

## Winter Serenity

*In this issue, we focus on mental health, self care,  
home care, and aging gracefully with SCI*

## Reopening

*The SCI Manitoba office is  
reopening on April 3, 2023*

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## **Contents**

<b>1. From the Editor.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Staff Contact Info.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Aging with Spinal Cord Injury.....</b>	<b>7-9</b>
<b>4. Ask a Rehabilitation Counsellor.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5. Taking Care of Our Mental Health.....</b>	<b>12-14</b>
<b>6. Manitoba's Home Care Program.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>7. What are Hydrophilic Catheters.....</b>	<b>16-17</b>
<b>8. Self-Care.....</b>	<b>18-21</b>
<b>9. News from Manitoba Paraplegia Foundation.....</b>	<b>22</b>

**ON THE COVER:** The aurora borealis (northern lights) in  
northern Manitoba with an *inunnguaq* in the foreground.  
Although many people refer to these stone formations as  
*inukshuk* (or *inuksuk*), the Inuit call them *inunnguaq*, which  
means 'imitation of a person'.



Thank you to the  
Manitoba Paraplegia  
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continued financial  
support of ParaTracks  
and Manitobans living  
with spinal cord injury.

# FROM THE EDITOR . . .

The early part of each year is a busy time for SCI Manitoba as we begin our yearend activities, reflect on what's happened during the year, and set program goals for the year ahead, all while continuing to provide essential services and support to our members. And yet during this period of transitioning from one fiscal year to the next, there is excitement and enthusiasm for the organization's growth and opportunities for reframing our understanding of how we can continue meeting the evolving needs of members.

In this issue, content is focused on paying attention to our [mental health](#) (p.12-14) and tips for optimizing our [self-care](#) routines (p.18-21), both vital elements that contribute enormously to our overall health. We are also sharing information about an emerging area of research that reflects the lengthening average life expectancy within the SCI population - [aging successfully with SCI](#) (p.7-9). The [provincial home care program](#) is a critical resource for many members and it may be an option for those who are getting older and looking for support with activities that were always done independently in the past, so we're providing some basic program eligibility details and highlighting a couple of additional resources (p.15). Finally, we're introducing a new interactive feature, [Ask a Rehabilitation Counsellor](#), that will dedicate space in each issue to answer your questions about any topic related to SCI - this issue offers suggestions on preparing for medical appointments and how to make the most of your time with your doctor (p.11).

In October 2022, a much anticipated report entitled *Identifying Jurisdictional Gaps in Providing Essential Attendant Services, Medical Supplies, and Assistive Devices Needed by Canadians Living with Spinal Cord Injury* was released. This report is the result of a joint research initiative prepared by the University of Manitoba and SCI Ontario and provides an incredibly detailed snapshot of how each province makes these essential needs available to people living with SCI. For the first time, it's possible to easily see and compare how and to what extent the essential needs are covered in each province. The full report can be downloaded from our website at [www.scimanitoba.ca](http://www.scimanitoba.ca).

## OFFICE REOPENING

If you've been wondering when SCI Manitoba will be reopening our office and resuming in-person service delivery, wonder no more - effective [Monday, April 3, 2023](#), the SCI Manitoba office will reopen after a three-year hiatus in response to the COVID-19 pandemic when staff worked 100% from home. Although the office will be open again, we are moving to a hybrid work model that will allow staff to split their time working both from home and from the office on a structured but flexible schedule. Important changes for members to note with the hybrid model include needing to schedule all visits to the office in advance, and providing proof of COVID-19 vaccination (not including boosters) before meeting with your counsellor in person (staff are also required to provide proof of vaccination). In cases where members are unable to provide proof of vaccination, services will continue to be provided remotely until further notice. Masks will be optional and a small supply will be available for visitors to the office, along with gloves and hand sanitizer. For more information, contact your counsellor or the SCI Manitoba office. We look forward to seeing you all again in the months ahead!

Dan Joannis  
Interim Executive Director





# NEW SERVICE PROVIDER REPORTING SOLUTION

# RSVP

The provincial government, SCI Manitoba's primary funding partner, has introduced a new database for tracking services delivered by all funded agencies, including SCI Manitoba. SCI Manitoba's two vocational services counsellors and two transitional services counsellors are required to enter service activity into the Service Provider Reporting Solution (SPRS), but first each member on their respective caseloads must be imported into the new database.

In the fall, a letter was sent to all SCI Manitoba members on these counsellors' caseloads, together with a privacy notice and consent form and a pre-paid return envelope. Those members who received this letter and form are asked to [review, sign, and return the form to SCI Manitoba as soon as possible](#), and to also provide their social insurance number (SIN) to their rehabilitation counsellor. The signed privacy notice and consent form and SIN are required in order (1) to import your information into the new database, and (2) to continue receiving vocational and transitional services from SCI Manitoba, which are made available through our funding agreement with the provincial government that is cost-shared by the provincial and federal governments.

If you have questions, please contact your SCI Manitoba rehabilitation counsellor.

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# Aging with Spinal Cord Injury



Aging is broadly defined as the time-dependent functional decline that affects most living organisms and is characterized by a progressive loss of physiological integrity. It affects everyone and is just another step along the path of life. But a spinal cord injury (SCI) can speed up the aging process, and other health problems can become more common with age.

SCI commonly results in multiple permanent impairments that interact with a person's environment and can lead to significant limitations in activity, participation, and quality of life. In addition, these changes to the body's functions and systems pose increasing challenges to maintaining homeostasis (our body's ability to remain in a steady, stable state) across the lifespan.

Improvements in medical and rehabilitative care, coupled with technological advances, have significantly improved longevity for people with SCI. Since individuals aging with SCI are living longer, it is useful for them, and their healthcare team, to know what changes may be expected with aging.

