

**Connections • Summer 2024 Newsletter**

**You may not control all of the events that happened to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them.**

*-Maya Angelou*

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## Is it Allergies? A Cold? COVID? Influenza? RSV? How do I know when to call my physician?

-By Marny Eulberg, MD



Every fall, going into winter, people who have sniffles, coughs, and/or fever ask themselves and their health care providers, “What causes that?” or “What is this thing that is making me feel sick?” Fortunately, after the first killing frost, many of the allergies to plants go away until next growing season, but indoor allergens can bother people all year. In 2020 COVID-19 got thrown into the mix. And then in 2023 and 2024 RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) got added to the list.

Colds, flu, allergies, COVID and RSV may have many of the same symptoms. And yes, it is even possible to have allergies and COVID, or flu and COVID, or allergies and the flu, or the so called “triple-demic” of flu, COVID and RSV all simultaneously. COVID seems to be the only malady out of this list that can cause a person to have a new loss of the sense of taste or smell, but not all people infected with COVID lose their sense of taste or smell. Therefore, no one can say with certainty that because you can still taste and smell that you do not have COVID!

RSV used to be thought of as only a childhood disease, but now we’ve learned that adults can also become ill from RSV. RSV is a common “cold-like” infection in children (almost all children will have had a RSV infection by age two years). Symptoms of RSV usually include runny nose, decrease in appetite, sneezing, coughing, fever, and possible wheezing. Most RSV symptoms go away on their own in 1 to 2 weeks, but RSV can be serious, especially in those less than 2 years old and in adults and infants with impaired respiratory function. They may need hospitalization to treat low oxygen levels or dehydration.

If the problem is only due to allergies it is very, very unlikely that the person affected will have a fever, but they often have bothersome sneezing, stuffy or runny nose, and itchy eyes. The National Foundation of Infectious Diseases put together a chart of possible diagnoses (at the end of this article) for those with respiratory symptoms to help determine whether a person might have a cold, COVID, Influenza or RSV.

The best preventatives for COVID, flu, and RSV are the vaccines that are now easily available and in the U.S., the cost is covered by Medicare.

## *Is it Allergies? A Cold? COVID? Influenza? RSV? (Continued)*

Additionally, frequent handwashing, wearing face coverings when outside one's home, and maintaining a distance from others that do not live in your household can be very effective. And, there is the old rule that applies whether it be colds, COVID, Flu or RSV - if you are sick? Stay home!

These hygienic measures will decrease your risk of getting and spreading these contagious respiratory infections.

There are vaccines that can prevent and/or decrease the severity of Influenza, COVID, and RSV. Since the vast majority of us in the U.S. who had polio are 65 years or older, it is generally advised that we be given these vaccines including the "high dose" flu vaccine. Note: This is not based on the fact that we had polio but is purely based on our age. The "high dose" vaccine has four times the amount of flu antigen that is in the flu vaccine given to younger people to each of four different flu viruses (hence the term "quadrivalent") that are expected to be the cause of influenza in any given year.

According to the New England Journal of Medicine, the high dose flu vaccine was shown to be 24% more effective at preventing flu in persons 65 and older than the standard flu vaccine.

Nevertheless, no flu vaccine is 100% effective at protecting recipients from getting the flu if they are exposed to



*Photo by [Mélissa Jeanty](#) on [Unsplash](#)*

someone with influenza. Reminder: It takes two weeks after you've had the vaccine for it to be fully effective. In the past several years, flu vaccines have been shown to be about 40-50% effective.

Those who should not get the flu vaccine are those with severe allergies to eggs and those who are sick with fever (or any suspected infection including possible COVID). Persons who are sick with fever or have been recently exposed to COVID, flu, or RSV should delay getting the vaccine primarily to avoid exposing the vaccinators and staff to whatever you may have.

Initial treatment for colds, flu, COVID, and RSV are pretty much the same - fluids, rest, and symptomatic treatment such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, etc.) for treatment of fever and body aches. Stay home to minimize the risk of you transmitting these respiratory viruses to others, with special avoidance of those with impaired immunity and infants under one year of age.

