



**BC Epilepsy  
Society**

E-NEWSLETTER

*Improving lives.  
Inspiring courage.*

February 19, 2014

## **What Does Epilepsy Look Like To You?**

### **PURPLE DAY PHOTO CONTEST**

The BC Epilepsy Society is having a photo contest to help celebrate Purple Day. This is the international day for epilepsy awareness. It is celebrated annually on March 26<sup>th</sup>.

We are looking for your photos that include the colour purple in fun, creative, inspiring, and beautiful ways. We have a variety of categories that you can submit photos in – and lots of great prizes!

These are the categories and prizes:

- Best purple pet picture (prize is a \$50 gift certificate to Bosley's)
- Best purple nature picture (prize is a \$50 gift certificate to Rona)
- Best purple outfit (prize is a \$50 gift certificate to Old Navy)
- Best purple food (prize is a \$50 gift certificate to Safeway)
- Best creative or artistic depiction of the colour purple (prize is a \$50 gift certificate to Michaels)

Photos must be received by March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at noon. To enter a photo, email it with a completed [entry form](#) to [outreach@bcepilepsy.com](mailto:outreach@bcepilepsy.com)

Eligible entries will be judged based on the following criteria: creativity, photographic quality, and how it incorporates the word epilepsy or a message about epilepsy. You can enter in more than one category, but can only win in one category.

Good luck!

## **First Online Support Group Meeting**

**MARCH 4: 7-8 PM**

In response to your feedback, we have started an online epilepsy support group. This support group is for BC residents who are affected by epilepsy (this includes family, friends, or caregivers.) It will be a live online chat session. The first meeting will be on

Tuesday, March 4th from 7-8 pm.

This group is structured to provide emotional support, allow you to share your experiences and feelings, and learn from each other. Group discussions are focused around common experiences or concerns and questions. Some meetings may have specific topics to help generate discussions.

More information:

- A BC Epilepsy Society staff person and a volunteer with the BC Epilepsy Society will facilitate each meeting.
- The online chats are hosted on a secure password protected website and only people who have pre-registered and signed confidentiality agreements have a password to log into the meeting.
- The meetings are set-up to be anonymous and private. However, you do have the option to provide your full name or participate by video feed.
- The chat sessions are limited to the first 25 registrants.

To participate you must contact our office by February 28<sup>th</sup> to get a log-in code, sign a confidentiality agreement, and to get more information about the group.

To register and for more information about this group please email [info@bcepilepsy.com](mailto:info@bcepilepsy.com) or call 604-875-6704.

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## Items of Interest

### KEEPING YOU UP-TO-DATE

#### Activity Ideas for Purple Day

March 26th is Purple Day - a day dedicated to increasing awareness about epilepsy. To promote this day people are encouraged to wear purple and host events in support of epilepsy awareness.

How can you participate? You can distribute materials about Purple Day and epilepsy in your community, set up a display, information booth or presentation, have a purple-themed potluck or bake sale, can hold a purple clothing contest at a school or workplace. [Click here](#) for more ideas. We can provide resources and materials such as purple ribbons, information cards, stickers, pens, bracelets, and presentation speakers.

Please contact us at 604-875-6704 or at [info@bcepilepsy.com](mailto:info@bcepilepsy.com) for more information.

#### Olympic Athletes with Epilepsy

With the Olympics upon us it is important to highlight some Olympic medal-winning athletes with epilepsy. Two examples are:

Chanda Gunn (ice hockey goalie for the 2006 US Olympic team and winner of a

bronze medal)

Despite her challenges with epilepsy, Chanda has been able to establish herself as a prolific hockey player in the US. She also is a spokesperson for the Epilepsy Therapy Project run by [epilepsy.com](http://epilepsy.com). [Click here](#) to read an interview she did about the challenges of sports and epilepsy.

Marion Clignet (cyclist for the French Olympic team and winner of two silver medals) This French-American athlete won a silver medal in 1996 and 2000 in the track cycling event. She believes that her struggles with epilepsy equipped her with the determination and strength to turn her into an Olympic medalist. She said, "I'm really not sure how far I would have pushed myself if I didn't have epilepsy."

[Click here](#) to read our blog post about other notable athletes with epilepsy.

### **Advances in the Understanding of Absence Seizures**

Absence (petit mal) seizures are the most common type of seizures in children under the age of 12. They are characterized by an abrupt impairment in consciousness. Luckily they are usually controlled by medication and/or outgrown by adulthood. However in some cases these seizures can lead to cognitive difficulties and tonic-clonic seizures later in life.

Scientists have found that the degree that neurons (the nerve cells in the brain) communicate in unison - known as synchrony - is important because abnormal synchrony is believed to underlie the spike-and-wave discharges characteristic of absence seizures. In a study about this abnormal synchrony the researchers focused on the the principal brain chemicals that help to calm neuron function. By studying mice with and without epilepsy scientists have theorized that alterations in GABAA receptor subunits contribute to the abnormal synchrony causing absence seizures. If this is true, this could help develop new treatments for absence seizures. [Click here](#) for more information about these findings.

### **Epilepsy and Yoga**

A woman with epilepsy, who is also a yoga teacher, recently wrote an article about how doing yoga has helped her cope with epilepsy. She says that, "consistent yoga practice plays a huge part in handling my seizures every day." She mentioned that emotional stress was the biggest trigger of her seizures. She states that even if yoga does not completely reduce her seizures it helps her by, "making it easier to get your head round them and accept what's going on with your body." She also states, "As time has gone on, yoga has also become a way to handle the negative emotional after-effects of seizures." [Click here](#) to read her story

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## BC Epilepsy Society

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*The BC Epilepsy Society is a non-profit, charitable organization,  
which provides education, advocacy, and support.*