As you age, you may have health problems that you never had when you were younger. Chronic health problems are ones that last six months or more and require ongoing medical care. They can limit activities of daily life, and may result from common age-related problems, such as arthritis, which affects many middle-aged and older adults. When chronic conditions are related to SCI, they are called secondary health conditions. New health problems can:

- happen more often in people who are aging with physical disabilities
- result from complications from SCI, or its treatments
- come from overusing, underusing, or misusing a body system, such as shoulder and wrist pain from propelling a wheelchair
- result from lifestyle behaviours and factors in the environment, such as limited transportation options or fewer opportunities to be involved in healthy recreational activities

## **Body Changes from Aging**

Some body systems lose function with age, and the degree of loss varies for each person. How a person ages after SCI is based on several factors, such as:

- level and severity of the injury
- age at the injury
- family health history
- lifestyle behaviours (for example, activity levels, smoking or alcohol use, and diet)
- access to community services and social supports

A symptom or change in a condition may be "normal" aging or the sign of a problem. Discussing your symptoms with your doctor can help you figure this out.

## **Skin**

Pressure injuries or pressure ulcers are common secondary complications amongst people with SCI who are susceptible to skin breakdown due to factors like immobility, impaired sensation, and prolonged periods





of sitting. The increase in pressure on the skin can be relieved by frequent repositioning or regular pressure relief manoeuvres (leaning forward or to the side in the wheelchair for two minutes) to be incorporated into the person's everyday lifestyle. The use of specialized wheelchair cushions and bed mattresses after assessment using pressure-mapping systems can be very helpful (2, 3).

In addition, as skin collagen degrades over the years, the skin becomes thinner and loses elasticity making it more susceptible to pressure ulcers, blisters, and other skin breakdowns.

Ongoing monitoring of the skin and preventative education are also necessary. Recommended measures for maintaining optimal skin health include cessation of smoking to improve skin blood flow, keeping the skin clean and dry, adequate nutrition for skin integrity, frequent pressure relief, and periodic review of equipment and transfer techniques.



### **Feelings, Emotions, Family and Caregiver Issues**

People usually live fulfilling and pleasurable lives and most older adults, with and without SCI, are resilient and adjust well to changes in their physical abilities. They also note improved relationships with loved ones, increased appreciation for life, and changes in priorities.

However, the impact of age-related changes in our bodies can be lessened by adapting and maintaining functional abilities. One of the most important issues for psychosocial health is maintaining independence, but this can become increasingly difficult for a person aging with SCI, since aging is a predictor of functional decline and increased physical dependency in the SCI population (4). It is also more common for age-associated physical decline to occur at a comparatively younger age in those with SCI than those in the general population.

SCI can affect the entire family and close friends, both physically and emotionally. It is well understood that individuals with SCI will likely require more assistance as they age, but it is equally true that caregivers and family members are also aging and may develop health issues of their own. To effectively manage secondary health complications that may arise with aging, activities may need to be modified. The introduction of adaptive equipment or technology will help maintain as much independence for as long as possible. When physical assistance becomes necessary, making decisions and directing care are essential for maintaining independence. Regular assessment of family and caregivers' mental and physical health is also very important. Respite care can assist all members of the social support network, and it is recommended that care should not always be provided by a spouse, family member, or parent, wherever possible. Care by a spouse in particular may be perceived negatively with increasing age (4) so it is important to maintain a cooperative approach between the individual, family members, and caregivers for successful aging with SCI.

Identifying potential problems at their earliest onset can help address issues before they become major impediments. Your doctor plays an important role as you age with SCI. Visit your doctor regularly to get physical check-ups. Talk to your doctor about your emotions and physical independence. High levels of anxiety, depression, and stress don't have to accompany aging so talk with your doctor or a counsellor if you're frequently worrying, losing interest or pleasure, or feeling "blue" most of the day.



## **Keys to Successful Aging**

The choices you make as you age with SCI are just as important as earlier life events, such as participating in initial rehabilitation, returning to work, developing relationships, and participating in life's activities. To help handle changes as you age, keep a positive outlook and visit your doctor regularly.

Aging successfully with SCI means maintaining your physical health and independence as much as possible. It also means adapting to new limitations, staying emotionally healthy, and participating in activities that are important and meaningful to you.

To age successfully with SCI:

- don't be afraid to change the way you do some activities, trying a new diet for example
- use adaptive equipment to help you with everyday tasks
- seek help from others as needed but keep a steady level of independence. You can continue to make decisions and direct health and care-related issues, such as hiring and training caregivers
- if possible, find more accessible housing
- take part in social activities that you value

To keep a positive outlook:

- connect with others
- engage in regular physical activity
- participate in enjoyable activities
- learn something new
- volunteer or seek services and supports provided by community-based organizations, such as independent living centers, aging and disability resource centers, and faith-based organizations

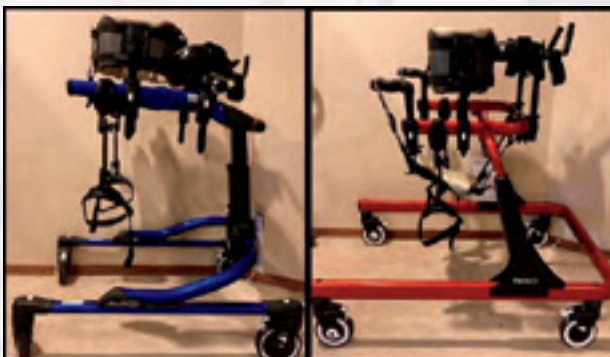


Maintaining your physical health is another way to age successfully, so make sure to get regular check-ups from your doctor. Work with your SCI Manitoba counsellor to find information and answers to questions about potential secondary health conditions related to aging with SCI. Keep learning from research, talk with peers, follow a health plan, and discuss aging with SCI with your doctor.