*Is it Allergies? A Cold? COVID? Influenza? RSV? (Continued)*

**Can I Have Flu and COVID-19 At the Same Time?**

Yes. It is possible to have flu, as well as other respiratory illnesses, and COVID-19 at the same time. This is what happened with the “triple-demic” (When flu, RSV, and COVID-19 cases collide). Some of the symptoms of flu, COVID-19, and RSV are similar making it hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. Diagnostic testing can help determine if you are sick with flu, COVID-19, or RSV.

**Should vaccines be given to someone who feels ill? What if they have a fever?**

No. Vaccination should ideally be deferred (postponed) for people who have a fever or severe respiratory symptoms. While mild illness is not a contraindication to vaccination, vaccination visits for these people should be postponed to avoid exposing healthcare personnel and other patients to the viruses causing these illnesses.

When scheduling or confirming appointments for vaccination, patients should be instructed to notify the provider’s office or clinic in advance if they currently have or have developed any symptoms of COVID-19, flu, or RSV.

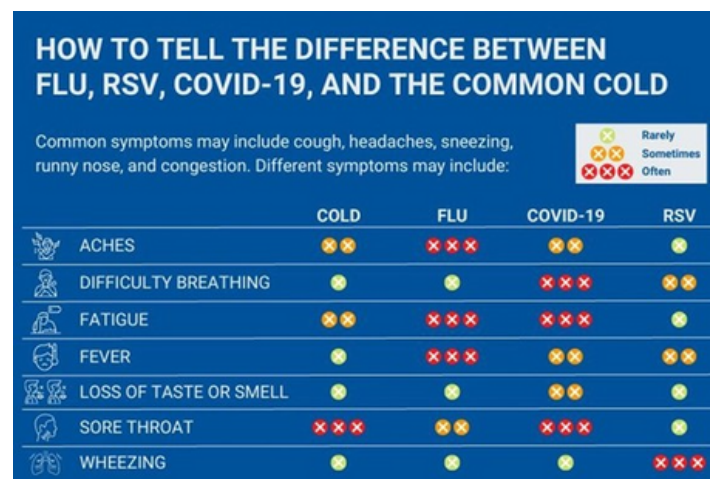
Additionally, a prior infection with any of these viral illnesses does not protect someone from future infections, but the immunity resulting from the infection may give one protection from that same

disease for a year or two. The best way to prevent these illnesses is to get vaccinated following the most recent vaccination schedule.

**When should someone call their Healthcare Professional, go to Urgent Care, or to the Emergency Room?**

Call your healthcare professional anytime you are concerned. Consider going to an urgent care facility if you have a fever over 102 degrees Fahrenheit (38.9 C), are having trouble breathing including being shorter of breath than usual with ordinary activities, have had a fever over 101 degrees Fahrenheit (38.3 C) for more than 2-3 days or symptoms other than upper respiratory symptoms such as chest pain, urinary symptoms, or problems eating or drinking.

It’s time to go the ER – if you have severe shortness of breath, chest pain, fever lasting more than 3-5 days or over 103°F, severe pain anywhere, impaired level of consciousness, bleeding not related to a minor cut, or passing out.



	COLD	FLU	COVID-19	RSV
ACHES	○○	×××	○○	●
DIFFICULTY BREATHING	●	●	×××	○○
FATIGUE	○○	×××	×××	●
FEVER	●	×××	○○	○○
LOSS OF TASTE OR SMELL	●	●	○○	●
SORE THROAT	×××	○○	×××	●
WHEEZING	●	●	●	×××

SOURCE: CDC [www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html)

## Family Corner – Building Strong Relationships

-By Mitzi Tolman

Watching your parents age is hard, but for a minute consider this same process through your child's eyes. Aging loved ones can be difficult to process for them. Here are a few ideas to maintain strong relationships as the time together looks different:

1. Share with your grandchild things you liked to do at their age. Connect with teenagers by watching videos of shows that you used to enjoy. Be prepared for them to laugh with you at the graphics and special effects.
2. Have a game night and each bring a favorite game to play.
3. Write cards or draw pictures that you can put up to think of each other.
4. Book club with them. Read either a book you enjoyed as a child or better yet, ask them to bring you a book they enjoy. Discuss the book.
5. Share your story – less and less people know about polio – share what

it is like for you, what it was like growing up during the epidemic, make sure to share positive as well as negative experiences.

