

Intro | Happy Leap Year, Lunar New Year and Month of Love!

This year the month of February will have 29 days! Some fun facts about leap years to impress your family and friends:

A leap year has 366 days, this extra day is necessary since the actual length of a year is 365.25 days. Leap years account for this extra time, thus leap years occur every 4 years, and years that are divisible by 4. Less commonly known is the special exception to the rule, involving century years (ex. Like the year 1800). Since a year is technically 365.2425 days (slightly less than 365.25) adding an extra day every 4 years results in about 3 extra days over 400 years. As such, only one out of every four century years is considered a leap year. Therefore, century years are only leap years if they are evenly divisible by 400. Making 1600 and 2000 leap years, but not 1900 or 2100).

It is celebrated differently, but a common theme is to do something unexpected or different to make the day extra memorable. If you are looking for a unique way to spend this years leap day in Edmonton, join us for our pizza and peers evening at the Glenrose from 4-6pm! Please RSVP to Kendra at Kendra.erhardt@sci-ab.ca if planning to attend.

Empowered Para + Blake Medical Cushion Giveaway | Feb 8 @ 10am MST

Brittney Neunzig aka Empowered Para (<https://www.youtube.com/@EmpoweredPara>) - and all around legend, has an amazing event and give away on February 8th at 10am Alberta time!

From Brittney: If you spend 12+ hours sitting in a wheelchair each day, then what you're sitting on better matter to you! A wheelchair cushion isn't just a thing to keep you comfortable. It's got a job to do and that job is important. It's your cushion's job to redistribute pressure, regulate temperature and moisture, and correct your posture. Without a quality cushion you increase your risk of a pressure injury and every year more than 25 000 people die from these preventable wounds. Choosing a cushion can be overwhelming, especially since there are hundreds of options on the market. But luckily choosing a cushion doesn't have to be done alone. Occupational therapists specializing in wheelchair seating are equipped with the knowledge and expertise to help narrow down the search for a cushion. However, finding an OT in your area that has this specialized knowledge can sometimes be a challenge. That's why she's teamed up with Blake Medical, a cushion manufacturer, and Markie Ryckman, a wheelchair seating OT, to bring you a YouTube Live all about how to choose a wheelchair cushion. The live show will be an hour long followed by a Q&A session. Blake Medical is also sponsoring a giveaway so this is your chance to get a cushion totally free! Here is the link to the YouTube live: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFIOMXnJF3w>

Ps. The giveaway is for an ADULT sized cushion

WHAT'S UNDER YOUR BUTT?
A wheelchair cushion conversation between therapist and end user.
LIVE FEBRUARY 8TH @ 12 PM EST 1 HR FOLLOWED BY Q&A
GIVEAWAY! sponsored by Blake Medical. A Geo-Matrix™ gel product of choice* & a 30 min consultation with a wheelchair seating OT. *excludes mattresses

Giving Campaign | Donations Matched by the Government of Alberta

A spinal cord injury can happen to anyone, any time, anywhere, any place. In the blink of an eye, life can change forever. When something as devastating as this happens, hopes and dreams for the future can disappear instantaneously.

By donating to SCI-AB, you make it possible for clients to be partnered with peers who have a deep understanding of what they are going through. Client Services Coordinators are on hand to connect clients to resources like food and healthcare needs, and the exercise physiologists assist clients with mobility, strength, body conditioning and confidence. Clients can participate in peer events while still in the hospital. Engaging with peers who are navigating a similar journey is as important to the clients' well-being as getting out into the community and resuming normal life as possible. And exercising and moving one's body is extremely beneficial to the clients' overall health as well as being referred to the resources available to clients.

While it is a new year, it isn't too late to contribute to SCI-AB's Giving Campaign! Donations will be eligible for 30% match funding from the Government of Alberta and it is a great opportunity to give back to the community and those in need, and making your dollar go the extra mile. Learn more about the initiative, help spread the word, or donate today!

https://give.crowdfunding.alberta.ca/helpspinalcordinjuryalberta?ref=ab_0to5PdKlAX0to5PdKlAX

Permobil Ti-Lite Wheelchair Raffle Date - June 21

The date has been set for the Permobil manual Ti-Lite wheelchair raffle! The lucky winner will be announced on June 21st on the first official day of summer! We can't think of a better way to kick off the sunny season than with a new set of wheels.