Artem Dolia, Rehabilitation Counsellor - WCB, Seniors, and Community Services

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4. Charlifue S, Jha A, Lammertse D. Aging with spinal cord injury. *Phys Med Rehabil Clin*. 2010;21(2):383-402.



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# Ask a Rehabilitation Counsellor



We are excited to announce a new regular feature in ParaTracks called [Ask a Rehabilitation Counsellor](https://scimanitoba.ca/ask), a dedicated space for members to ask questions about living with SCI and how to adjust and adapt. As rehabilitation counsellors, we will answer any questions that fall within our scope of practice, and where necessary, we will reach out to the right professionals for the answers. Please note that questions can be submitted through your rehabilitation counsellor or anonymously through our website: [scimanitoba.ca/ask](https://scimanitoba.ca/ask).

The first topic in this new feature is about preparing for an appointment with your physiatrist (a physician specializing in rehabilitation) and questions to ask your family doctor at your first visit after your injury.

Dr. Karen Ethans, Director of the Spinal Cord Injury Unit at the Health Sciences Centre and Associate Professor at the University of Manitoba, offers the following suggestions for making sure your appointment at the outpatient clinic goes smoothly:

- It is important to arrive early because accessible parking is difficult to find near the HSC Rehabilitation Hospital due to the closure of some parking lots in the area. Many patients plan to arrive at the time of their appointment but show up 25 minutes late because of parking issues, which impacts other patients
- Bring your medications and know exactly why they've been prescribed
- Make sure to only ask about issues related to your spinal cord injury and rehabilitation problems, and not about new symptoms, conditions, or injuries that are unrelated to your SCI. For example, if you had a fall three weeks prior and have pain or tenderness but didn't get it checked out by your family doctor because you had an upcoming appointment with the physiatrist, that issue will not be addressed
- It is also important that you get checked out by an acute care provider for any new weaknesses you may have because a physiatrist cannot treat new problems
- If you have attended urgent care or an emergency department, give your physiatrist the date(s) so they can request copies of relevant records (if they were not already sent)

Before your first visit with a family doctor after SCI, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are the offices accessible? Can I get into the building?
- Do they have an accessible exam table I can transfer onto? If I need assistance for transfers, will they help or do I need to bring a helper with me?
- Is the doctor familiar with spinal cord injury?
- Can I bring another person into the room with me?

Preparing for your appointment with your family doctor is similar to preparing to see your physiatrist:

- Be there on time
- Have a list of any medications or changes in your health since your last appointment
- If you have attended urgent care or an emergency department, provide the date(s) so they can request copies of relevant records (if they were not already sent)
- Write down your list of questions so you don't forget something important, and make sure to bring the list with you to your appointment

If you have more specific questions, don't hesitate to discuss them with your rehabilitation counsellor.

***If you have a question you'd like us to answer in the next issue of ParaTracks, let your counsellor know or go to our website and post your question anonymously at [scimanitoba.ca/ask](https://scimanitoba.ca/ask).***

# Taking Care of our Mental Health: Giving our Thoughts and Feelings a Voice

**Bell Let's Talk Day** on January 25, 2023 reminded us that creating positive change in our lives is one of the most important things we can do to improve the mental health of ourselves and others. Creating positive change can be a challenge for anyone including, and perhaps especially, for someone who is trying to adjust to life with spinal cord injury (SCI).

Over the past 3 years, COVID-19 and its subsequent strains have created additional challenges and barriers to navigating the resources and supports necessary for managing SCI. Working directly with individuals with new injuries, I often sit in a space with members where they can express the difficult emotions and thoughts related to this time of adjustment. We discuss many important issues – new abilities and limitations, isolation secondary to COVID-19, and the stigma attached to asking for help, to name a few. There is also the added challenge when living in a rural or remote area where resources may be less available or nonexistent.

A key action, arguably the most important, is to find a safe space to share, explore, and discuss thoughts and feelings. Yes, this may seem like too simple a concept to make significant improvements to our mental health, but having that dialogue with another person regarding how we are feeling and thinking can and has the potential of being nothing short of a mental health miracle. Thoughts hold incredible power and influence over how we feel and behave.

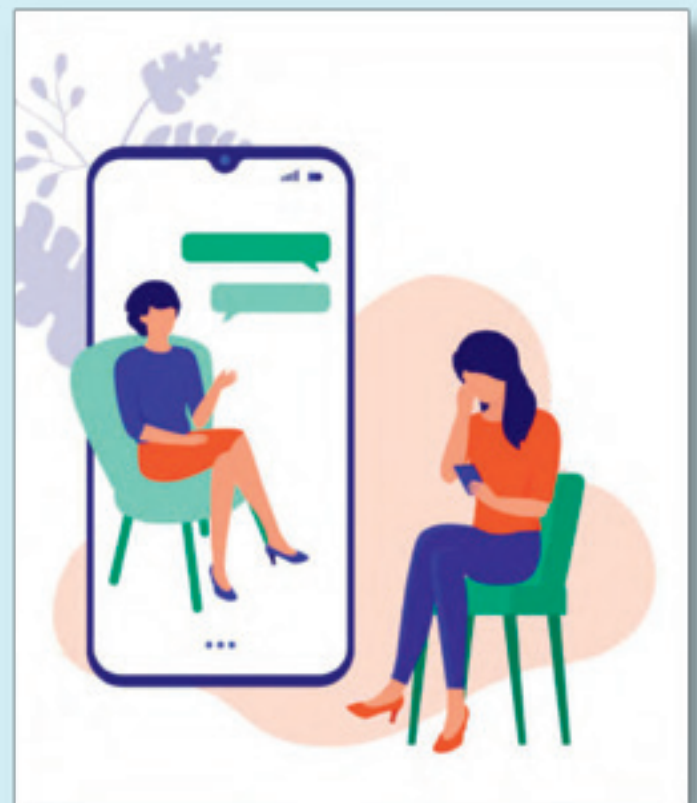
Close your eyes and think of a time when you had a really great talk with a friend or family member. What about when you were able to vent in a safe space about the daily frustrations of life? How did you feel after? Lighter, calmer, less physically tense, or emotionally escalated?