Recently I went to Washington state to see my daughter and took my mother. She shared all about going to the World's Fair in Seattle with her family while she was in high school and how the lines were so long, she didn't get to go to the top of the Space Needle. Taking a day to give her that experience is something that both will always cherish.



*Vicki visiting Space Needle exhibits in 2024.*



### CPPO Resource Book

Need more info? Check out CPPO's Resource Book of Articles Related to Polio and Post-Polio Syndrome.

<https://www.easterseals.com/co/shared-components/document-library/post-polio/july-22-resource-book.pdf>

# How to Use This Polio Medical Alert Card

## Medical Alert—The Late Effects of Polio and Aging

Polio is a virus-caused neurological disorder that interrupts the nerve input to voluntary/skeletal muscles but does not affect sensation. Nerves and muscles that were impacted at the onset of polio have had to work harder and, in aging, continue to deteriorate leading to fatigue and increasing weakness.



Treatment of Post-Polio Syndrome includes lifestyle modifications and the use of assistive devices, including orthotic bracing and mobility devices. There is no proven cure or medication that will help.

Concerns may include swallowing difficulties, respiratory issues due to weakening of the respiratory muscles and the diaphragm, and/or some body placement positions, balance & stability and falling & broken bones in osteoporotic limbs.

CPPO/Easterseals Colorado  
393 S Harlan St. Suite 250  
Lakewood, CO 80226

## Polio Medical Alert Information for Polio Survivors, Their Caregivers and Their Medical Professionals

### Polio Medical Alert Card

- When folded, fits in your wallet.
- Ask your medical provider to read it as part of your appointment and return it to you.
- Refer to it in guiding your conversation about polio and your other medical concerns.
- Ask to have it included in your electronic medical records.
- Refer to QR codes to link to further information from Post-Polio Health International (PHI) and a video about Polio.
- Download it on your smart phone for easier access.
- For additional cards or replacements, contact [mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org](mailto:mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org).

### Diagnosis and Treatment Considerations

- \*Factor in/rule out other conditions that may have similar symptoms.
- \*Critical—Manage/prevent neuromuscular fatigue—reduce activity frequency & intensity by pairing activity with rest when exercising, doing physical therapy and activities of daily living.
- Overuse and over stress causes neuron and muscle loss.
- \*Some neuromuscular pain may be the result of poor body alignment.

- \*Factor in polio limitations when treating other conditions, including surgeries, and pre- and post-op recovery.
- \*Discuss anesthesia options to allay polio survivor's fears of adverse affects, particularly those that effect the respiratory system.



Scan Code  
for  
More Info



Scan Code  
to Watch  
Video



Cut Along Dotted Line

## *How to Use This Polio Medical Alert Card (Continued)*

This card summarizes the issues of aging with polio. It provides the polio survivor and significant others with the latest data-based information about polio and aging so that the survivor and medical professionals, including doctors, physical therapists, orthotists, nurses, and assistive living and independent caregivers, can share common language and understanding when discussing medical care and treatment. It speaks not only to polio, but it also gives guidelines for treating other conditions in relationship to having had polio. To make the best use of this card:

- 1.** Cut along the dotted lines, fold it in half vertically and then again fold it in half vertically so it fits in your wallet, like a business card.
- 2.** Keep it in your possession.
- 3.** During initial appointments with professionals ask them to read the card in your presence and return it to you. It is brief enough to be read in less than two minutes. This allows an immediate conversation regarding your health issues, including the relationship to polio, and does not assume that the professional will read any printed polio information you give them to read later.
- 4.** Refer your providers to the QR codes that connect them with Post-Polio Health International's recommendations for treating polio issues and to a video about

polio if they want to expand their knowledge about your polio.

- 5.** Request that they scan the card into your electronic medical records, perhaps under "allergies" where professionals are more likely to see it when reading your records. By including this information as part of your personal medical records, you increase the chances that any of your medical team will also read it and add the information into your treatment plan.
- 6.** It can also be scanned into your smart phone health records where emergency responders will have access to it.
- 7.** To replace this card, download and print it from Easterseals Colorado's web site at <http://www.easterseals.com/co/shared-components/document-library/post-polio/medical-alert-card.pdf> or request a new card from [mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org](mailto:mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org) and offer a donation to defray mailing costs.