Entries can be obtained at each in-person peer event attended until the draw date. Please note that to enter your name in the draw you must be in attendance at the peer event, be a wheelchair user, and agree not to re-sell the chair for monetary gain. For more details please reach out to Kendra at Kendra.erhardt@sci-ab.ca.

Good luck to those who have already entered, and remember it's not too late to get your name in the draw. While the more entries will increase your odds, you only need one ballot for a chance to win!

SCI-AB February 2024 Events:

- Feb 6 - Virtual Ladies Peer Chat
- Feb 7 - Online Peer Chat with Terry
- Feb 8 - YEG Peer Dinner at Bucco
- Feb 13 - Coffee + Peers at the Glenrose
- Feb 14 - YEG Coffee Group
- Feb 19 - Family Day (offices closed)
- Feb 20 - Virtual Ladies Peer Chat
- Feb 21 - Online Peer Chat with Terry
- Feb 28 - YYC Peer Dinner
- Feb 29 - Pizza + Peers at the Glenrose

Be sure to check out our [online events calendar](#) or our social media channels to keep up to date on upcoming events!

In the Community + Across the Province:

For those who love to snack and read, there is a [culinary book club](#) at the downtown Edmonton Library on Monday evenings from 6:30-8pm or Friday afternoons from 1:30-3:30pm. There is a rotating series of books, and the snacks prepared will be based on the reading. This is a great way to get involved in the community, read some good books and learn some new recipes!

There are elevators and ramps that can connect to the underground Library Parkade that has accessible stalls available. For more information check out their website. For more information, check out the City of Edmonton Stanley A Milner Library [event page for all the different events they host!](#)

The [Lacrossing barriers](#) program will be expanding from Calgary up into the Edmonton zone as well! They offer inclusive indoor lacrosse, with programming on Mondays from 6-8pm at Minchau Elementary School. For more information, please contact ethan4grave@gmail.com. They will also be offering a wheelchair dance class in Calgary starting in March on Wednesday nights. For more info, or to register, check out their website online at <https://www.lacrossingbarriers.org/>.

February 7th is National Girls + Women in Sport Day- so WSA thought it would be fitting to have a Women's Wheelchair Rugby try-it event on February 3rd. It will take place from 9:00am-12:30pm at Village Square Leisure Centre in Calgary. They have had some wheelchair rugby athletes graciously agree to help out; two of which were on the first ever women's team sent to represent Canada at the Women's Cup! They are excited to share more about this with our participants.

The event will be open to women of all ages and abilities to come out and try wheelchair rugby and meet some of our amazing female athletes! It is free to register and we will have wheelchairs there for people to use. To register, please email Aspen: aspen@wheelchairsportsalberta.com

If you are in central Alberta, the Red Deer Reapers Wheelchair Rugby practices Sunday nights at the Penhold Multiplex 7:30-9pm. Come to watch or play, we have chairs and equipment and are looking for new players! Contact Wanda Seifried at wanda.seifried@sci-ab.ca for additional info. There is also free sledge hockey try-it events on Thursdays from 4:30-5:30pm at the Dawe Centre (see poster for details).

The Strathcona Wilderness Centre will be offering Wednesday evening adaptive ski training program, you can get more info or register online at: <https://reonline.strathcona.ca/STRATHCONA/public/booking/CourseDetails/31261>

There is also the opportunity to have a complimentary, private fitting and ski lesson, for more information or to book your ski contact Mike at michael.neary@strathcona.ca for more information! Also be sure to check out the [Parallel Para-Nordic Ski Club Instagram page](#) more information about para-nordic skiing in our province!

In Grande Prairie, the Wolverines adaptive sports association has wheelchair basketball on Thursday evenings at 7pm at the EastLink Centre. Chairs are provided! Feel free to stop by for a drop-in session to try it out! Contact info@gpwolverines.com for more information.

For those adverse to being out in the cold Ultimate Para Sports also offers a virtual cycling program that runs until March. Equipment can be provided! Program cost is \$50 plus \$25 membership fee, but they have a fee exemption program for those who may have difficulty affording these fees, for more information contact info@ultimateparasports.com Or check out the poster below!