Thoughts can lead to actions and if we are not

mindful, actions that do not serve our healing or overall well-being can be detrimental. Can you think of a time when you were disappointed or angry and soon thereafter engaged in some online retail therapy? Perhaps needed a drink that may have led to another drink, and another, until those uncomfortable feelings were gone.

It's important to note that although both of these coping tools may not lead to immediate harm, long term, they can potentiate a cycle that may diminish our ability to cope in healthier and more meaningful ways. A more productive solution might be having that honest and open conversation with someone we trust and experiencing the satisfying emotional release that happens as a result.

What happens to those uncomfortable feelings that we repress? Do they go somewhere? Well, the short answer is, 'yes!' They remain stored in our bodies and often manifest down the road in







physical forms such as tension in your shoulders or a headache that just won't go away. They can show up as feelings, such as irritability with someone or about something that would not normally impact us in such a way. We may also be less tolerant of others and situations and find ourselves reacting rather than responding.

There is a mind-body connection that goes far beyond what many of us understand. The good news is we can change that relationship with our mind, positively impacting our bodies and therefore how we think, feel, and respond.

How? Begin to give those thoughts and feelings a voice: share them with a trusted support, write them on paper or in a journal, create song lyrics, or express them in creative ways such as paintings or drawings. Making them tangible removes them from occupying valuable space in our minds, creating room for healthier thoughts to reside.

Remember that your thoughts and feelings are important and valid. No one can tell you otherwise. They are yours and have surfaced due

to circumstance or experience. What you do with those thoughts is imperative to how you feel and behave. Our brains are not separate from our bodies, they work as one, so the next time your thoughts become uncomfortable, try to express and make sense of them in a way that works for you.

Please see page 14 for a list of local and trusted resources: online, in person, and over the phone.

You are not alone so do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or for support. Everyone will need help at some point on their journey!

Natasha Schreyer  
Rehabilitation Counsellor  
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**211 Manitoba** This is the front door to community-based government, health, and social services support designed to meet the needs of diverse populations, across all different aspects of life. It is a free, confidential service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week in more than 150 languages, including 4 Indigenous languages. Simply dial 2-1-1 from any phone or visit [www.mb.211.ca](http://www.mb.211.ca).

### 24-Hour Urgent or Crisis Services

- **Crisis Line:** 204-786-8686. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. *Note: You do not need to be in crisis to call.* <https://klinik.mb.ca/crisis-support>
- **Manitoba Suicide Prevention and Support Line:** 1-877-435-7170. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.reasonstolive.ca](http://www.reasonstolive.ca)
- **First Nations & Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line:** 1-855-242-3310. Available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. Immediate, culturally competent, crisis support for First Nations and Inuit people of all ages. Counselling is available in English and French; also in Cree, Ojibway & Inuktitut on request. <https://hopeforwellness.ca>
- **Residential Schools Crisis Line:** 1-800-721-0066. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **Crisis Response Centre:** 817 Bannatyne – in-person only. The CRC is open 24/7 for adults experiencing a mental health crisis.
- **Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakinak (MKO) Crisis Response Team:** 1-877-927-LIFE (5433). Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Provides culturally sensitive crisis response and trauma support and intervention for First Nations in Manitoba. Email: [crisisresponse@mknorth.com](mailto:crisisresponse@mknorth.com)

### Free and Low-Cost Counselling or Support Services

- **Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre of Winnipeg:** Counselling, sharing circles, traditional teachings, ceremonies. Call 204-925-3700 or <http://ahwc.ca>
- **Aulneau Renewal Centre:** 204-987-7090 or <https://aulneau.com/counselling>
- **Aurora Family Therapy Centre:** 204-786-9251 (sliding scale) or <https://aurorafamilytherapy.com>
- **Bilal Community and Family Centre:** 204-772-7358 or <https://bilalcommunitycentre.ca>
- **Black Mental Health Promotion:** 204-202-7197 or [www.blackmentalhealthpromotion.ca](http://www.blackmentalhealthpromotion.ca)
- **Canadian Muslim Women's Institute:** 204-943-8539 or <https://cmwi.ca>
- **Elmwood Community Resource Centre:** Racial Trauma Counselling and Support Program 204-982-1720: <http://elmwoodcrc.ca/counselling-program>
- **Family Dynamics** – Individual, couple & family therapy. Call 204-947-1401 or visit <https://familydynamics.ca/services/counselling>
- **Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre:** 204-477-1123 or <https://fgwrc.ca/our-programs/counselling>
- **Islamic Social Services Association:** 204-944-1560 or [www.issacanada.com](http://www.issacanada.com)
- **Jewish Child and Family Counselling Services:** (open to all faiths and cultural groups) 204-477-7430 or visit [www.jcfswinnipeg.org/services/counselling](http://www.jcfswinnipeg.org/services/counselling)
- **Klinik Community Health Centre:** 204-784-4059 or <https://klinik.mb.ca/in-person-counselling>
- **Manitoba Islamic Association (Grand Mosque)** – Mental Health and Wellbeing Program: 204-256-1347 or [www.miaonline.org/mental-health](http://www.miaonline.org/mental-health)
- **Ma Mawi wi Chi Itata Centre (Indigenous):** 204-925-0300 or [www.mamawi.com](http://www.mamawi.com)
- **Mount Carmel Clinic:** 204-589-9419 or [www.mountcarmel.ca](http://www.mountcarmel.ca)
- **North End Women's Centre:** 204-589-7347 or <https://newcentre.org/counselling>
- **Pluri-elles (French):** 204-233-1735 or [www.pluri-elles.mb.ca](http://www.pluri-elles.mb.ca)
- **Wa-Say Healing Centre** – counselling, sharing circles, traditional teachings, ceremonies, body work, arts and crafts. 204-774-6484 or [www.wa-say.com](http://www.wa-say.com)