## Food for Thought—Aging with the Late Effects of Polio

-By Margaret Hinman

In reality, it sucks! Living with the late effects of polio, the decreased nerve functioning and muscle strength due to overuse fatigue, often resulting in balance issues not to mention the increased chances of falling that are also effects of normal aging. Polio effects accelerate our physical aging process. I don't like it! And I am frustrated! Finally, 71 years after having contracted polio, anger has set in!

I see myself as a patient person, accepting that every life is filled with adversity, so I usually roll with the punches and make the best of situations. The polio effects have not interfered with living an interesting, full, productive life. Until recently, the deterioration process has been gradual and mostly unnoticed.

My current balance issues now require me to be seated to be able to use my hands to do many of my daily activities. I HATE moving so slowly, having to concentrate on every step I take just so I can remain safely upright, and to continue to get out and about and do the things I enjoy. It's the pits, big time! I have come to recognizing that my decline has accelerated, and I'm angry!

I REFUSE to become a sad, grumpy old lady, but I am keeping my anger . . . for a while! It motivates me to address the other emotions that underlie my anger, the grief over increasing loss of functionality and the fear of what the future may bring.



So, what can a person do to continue to age with the late effects of polio as gracefully and as positively as possible? One blueprint is in the Serenity prayer attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr, Lutheran theologian (1892–1971). “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, . . .” We will all age with the aftereffects of polio, there are no treatments or cures for it and polio will not be our cause of death. “. . . the courage to change the things I can. . .” Minimize nerve and muscle fatigue through time and energy management to slow down the acceleration of the aging process. Take



## *Food for Thought—Aging with the Late Effects of Polio (Continued)*

advantage of the many assistive devices that are available, including the electronic devices such as smart phones, tablets, iPads, and TVs, the keys to staying socially connected and provide intellectual stimulation and entertainment when we cannot easily get out and about. Ask family and friends for help with difficult tasks and those that can no longer be done safely. Hire help with house cleaning chores and home repairs. Explore the future possibility of other living and life-style options if/when we may need them. Keep family and friends in our lives, both physically and virtually and continue to take advantage of opportunities to do social and intellectual activities for as long as possible.



“. . . and the wisdom to know the difference.” Do what polio survivors have done all their lives when facing adversity. Acknowledge the difficulty, recognize the feelings, explore the solutions, and take action. Keep life in perspective. Many of us have faced, endured, and overcome

greater adversities than aging with the late effects of polio. Count blessings. These include our cognitive abilities, a warm, accessible home and food on the table, good overall health, caring and loving family and friends and some mobility, even if it is reduced. And there is a world full of people who have and are enduring greater adversities!

By adopting this attitude I can put my anger into perspective, wallow in it for a while, then store it away until next time and continue to embrace life!

However, this doesn't change the reality that aging with the late effects of polio still sucks! But perhaps this attitude can make it more tolerable! To quote Maya Angelou, “You may not control all of the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them.”

Just some food for thought!



*Margaret Hinman and friend.*

## I Only Take Guilt Trips to Sunny Places: Tips for Addressing Conflict

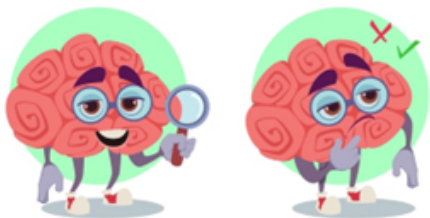
-Jill Eelkema, MSW, LCSW, EMDR | 720-675-9902 | [jille@westerncarepartners.com](mailto:jille@westerncarepartners.com)

*"You have to have conflict to have the opportunity to strengthen valuable relationships or to identify and remove malignant relationships with minimal damage." – Kwame Christian, Esq.*

**When someone is aggressive:** "What you're saying is important, but I can't follow all the pieces when we're going so fast – can we slow down or do you want to take a break?" OR "This isn't a conversation I can have right now."

