

# One brave step at a time in

## WHAT IS PSEUDOMYXOMA PERITONEI?

■ Pseudomyxoma peritonei is a very rare type of cancer that usually begins in your appendix as a small growth, called a polyp. More rarely, it can start in other parts of the bowel, the ovary or bladder.

This polyp eventually spreads through the wall of your appendix or wherever else it starts, then spreads cancerous cells to the lining of the abdominal cavity.

■ It is not known what causes this type of cancer.

Pseudomyxoma peritonei does not act like most cancers and does not spread through the bloodstream or the lymphatic system. It develops very slowly and it may be many years before you have any symptoms from this type of cancer.

■ Symptoms can include: Abdominal or pelvic pain, not being able to become pregnant, abdominal swelling and bloating, and changes in bowel habits. Some people will not have any of these symptoms, so pseudomyxoma peritonei can be difficult to diagnose.

Source:

cancerresearchuk.org

Law student Davina Knight is recovering from treatment for pseudomyxoma peritonei, known as PMP.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED



## Davina Knight stays positive in face of one-in-a-million cancer diagnosis and here she shares her personal journey

I WISH there was a better way of diagnosing what I have – pseudomyxoma peritonei or PMP (one step on from appendix cancer).

But I'm not a doctor; I'm a 27-year-old studying law. I don't know much about medicine and so instead of working on a way to diagnose or cure PMP, I am going to work on getting the word out there about it.

As mentioned PMP is the next step on from appendix cancer. Basically, a tumour started to grow in my appendix. No one knows quite when it started, possibly many years ago.

In that time, the tumour has perforated and was leaking this jelly-like substance through my peritoneum (the right side of my body – the empty space where the appendix sticks out).

So this jelly stuff is basically the cancer. It doesn't stop growing with normal chemo because it's not in the bloodstream, and it isn't anywhere except the cavity in my middle section.

If undetected, the jelly keeps growing and multiplying in size and will basically suffocate organs, which is what it did to Audrey Hepburn.

This is how they found this one-in-a-million cancer in me.

I originally started getting pain in my side, for which I saw a GP in 2011.

I saw a GP here in Rockhampton a year later, who sent me to the hospital, where I saw an ER doctor as well as surgeons. In Rocky I was also sent for ultrasounds. So far no one was able to diagnose me.

I heard many different theories, but my symptoms didn't match any of these

theories, so it just dragged on and the pain came and went. So without the pain, it's hard to pinpoint what is causing it, so it became less important.

I continued to get pain, but I mostly ignored it. I moved to Brisbane. Finally, my new boss got on my case and made me see his doctor.

This GP sent me for three ultrasounds, all of which came back with results along the lines of "there is something odd going on, we just aren't sure what it is; we want other imaging".

So they performed an MRI. Again, something odd going on, not sure what. Finally, after a gynaecologist ruled out "women's problems", the gyno sent me for a CT.

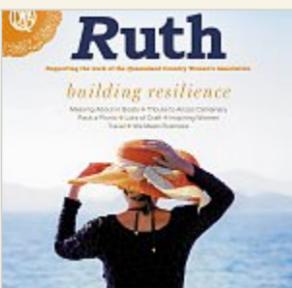
As he said, it's bulk billed and we may as well have all the images possible.

**Davina Knight:**  
The thing I found important was to find little things to mark as progress

The CT showed that what they could see of my appendix (it was tucked under my bowel, quite a common thing apparently), it was inflamed.

I was sent up to the Royal Brisbane to have the appendix removed. They said they could have a bit of a look around when they were removing it, just to see if there was anything else going on.

After three days of nil by mouth, waiting for an operating room to become available for my non-urgent appendix removal, I finally



The latest edition of Ruth is available at The Morning Bulletin's front counter.

PHOTO: THE MORNING BULLETIN

## We all have role in building resilience

BUILDING resilience and helping each other bounce back when things get tough is the focus of the autumn edition of Ruth magazine, produced quarterly by the Queensland Country Women's Association.

Association state president Robyn McFarlane said the organisation had an affinity with people in crisis.

"We know that when

people face the stress of drought, flood or other disasters the last thing they need is a mental illness label," she said.

"Severely stressed people need support, a friendly ear and some assistance to get through the hard times. This is what the QCWA's 'Bouncing Back' strategy is all about."