# Manitoba's Home Care Program

The Home Care Program was established in 1974. Eligible individuals must be a Manitoba resident, registered with Manitoba Health, and require health services or assistance with activities of daily living to remain safely in their homes. One of the stipulations of being approved for home care services is that individuals must have a 'backup plan' in the event home care services are not available. In most cases, family members, specifically spouses, were named as the backup person who could provide the care required. However, sons, daughters, and other family members have also become care providers during these times of need.



Over the past three years, COVID-19 has significantly impacted the Home Care Program's ability to provide timely and consistent services to the clients they serve. Unfortunately, the program continues to experience staffing shortages, and depending on the nature of the service, visits have been delayed, rescheduled, or cancelled. Due to redistribution of health care resources, housekeeping and laundry services have been discontinued. Some SCI Manitoba members have been able to hire private agencies to provide for their care needs, however, many private agencies have a minimum of four hours per call/visit, making short but crucial calls nearly impossible.

One option is the Care Possible program through Manitoba Possible (formerly the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities). This program connects local, certified providers with individuals and families who require services. The program is available through an accessible online platform using a computer, tablet, or smartphone.

The Care Possible program offers help with respite, elder care, personal support, and home care needs. There is a charge for this service and the client is required to pay 10% of the provider's hourly rate prior to the scheduled appointment, which can be done using the secure online platform. One of the advantages of this service is that clients can browse a list of care providers for the service they require and select an individual they feel would be appropriate. Please see the program information on their website for full details: [www.carepossible.ca](http://www.carepossible.ca).

Another option is Go Orderly – they seek to restore a person's independence and mobility, providing personal attendant services in Winnipeg. They offer assistance for almost any service required. Go Orderly is committed to providing support regardless of what personal care needs you or your family member requests. Whether it's companionship, attending a medical appointment in a timely fashion, or providing safe hospital discharge services, Go Orderly will be there to ensure your or your family member's needs are satisfied. At home or in the community, Go Orderly takes responsibility for the client's needs and takes pride in the delivery of safe, professional services. Go Orderly has the ability to remain with you and assist with all your needs, and when the appointment is over, exceptional care is taken to ensure a safe return home, including any support needed to enter and settle back into the home environment. Please contact Go Orderly by email at [goorderly@gmail.com](mailto:goorderly@gmail.com), by telephone at 204-783-7881, or visit their website [www.goorderly.ca](http://www.goorderly.ca) for more information.

Gail Burnside

Rehabilitation Counsellor - Hospital Services | Assistant Director of Rehabilitation Services

# What Are *Hydrophilic* Catheters?



Whether you are a new catheter user or have been using catheters for quite some time, you may have heard the term “hydrophilic” when discussing intermittent catheters with your healthcare provider. This term is often used in comparison to an uncoated catheter. But what does hydrophilic actually mean?

In this article, our friends at Coloplast go into more detail from their perspective about what exactly makes a catheter hydrophilic, how it can help protect the urethra, and why it can be beneficial to your catheterization routine.

## **What makes a hydrophilic catheter different from an uncoated catheter?**

Uncoated catheters require added gel lubrication. This means you must evenly distribute the gel onto the catheter without introducing bacteria. The gel can be messy and hard to apply uniformly. A poorly applied coating increases urethral friction with catheter insertion and removal, causing potential urethral trauma<sup>1</sup>. And that’s the last thing you want from your catheter!

## **Protecting the urethra from damage, complications, and UTIs is important**

Did you know the average intermittent catheter user catheterizes 1,825 times every year?

Hydrophilic catheters are ready to use right out of the package, may increase comfort, and can help reduce risk of urethral trauma. They support smooth insertion resulting in less trauma and friction compared to uncoated catheters. Hydrophilic catheters are pre-lubricated, so you do not have to worry about carrying or applying lubrication, which also means fewer steps for you.

## **But, not every hydrophilic catheter is the same!**

Some hydrophilic catheters have dry spots where the coating does not adhere to the catheter during insertion or withdrawal. Or insufficient hydration may cause the coating to dry out over time and become rough or sticky.

That is why all SpeediCath® catheters come with a unique hydrophilic coating, featuring our Triple Action Coating Technology. This coating consists of three strongly bonded elements, designed to protect the urethra in three ways:



1. Stays bonded: It stays bonded during insertion and withdrawal due to a proprietary basecoat that is covalently bonded to the catheter surface for an even coating without dry spots.
2. Stays smooth: It stays smooth because the polymer topcoat enables excellent water absorption for low friction, smooth insertion, and reduced discomfort.
3. Stays hydrated: It stays hydrated with a special water-based solution that swells the coating and makes it instantly ready to use.



Since SpeediCath® catheters are pre-lubricated and instantly ready-to-use right out of the package, they eliminate the need for additional lubricants or time spent waiting for a catheter to hydrate. SpeediCath® catheters are easy to use, convenient, and stay lubricated during insertion and removal, designed to help protect the urethra!

If you are interested to learn more, get in touch with Coloplast's Care Advisors at 1-866-293-6349 or email them at [casupport@coloplast.com](mailto:casupport@coloplast.com).

1. Stensballe J, Looms D, Nielsen PN, et al. Hydrophilic-coated catheters for intermittent catheterisation reduce urethral micro trauma: a prospective, randomised, participant-blinded, crossover study of three different types of catheters. Sponsored by Coloplast. *EurUrol*2005;48(6):978-83, n=49.