**When someone is passive:** "I really want to hear what's going on in that beautiful brain of yours." OR "I know you're saying it's nothing, but I really respect your opinion."

**When someone is passive-aggressive:** "Ouch!"



**Compassionate Curiosity:** I'm OK, You're OK (Thomas Harris, 1967)

Recognize what you're feeling.

Renounce - "I don't want to be angry with you"

Request - "Can we talk about this later?"  
OR "Can you please not interrupt me?"



### Giraffe Phrases to Build Connections

"I'm feeling off/fragile - are we okay?"

"I can see where you're coming from."

"I could use some reassurance."

"I could have handled that better."

*"All too often our so-called strength comes from fear, not love. Instead of having a strong back, many of us have a defended front, shielding a weak spine. In other words, we walk around brittle and defensive, trying to conceal our lack of confidence. If we strengthen our backs, metaphorically speaking, and develop a spine that's flexible but sturdy, then we can risk having a front that's soft and open. How can we give and accept care with strong back, soft front, compassion, moving past fear to a place of genuine tenderness? I believe it comes when we can be truly transparent, seeing the world clearly and letting the world see into us."*  
-Zen Buddhist Roshi Joan Halifax



## **CPPO Statewide and Beyond Zoom Educational Meetings**

Colorado Post-Polio hosts educational meetings via Zoom. Meetings are open to all who wish to join from wherever your life takes you! Meetings are offered quarterly every 5th Saturday during the year. Join CPPO August 31 from 10:30 – 12:30 MST. Preregistration is required.

**Social & Introductions:** 10:30 – 11:00 a.m. MST

**Presentation (topics TBD):** 11:00 a.m. – Noon MST

**Questions:** Noon – 12:30 p.m. MST

**Registration:** Contact Mitzi Tolman at [mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org](mailto:mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org)

**Registration link:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0sdOGqrzloG9C7HKLGnpS\\_nyk6OfekZFgk#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0sdOGqrzloG9C7HKLGnpS_nyk6OfekZFgk#/registration)

**2024 Dates:** August 31, November 30



### ***In the Know***

Breaking news for those on the Western Slope, there is a new option for bracing in Grand Junction. Evergreen Prosthetics and Orthotics, which has an office in Denver has opened an office at the previous Mesa Orthopedics building at 2305 N. 7th St., Grand Junction, CO. 81501. Phone: 970.880.9760 Fax: 970.880.9761.



### ***Listen Up!***

If you'd like a copy of the recording from CPPO's March 30th Statewide Zoom meeting that focused on bracing (orthotics) or a copy of Alex Miller, CPPO's Power Point presentation in .pdf format, please contact Mitzi Tolman at [mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org](mailto:mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org) or Marny Eulberg at [marnyeul@me.com](mailto:marnyeul@me.com).

## Just for Fun - 2024 Summer Paralympic Games

This summer, the 2024 Paris Olympics will begin on Friday, July 26. Watched by millions, the Summer Olympics feature exciting events in swimming, track and field, gymnastics, and more.

However, what I am most excited for is the commencement of the 2024 Summer Paralympics. On August 28, these games kick off in Paris. There are 22 sports and 549 medal events included.

The Paralympic games feature adaptive professional sports like para-triathlon, blind football (soccer), wheelchair rugby, just to name a few.

To watch these Paralympic games, you can tune in to live coverage on NBC, USA Network, and CNBC. Major events can be watched online at ParalympicSport.TV. Closed captions will be available for all events on every broadcast platform.



### Paralympic Fun Facts

1. This year celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the Paralympic games.
2. Originally, the Paralympic Games were exclusively for wheelchair athletes. However, the 1976 Paralympic Games officially expanded its program to include athletes with other types of disabilities.
3. There are two events which only exist at the Paralympic Games; boccia and goalball.
4. Wheelchair racing athletes can race at speeds of up to 36 km/h thanks to their specially designed wheelchairs.
5. The basketball hoop in Wheelchair Basketball is the same height as the Olympic Basketball hoop at 3.05 meters.

