in the area of problem gambling and other addictions. I moved back home to the Eastern Bay of Plenty two years ago and am enjoying the sunshine capital of New Zealand (even though some people might debate that issue).

The experience I bring to the service is having been the primary carer for a family member who suffered from COPD. This informs me of some of the issues that arise when managing COPD, but more importantly, I want to hear your stories.

If I can be of assistance to you, or if you have any questions, then please do not hesitate to contact me on 07307 1447 or 0800 227 363.

**COPD Support group meetings**

Our guest speakers for the April Support group meetings will be representatives from your local WINZ office. There will be the opportunity to have your questions answered about what funding is available to best support your health and any other Benefit questions you may have that are concerning you.

**Kawerau Support Group**

Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> of April at 10.00am, held at the Bert Hamilton Hall, Porritt Drive.

**Opotiki Support Group**

Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> of April at 10.00 am, held at the Community House beside the Church on Kelly Street.

**Whakatane Support Group**

Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> of April at 1.00 pm, held at the Disabilities Resource Centre Trust, 141 King Street.

## Information for using Home Oxygen

Oxygen is a safe gas when used properly. It will not burn or explode. However, it will aggressively support combustion and therefore, is a fire hazard.

### Safety Precaution:

- Store units away from heat, open flame or electrical equipment.
- Keep the units away from all flammable materials such as oil, grease, Vaseline, hair lubricants, hand lotions and aerosol sprays.
- Close cylinder valve when not in use, place cylinder so they will not fall.
- Do not permit smoking within the same room as your oxygen equipment.
- Do not allow oxygen tubing to come into contact with any stoves or space heaters.

### Safety Message:

If you need to carry an oxygen bottle in your vehicle please follow the instructions below to ensure your safety and those travelling with you.

- Do not carry an oxygen bottle in your vehicle unless you have to.
- Secure the as bottle so it cannot move around in the vehicle.
- Make sure the goods are properly packaged identified.
- Keep away from other dangerous goods
- Keep air flowing around the cylinders by having an open window.
- Turn off the regulator and ensure regulator is protected from being knocked and/or damaged.
- Do not leave oxygen cylinders in a car for any length of time as they will heat up and create risk of explosion

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## A daily habit that may make you sick (continued)

(from:<http://www.webmd.com/allergies/features/6-daily-habits-that-may-make-you-sick>)

1. Using a Sponge (Printed in Newsletter March 2010)

### 2. Vacuuming

Conventional vacuum cleaners are intended to pick up and retain big pieces of dirt, like the dust bunnies we see floating about on our floors. But it's the tiny dust particles that pass right through the porous vacuum bags and up into the air. So, while our floors may look cleaner after running a vacuum over them, plenty of dust, which can exacerbate allergies and asthma, remains.

Pet allergens and indoor dust, which contains the highest concentrations of hazardous materials like heavy metals, lead, pesticides, and other chemicals, are found in higher concentrations in the smallest particles of the dust, explains David MacIntosh, MD. He is principal scientist at Environmental Health & Engineering (EH&E), an environmental consulting and engineering services firm based in Needham, Mass.

"The everyday habit of cleaning with a conventional vacuum cleaner results in a burst of particles in the air and then they settle back down over the course of hours," says MacIntosh.

**Solution:** Look for a vacuum cleaner with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter. Unlike those in conventional vacuums, HEPA filters are able to retain the small particles and prevent them from passing through and contaminating the air you breathe in your home.

*I look forward to seeing you at the group.*

**Vicki Seamark**  
**COPD Liaison Officer**