2. European Association of Urology Nurses. (2013) Catheterisation/Urethral Intermittent in adults. [https://nurses.uroweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013\\_EAUN\\_Guideline\\_Milan\\_2013-Lr\\_DEF.pdf](https://nurses.uroweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013_EAUN_Guideline_Milan_2013-Lr_DEF.pdf). (Reports 4-6 catheterization per day for an adult patient. Assuming 5 times a day for an average adult, it is calculated to be 1825 catheterization/year).

3. Stensballe J, Looms D, Nielsen PN, et al. Hydrophilic-coated catheters for intermittent catheterisation reduce urethral micro trauma: a prospective, randomised, participant-blinded, crossover study of three different types of catheters. Sponsored by Coloplast. *EurUrol*2005;48(6):978-83, n=49.

Prior to use, refer to product labeling for complete product instructions for use, contraindications, warnings and precautions.

Important Safety Information: SpeediCath® catheters are prescribed for use by adults who require bladder drainage due to urinary retention or post void residual volume (PVR). Before use, carefully read all of the instructions. Call your doctor if you think you have a UTI or can't pass the catheter into the bladder. For more information regarding risks, potential complications and product support, call Coloplast Corp. at 1-866-293-6349 and/or consult the company website at [www.coloplast.ca](http://www.coloplast.ca).



Join Coloplast for a webinar!

## Sex and Intimacy for Catheter Users

Thur Mar 23 at 7pm ET or  
Tue Apr 4 at 3pm ET

Are you worried about your catheter's impact on your sex life or your ability to be intimate with a partner? Join @Coloplast(ca) for an upcoming webinar to learn tips and tricks about feeling comfortable and confident when being intimate as a catheter user. You can submit anonymous questions that will be answered during the webinar! To register for the webinar, visit: <http://visit.coloplast.ca/Intimacy-Webinar-CC>



# Self-Care

Self-care is a trend that has become more popular in recent years, and it was one of the first lessons I learned when I started my career in the mental health field. To be able to take care of others, you need to take care of yourself first, which means your needs are as important as everyone else's. The World Health Organization recognizes that self-care is important in promoting health and wellness. It is also important in preventing diseases, helping people cope with illness better and living a longer life. The Canadian Health Association supports that a self-care routine has been clinically proven to assist in reducing and managing stress, increasing resilience and happiness, improving concentration and energy, assisting in reducing anxiety and depression, and reducing risks of heart disease, stroke and cancer. Engaging in self-care improves both our physical and mental health.

Olga Phoenix is the world's leading resilience and vicarious trauma prevention expert. She developed the Self-care Wheel which contains a set of six dimensions which represent areas of life. This includes physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, personal, and professional. The wheel contains a suggested list of topics as an inspiration to act and promote nurturing in our lives. For a deeper understanding of self-care, you can find more information at [olgaphoenix.com](http://olgaphoenix.com).

If you search the Internet, social media, magazines, news, etc. for information on self-care, it can be overwhelming. We may already be following a self-care activity routine daily by eating regular meals, getting a good night's sleep, spending time with friends or family, exercising, or enjoying a hobby. Me? I like to stick to the basics: physical care, emotional care, social care, and spiritual care. Over the years I developed my own daily routine and even if there are times when I am not able to complete all of the tasks, I still do at least some of them daily. It takes love and commitment for self-care.

## **Physical**

I consider having a good night's sleep one of the most important necessities of my self-care. When I walk into my bedroom at the end of the day, I feel at peace, content, grateful and ready to sleep. My bed offers me safety, comfort and a place for recharging with a promise of a good night's sleep. To obtain that bliss I do not carry the problems from the day into my night so I symbolically leave them at my bedroom door and physically close it behind me.

I would like to focus your attention on the importance of a good night's sleep because I've met so many people in my life who are not able to have that. Sleeping issues affect your physical and mental health. The following are some tips that I noticed during the years make a huge difference in getting a good night's sleep. You have to know yourself and your needs and you then need to take control of your sleep. Please take a few minutes to think about your bedroom and start assessing your physical environment. Is it too dark? is it too light? is it clean and peaceful, or crowded and messy? How do you feel when you walk into your bedroom? How does your bed and bedding make you feel? Is it comfortable? How is the temperature? Too cold or too hot? What do you need to change to make it better for your needs? The next step towards a good night's sleep is having a good healthy routine before bed. This will help send a signal to your body and mind that is time to rest and sleep. Disconnect from technology – no TV, Internet, or phone use in bed, and disconnect from social media at least one hour before bed. Rewind slowly with a gratitude exercise and relaxation. Calm your mind and body. There is a great app you may like to use called "Calm" from the Anxiety Canada website. This app should be the only exception for using technology in bed. If you are not able to sleep, do not stay in bed – get up and do something else and then try again later.





Making a rule that the bed is for sleep (and intimacy) should help. I wish you have a good night's sleep. Remember – only you know what your needs are so you can develop your own self-care routine.

The other part of my physical care routine consists of eating nutritious healthy meals, walking as much as possible during the day and using my stationary bike. Visiting my doctor for an annual physical exam and my dentist are necessities for me to maintain my health. Taking my medication on time and noticing any changes in my body is also a task that helps me daily. Please don't ignore changes in your

health and contact your doctor if you notice anything. Take a few minutes and think about where you are with your health. When was the last time you visited your doctor? Did you have an eye exam recently? Visit the dentist? What do you need to improve? How are you doing overall? Again, my self-care is only one example – you need to develop your own self-care plan. Please take care of your physical health so you can live a healthy and good life.