*Credit: Facts found on the official 2024 Paris Paralympic Games website*

## **2024 Advisory Council Members**

**Sue Brandon**, *Chairperson*

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**Lois Tilley**

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loistilley@live.com

## **2024 Advisory Council Meetings**

Advisory Council Meetings are when planning takes place. Members are welcome to attend. **Meetings are held quarterly, the 4th Wednesday of the month at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom. If you are interested in attending, please let Mitzi know.**

2024 dates are: October 23



## Colorado Post-Polio Support Group Schedules

### AURORA

Meets the 4th Thursday of every month from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Meeting in-person at the New Hope Church, 17699 E. Hampden Ave.

**Facilitator:** Myrna Schmidt, 608.790.5755 or myrnaschmidt1@yahoo.com

### COLORADO SPRINGS

Meets the 1st Wednesday of every month from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Meeting in-person at the Colorado Springs Police Dept., 950 Academy Park Loop. Contact the facilitator for additional information.

**Facilitator:** Hal Goldberg, 303.212.0017 or halgoldberg@halgoldberg.net

### DENVER NORTH

Meets the 3rd Saturday of every month from 10:00 a.m. to Noon.

Meeting via Zoom.

**Facilitator:** Jill Eelkema, LCSW, 720.675.9902 or jille@westerncarepartners.com

### DENVER SOUTH

Meets the 1st Tuesday of every month from 11:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Meeting via Zoom. Contact the facilitator for further information.

Facilitator: Hal Goldberg, 303.212.0017 or halgoldberg@halgoldberg.net

### GRAND JUNCTION

Contact Ron Carlson, 970.640.8052 or [rpcarlson2@gmail.com](mailto:rpcarlson2@gmail.com) for support and information.

No group meetings at this time.

### NORTHERN COLORADO (Fort Collins)

Meets the 4th Saturday of every month from 10:00 a.m. to Noon

**Facilitator:** Peter Way, 970.460.6164 or NOCOPolio@gmail.com

### PUEBLO

Contact Jill Eelkema, LCSW, 720.675.9902 or [jille@westerncarepartners.com](mailto:jille@westerncarepartners.com) for support and information. No group meetings at this time.

### ZOOM GROUP

Meeting via Zoom the 2nd Wednesday of every month from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. PST / 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. MST / 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. CST and 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. EST.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

**Facilitator:** Jill Eelkema, LCSW, 720.675.9902 or [jille@westerncarepartners.com](mailto:jille@westerncarepartners.com)

Join Zoom meeting at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89008651033?pwd=TUZhVVpPc1hKOGJRTy9Bek8rZnppdz09>

Meeting ID: 890 0865 1033 | Passcode: 184185 | Phone number to call in: 719-359-4580



## Donations

If you would like to donate to support Colorado Post-Polio efforts, **please complete this form, detach and mail it to Mitzi Tolman at Easterseals Colorado.** To ensure that we receive 100% of your donation, contributions should be **payable to Easterseals Colorado** with **"POST-POLIO" written in the memo line.** Your contribution will be gratefully acknowledged. Thank you again!

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY, STATE, ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL TO:**

Easterseals Colorado  
Attn: Mitzi Tolman  
393 S Harlan St, Suite 250  
Lakewood, CO 80226  
Memo line: POST-POLIO

**FREE MATTER FOR  
BLIND OR DISABLED**



Colorado Post-Polio  
393 S Harlan St, Suite 250  
Lakewood, CO 80226



**This Is YOUR Newsletter – *Connections*** is the official news publication of the Colorado Post-Polio Program. The opinions are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily constitute an endorsement or approval by either the Colorado Post-Polio Council or Easterseals Colorado. **(Always check with your personal physician for all medical questions and concerns.)**

We invite not only your comments about this newsletter; tell us what topics you want to read about in future issues. If you have article ideas or suggestions, are willing to write a short article, tell your personal story or you'd like to review a book, please call **Mitzi Tolman** at **720.940.9291** or email her at [mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org](mailto:mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org), or write to: Easterseals Colorado, Attn: Mitzi Tolman - Colorado Post-Polio *Connections*, 393 S Harlan St, Suite 250, Lakewood, CO 80226.

**If you prefer to receive this newsletter online or need to change your mailing information**, please contact Mitzi Tolman at Easterseals Colorado at 720.940.9291 or [mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org](mailto:mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org).