The Paralympic Sports Association will be offering a Winter Integrated spin at the Van Vleet Centre at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. Classes are Monday and Wednesday evenings, which go from 7:00pm-7:50pm, starting mid January (Jan 15 + Jan 17) and run until March 25 and April 3rd respectively. For more information or to sign up, please visit their website.

Finally, PSA will be offering FREE Women and Girls Sledge Hockey Development Sessions at the Meadows Community Recreation centre on Mondays from 7:30pm-9:00pm from January 8th to March 18th (with no program on Feb 19th). For more details or to sign up [check out their website](#)

Once again this year Rocky Mountain Adaptive will be offering a the U CAN Try-It Camps thanks to the Wim & Nancy Pauen Foundation's generous support. These one-day camps are open to any adaptive participants who have not tried skiing, snowboarding, or sit skiing. These sessions will take place at Sunshine Village in Banff. It includes a full day private lesson, lift ticket, rentals, and any necessary adaptive equipment for the participant. Also included is a discounted lift ticket or complimentary gondola pass for one parent or caregiver. The camp is free, but a deposit is required during booking. However, the \$60 deposit can be used towards future activities with RMA once the camp is completed. Participants are welcome to sign up for up to two separate camps. For more information, or to register [check it out here](#).

Finally, SCI Alberta is thrilled to be part of the exciting event planned at Healthcare Solutions (Gateway Location) on February 29, 2024, from 10 am to 3 pm! Join us for a day filled with exploration and awareness as we showcase our commitment to making a difference in the spinal cord injury community.

Discover the latest advancements in catheter products, carefully crafted for ultimate comfort and effectiveness. Representatives from industry leaders like Coloplast, Hollister and ConvaTec will be on hand to guide you through these innovations, providing valuable insights and information. It's an opportunity to learn, connect, and support a cause that's near and dear to our hearts.

Mark your calendar and be prepared for an immersive experience at Healthcare Solutions. Together, let's make this event a remarkable journey towards enhancing lives and raising awareness. See you on February 29th!

Insist on less, and get more from your catheter!

With Triple Preparation, **SpeediCath®** catheters with Triple Action Coating Technology™ provide less friction, less risk of harming your urethra, and less worry about UTIs.¹

Get a **FREE*** cupholder for your wheelchair when you sample a SpeediCath® Catheter!

To see the QR Code or visit the link visit coloplast.ca/FreeSpeediCathSample

¹ Innovations apply.
1. Compared to uncoated catheters.
*SpeediCath® catheters may be prescribed for use by pediatric patients (children to age 21) and adults who require bladder drainage due to chronic urine 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 Care at 1 (866) 293-6369 or visit our website at www.coloplast.ca
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SCI-AB Update | Join Our Team

Are you passionate about supporting persons with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities? You would be the perfect addition to the team at Spinal Cord Injury Alberta! We are currently looking to fill a variety of positions: a full-time client services coordinator position in Edmonton, volunteer board members, and peer mentor volunteers. For more information, check out the [join our team page](#) on our website. We look forward to connecting with you!

Alberta SCI Research Updates | Recruitment Database

Spinal Cord Injury Research Participant Recruitment Database
A new database to assist in informing individuals with SCI about potential research studies that are currently recruiting is now live at <https://redcap.link/SCIDatabase>. Individuals who are interested in having researchers contact them about trials in Alberta that are of interest to them should please enroll using the link provided. You may indicate what types of studies interest you. If you have any questions about this database, please contact Dr. Jessica D'Amico at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital/University of Alberta at damicoj@ualberta.ca.

Researchers at the U of A are looking for volunteers for a study identifying neural correlates of arm function using robotic technology. Participants must have a SCI above T1; AIS C or D and be 18-65 years old. The study will get you to involve two 2-3 hour sessions, and remuneration for time and parking will be provided.
For more information please contact Jane at japorter@ualberta.ca

Check out the all of the current research study opportunities here! <https://sci-ab.ca/research-opportunities/>

Save the Date(s) | RMA Spring Camps

Save the date for some upcoming SCI specific camps coming up in the next few months! There are several camps put on by Rocky Mountain Adaptive that will be partially subsidized by the Neilsen grant! They are open to those with spinal cord injuries and other similar conditions. Registration is not quite open for all the events, but the dates will be:

- WMNS+ Camp : Feb 25-March 1 (registration open)
- WMNS+ Camp : March 1-7-22
- SCI Camp: March 24-29 (registration open)
- YEG Ski Trip to Kananaskis: April 7-10
- SCI Camp: May 26-31

9-8-8 Hotline Info + Bell Let's Talk Day

January 25 was Bell Let's Talk Day. A spinal cord injury (SCI) can be a life altering event. The recovery can be challenging as people come to terms with different physical capacities, new routines, changing relationships and possibly a different sense of self. While people differ in their emotional experiences, reactions such as shock, anger, guilt and grief are completely normal.

One of the biggest hurdles for anyone struggling with their mental health is overcoming the stigma surrounding it. Navigating one's way around mental health concerns and issues are never easy but the more we talk about it, the more we are able to shake the stigma, lighten the load, and the more we are able to create lasting change in mental health.

If you have a spinal cord injury or a physical disability, and you are struggling with your mental health, please reach out to SCI-AB for support, or tell someone how you are feeling.

If you are in crisis, please go to the closest hospital or call 911. If you are thinking about suicide, call or text 988 toll-free, anytime Connect to a responder to get help without judgement. Call or text 9-8-8 toll-free, anytime.

Eating healthy with a SCI on a Budget

Eating healthy can feel challenging at times, especially with the rising cost of groceries. All too often convenience wins, and it can add to the waistline and the wallet. Maintaining a healthy diet is even more crucial when living with a spinal cord injury. What we eat can have a huge influence on secondary conditions, and diet can be used to manage nerve pain, UTIs, bowel routine, mental health, and much more. If you were unable to tune in to the healthy diet and eating seminar, it is available to view online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJMYyGvcgEY> There are a ton of helpful tips to help manage weight and healthy habits to take up. Some top tips from the seminar include: batch meal prep, using frozen veggies, planning out healthy meals, drinking adequate water, using canned beans and lentils to up protein and fiber intake, and minimize carbohydrate intake.

Full Circle on Netflix

Another great video to add to your playlist is the documentary "Full Circle" on Netflix. It tells the story of Trevor Kennison a skier who sustained a spinal cord injury in 2014 while attempting a 40 foot ski jump. After adjusting to living life as a wheelchair user, Trevor was determined to get back to what he loved, even if it was in a different way. A lot of blood, sweat and tears later he is redefining the sport of mono-sit skiing and the documentary follows his journey back to his accident site and the people who have paved the way before him.

It is a great story about the healing power of adaptive sport and the tenacity of the spirit to get back to what you love. Check out the trailer on youtube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hvx6nZOXHbY>

Or check it out on netflix here: <https://www.netflix.com/ca/title/81691263>

PUSH Season 2 on CBC Gem

Tune into the season 2 of PUSH every Sunday night at 7:30pm. Or anytime on the CBC Gem app! This is a fantastic and real look at life as a wheelchair user. It shares the perspective of the "Wheelee Peeps" a group of wheelchair users in Edmonton, Alberta, as they support each other through ups and downs, and always there to give each other a little "push."

Sexual Health Resources Spotlight

Since February is known as the month of -love- it seems a fitting time to do a refresh on sexual health resources available for those with spinal cord injuries:

<https://www.christopherreeve.org/todays-care/living-with-paralysis/health/sexual-health/>

<https://www.uhn.ca/TorontoRehab/Spinal-Cord-Rehab/Spinal-Cord-Essentials/Documents/General-Health/SCE2-Sd8-Sexual-Health-Pdf>

<https://www.uhn.ca/TorontoRehab/Spinal-Cord-Rehab/Spinal-Cord-Essentials/Documents/General-Health/SCE2-Sd9-Sexual-Self-Discovery-And-Body-Mapping-Pdf>

Did You Know? | Paralympians Finally Getting Paid for Medals

A long overdue update: paralympic athletes will now receive payment for medals in line with their able bodied Olympic counterparts! A gold medal will get you \$20000, while a silver is \$15000 and a bronze is \$10000. This is a nice update to see, and hopefully there will be continued funding towards adaptive sport across the country.

Happy Leap Year! - Kendra + Terry