### **Emotional**

Feel your feelings is my motto. I learned in my family of origin to not hide my feelings but to feel them and express them and talk about them. I laugh when it is funny, I cry when I am sad, I get angry when I see injustice, and I smile when I get hugs and kisses from my family. Feelings are very important in our lives and need to be expressed in a safe way. I've met many people who hold in their feelings and then get physically sick. They learned in their family or elsewhere that it is not okay to express feelings, or that their feelings are not important. The message received was that it was not safe to deal with feelings so you need to hide them. We can change that. Life is too short. Please laugh when you feel like laughing, cry when you are sad, get angry in a safe way when you have reason to, but no self-hurt or hurting others. Stay safe and feel your feelings and talk about your feelings. It can be very scary to express feelings, but this can be learned and it is never too late. In fact, it is empowering. Start with paying attention to what your body is telling you. Some people may need help from a therapist or counsellor to learn how to listen to their body and trust themselves with their feelings. The message is to listen to your feelings, trust your feelings, and feel the feelings in a safe way. Use communication tools to express them in context to others when it is safe and to promote healthy change. Example: "I feel this... when this happens..." Also ask for what you need to see change. "I need you to stop..." Feeling the feelings, then communicating about it is the way of healthy emotional self-care. Stand up for yourself and acknowledge that your feelings are valid and important. You are worth it. You deserve to have a healthy and happy life. You have the power to own your feelings and to deal with them in a healthy way. Healthy communication of your feelings promotes healthy relationships with yourself and others. Be true to yourself.

My emotional needs are also met by spending time in nature. I love gardening so during the summer you can find me in my flower garden. I believe nature is the best healer. Please make time during your day to notice the trees, animals and plants. Smell the roses. During the winter I accumulated some house plants which make me feel happy when I spend time taking care of them. I also like to take pictures of the snow on the trees and notice and celebrate nature changing with the seasons. Music is also a part of my daily life. I can't imagine life without music. Spending time with my granddaughters is some of the best memory-making, and nothing compares with their hugs and kisses. I am truly blessed. Think about what brings you joy and happiness and make time daily to do those activities.





**Under New Management!**



**Contact us to book your free assessment!**

**Mention this ad for 1 free hour of therapy  
(new clients only)**

## **RECOGNIZE POTENTIAL, NOT LIMITS.**

FSWC custom designs programs for each individual client to help reach their goals with specialized modalities that may include:

- \* DEVELOPMENTAL MOVEMENT PATTERNS
- \* ACTIVE NERVOUS SYSTEM RECRUITMENT
- \* GRAVITY FREE GAIT TRAINING
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## **Social**

My connection with my family is number one in my life and I communicate with them every day. During my lifetime I have also developed a few very deep relationships with friends who are my lifeline and my social security connection. We talk on the phone or Facetime every day. Working from home changed my social connection with my coworkers but we still communicate over the phone or Zoom. I used to volunteer in the community and belonged to different organizations but the COVID-19 pandemic changed that. A social life is very important in our lives because we are social beings and we need each other. This reality was never more relevant than during the pandemic and the feelings of loneliness and isolation were the hardest. The world stayed still for a while, but humans are very resilient and we always find a way to connect. I feel gratitude for being a part of my wonderful family, which includes my son, daughter-in-law, and two wonderful granddaughters, and my close friends who are always there for me. We are all interconnected. Please make sure that you connect with the people in your life who bring you joy and lift you up and tell them how important they are in your life. Make a phone call, go on social media, send a text or message, write letters and keep in touch with your loved ones. It will be good for your self-care. Keeping a balance in our social interaction is also important – too much connection or too little connection affects our quality of life. We need to feel that we belong, that we make a difference, and that we matter. Please take a moment and reflect on your own social life. Any changes you have to make?

## **Spiritual**

I consider myself a spiritual person more than a religious person, but I communicate with God and pray every day. This connection brings me peace of mind and calms my spirit. It gives me hope that everything will be fine, no matter what, and that I am not alone in the world. Sometimes I pray for people I know when they are experiencing hardship. Spirituality is the connection you have with a higher power, and religion is how you practice your belief. My mom is a very religious person. She instilled faith in me from a young age and I am very grateful for that because it's helped me feel grounded and to overcome many challenges in my life. I feel that as long as each individual has a connection with their own higher power, whatever they believe in, it provides comfort and brings hope. I feel so blessed every day and gratitude is a part of my daily routine.

Think about your spiritual connection - what do I believe? Am I a spiritual or religious person? How does the spiritual connection work in my life? Maybe you don't feel like you need one and that is ok too. Remember, only you know what works for you.

In this article, I reflected on my own self-care with the goal of promoting an open and honest internal dialogue so you can think about your own self-care. Each person is unique so self-care will be different for everyone. Start with baby steps and those steps will lead to a healthier and happier life. Self-care starts with your decision to take care of yourself. You deserve it – start today!

Maria Cabas  
Rehabilitation Counsellor - Indigenous Services

Sources:

[www.who.int/health-topics/self-care](http://www.who.int/health-topics/self-care)

[www.cmhahkpr.ca/importance-of-self-care](http://www.cmhahkpr.ca/importance-of-self-care)

[www.positivepsychology.com/self-care-wheel](http://www.positivepsychology.com/self-care-wheel)

[www.olgaphoenix.com](http://www.olgaphoenix.com)



# Manitoba Paraplegia Foundation (MPF) News

## MPF Trustees

Doug Finkbeiner, K.C. (President)  
Dr. Kristine Cowley (Vice-President)  
James Richardson Jr. (Treasurer)  
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MPF funds go to work in four main areas that are not supported by any other sources in Manitoba: special projects, product testing, research, and direct aid to Manitobans living with spinal cord injury who do not have the necessary financial resources for equipment and/or services. All requests for direct aid are initiated through SCI Manitoba. Individuals must provide information on their finances, explain why they cannot meet the expense within their own budget, and identify any other potential sources to support the request, including potential for contribution from family.

SCI Manitoba thanks MPF for its continued support and commitment to improving the quality of life of Manitobans living with spinal cord injury.

MPF has approved several requests for financial support during the past several months. Since the last issue of ParaTracks, financial support totaling \$4,976.41 has been granted. Some of the highlights follow:

- Funding was provided for the purchase of a backrest for an SCI Manitoba member. The member's long-term plans include a return to employment, and proper equipment is required to prevent skin breakdown and unnecessary health complications which would negatively impact the member's functioning, independence, and quality of life.
- Financial support was provided for an SCI Manitoba member to attend two courses at the University of Manitoba. These courses would allow the member to ease into the rigors of university-based academic training, earn credits towards a Masters degree and provide information regarding their academic skills and abilities.
- Funding was granted for a backrest, cushion and cushion rigidizer for an SCI Manitoba member. Providing this member with proper support for posture will prevent skin breakdown and secondary health complications and will increase the member's mobility and independence in their home and community.
- Funding was provided for the purchase of a wheelchair and cushion for an SCI Manitoba member living in a long-term care facility. This equipment will provide the member with appropriate seating and equipment to improve their ability to heal and prevent further skin breakdown. The wheelchair will also allow for their independence within the facility which will contribute to their well-being.

Visit MPF's website for more information at [www.scimanitoba.ca/mpf](http://www.scimanitoba.ca/mpf). Applications for assistance are available by contacting the SCI Manitoba office at [info@scimanitoba.ca](mailto:info@scimanitoba.ca) or 204-786-4753 (toll-free 800-720-4933 within Manitoba).

### Wolseley Woodworking & Construction



Wheelchair Ramps designed and built to code	
Wheel-in showers	Accessible bathrooms
Doorways widened	Home Modifications
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**667-5787**      **Mike Hladky** (SMR, U of M)



## Volunteers Needed for a Research Study

### INVESTIGATING ADAPTIVE SPORT PARTICIPATION FOR ADULTS AGED 50 YEARS OR OLDER WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY OR DISEASE (SCI/D): A DESCRIPTIVE CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY

#### Objectives:

- 1) Compare and contrast the characteristics of individuals aged 50 years or older with SCI/D who do participate and who do not participate in adaptive sport.
- 2) Describe the characteristics of adaptive sport that individuals aged 50 years or older with SCI/D participate in.
- 3) Identify the barriers and facilitators to participation in adaptive sport for individuals aged 50 years or older with SCI/D.



You may participate in this study if you identify with the following inclusion criteria:

1. Aged 50 years or older,
2. Live in Canada, and
3. Have had your SCI/D for at least six months\*

\* Any cause, level, and severity of injury is accepted. You can be of any mobility status (i.e., use a wheelchair, walk, or both). **You do not need to have experience in adaptive sports.**

To thank you for your participation, you may choose to enter your email address into a draw to win one of three \$100 gift cards.

If you would like to participate in the study, please copy one of the following links to a secure web-based platform into your browser:

Link to English survey: <https://abtdelphi.limequery.com/536419?newtest=Y&lang=en>

Link to French survey: <https://abtdelphi.limequery.com/458429?newtest=Y&lang=fr>

contact information :  
[kristin.musselman@utoronto.ca](mailto:kristin.musselman@utoronto.ca)

Email should only be used for general communication about the study. Please do not send any confidential information over email.



Physical Therapy  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

*SCI Manitoba extends its sympathies to the families of the following loved ones who recently passed away:*

*Abe Doerksen  
Roy Fedak  
Abram Hiebert  
Robert Iwacha  
Joseph McKay*

*George Murphy  
Darren Nepinak  
Anna Paradis  
Keith Russell  
Joseph Smithson*

*Leroy Smoke  
Scott Verwey  
Simon Watt  
Delphis West  
Robert Wroblewsky*



Proud History | Vibrant Future

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### YES!

Count me in as a member of Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba Inc. All members receive "ParaTracks" SCI Manitoba's newsletter and voting privileges at the Annual General Meeting.

Members also receive discounts at various health care supply stores.

Stevens Home Health Care Supplies (10% off supplies & equipment), The Access Store (10%), Northland Home Health Care (10% off medical supplies) and Fido Mobile (\$10 off monthly phone plan).

### PLEASE ENTER MEMBERSHIP FOR:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY:  PROV:

POSTAL CODE:  PHONE:

E-MAIL:   
(PROVIDING YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS WILL HELP SAVE ON MAILING COSTS)

SIGNATURE:  DATE:

I wish to select the following category of Membership:

- ☐ MEMBER \$15 - \$24
- ☐ SUPPORTING MEMBER \$25 - \$99
- ☐ SUSTAINING MEMBER: \$100 - \$249
- ☐ CHARTER MEMBER: \$250 - \$499
- ☐ PATRON MEMBER: \$500 AND OVER

All Monies donated remain in Manitoba to support SCI Manitoba. An income tax receipt will be issued for any amount over \$15.00. Sustaining, Charter and Patron Members will receive recognition of their generous contribution in the context of events such as our Annual General Meetings or in the programs of other SCI Manitoba functions.

☐ NEW ☐ RENEWAL

Make cheque payable to: Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba  
Mail to: 825 Sherbrook Street, Winnipeg MB R3A 2M5

### IMPORTANT!

By signing above, you are consenting to the use of your personal information (name and address only) by SCI Manitoba for the purposes of sending out SCI's newsletters, membership cards and receipts, reminder notices and meeting notices. SCI Manitoba does not sell or trade personal information and does not rent out its mailing lists.

For more information: Phone: 204-786-4753 Fax: 204-786-1140 Email: [info@scimanitoba.ca](mailto:info@scimanitoba.ca)  
Toll free within Manitoba: 1-800-720-4933