The association has been

reaching out to Queenslanders for more than 90 years. Its Public Rural Crisis Fund has donated more than \$200,000 to families in need, helping not only the recipients but also local businesses that benefit from cash being spent locally.

Ruth is available at The Morning Bulletin front counter and most news agencies.

If You're Over it...  
**Flog it!**

flog your  
Buy & Sell  
items...  
**FOR FREE!**

If you've got too much stuff and not enough money, flog it for free\* with finda and make some much needed cash!

\*Advertisements are free if placed online. Does not apply to jobs, motoring, garage sales, trades and services, property, notices and personals classifications. Additional exclusions apply. See our website for full terms and conditions.

Find out more at  
[www.finda.com.au](http://www.finda.com.au)

**finda**  
Anything Goes

5906380na

# recovery from PMP



HELP US TO SHARE THE STORIES AND PHOTOS THAT MATTER TO YOU

get knocked out.

When I wake up, and I am still a little groggy, the surgeon informs me they didn't end up taking my appendix out, that they aren't sure what is inside me, but it's been sent to pathology and I will be referred to a specialist. If he hadn't been such a serious, no-nonsense kind of guy, I would have thought he was joking.

Three weeks later, at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, I finally get my appendix removed and am informed that it did indeed have a tumour in the end of it, and the "stuff" that the surgeons weren't sure about had come from the tumour.

This puts me past appendix cancer and into PMP - pseudomyxoma peritonii.

I wasn't sure how to react, so I just asked what it looked like. And he said, which I will never forget, that the appendix is about the size of your little finger and mine looked like ET's finger because the tumour was a big bulb at the end of it.

Well, after a number of appointments with the specialist through the hospital (trips down to Brisbane for my parents who live in Rockhampton), the treatment plan would be to have laparoscopic surgeries every six months to "stage" the cancer (basically, track its progress).

After the second one, however, I was told I would need "the big one", nicknamed in the PMP community as the MOAS -



**LIFE GOES ON:** Back home in Rockhampton, Davina Knight is still keeping in touch with her law studies while recovering from surgery.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

Mother Of All Surgeries; so named due to the extensiveness of the surgery itself, but also because recovery time is estimated to be around six months minimum.

Well, that was unexpected for the doctors, my family and me. We weren't expecting this for years yet. It was especially hard for me to hear, as it meant that my life was about to turn over again.

I would need to move back in with my parents in Rocky, as I cannot look after myself

after the surgery. I will need help with basic tasks like getting food.

The surgery is different for everyone, so I'm not sure what condition I will be in post-op - I may have bowel and bladder issues, I may not be able to dress myself.

Well 12 months go by, I get everything ready. I have moved home, I have finished my job, I take a term off my degree, and I am ready for the surgery.

My Dad drives through the aftermath of Cyclone

Marcia to be in Brisbane for my surgery. And suddenly the day of admittance is here. It took 12 months, but it's so suddenly here.

They admit me the day before for prep and then they collect me at 7am for my surgery to start at 8am. My Dad is there to see me in and to see me when it's all over.

It took 8.5 hours, two surgeons call my Dad during the surgery to provide updates, which is better than most get.

Usually family get one

update, when the chemo is being flushed through my abdomen. I have the big incision down my front, and five drains. I'm in and out of it, on pain killers and light sedation for a couple of days.

But I'm on my feet walking to the bathroom for a shower on my second day. I'm out of the high attention room and into a share room by day five (amazing progress).

Still not great but a lot better than most other patients after this surgery. By day eight, I am walking without the walker, with just the pole that contains my fluids. And the following day, I am detached from that and I am walking unaided. I walk as often as I can, though it is very exhausting.

Showering is exhausting. I often need a nap after these simple tasks.

By day 17, I'm on a plane headed back to Rockhampton.

It has been tough since getting home. Learning what I can and can't eat.

When I should eat, portion sizes, flavours that I can handle.

I've had to retrain myself on all of this.

It's been a constant battle with nausea, a battle that so far the nausea has been winning, but as I slowly get stronger, it won't continue to win for much longer.

I'm out and about now, but they weren't kidding when they said recovery was a slow process.

But the thing I found important throughout this was to find little things to mark as progress or an achievement.

Showering standing up the whole time, sweeping the floor, eating a whole apple, drinking a full cup of tea.

All of these sound like small things, but for me they were big accomplishments.

And I will continue to achieve something every day if I can. If not, there is always tomorrow.

**YOUR STORIES** Send your stories to [themorningbulletin.com.au/your-story](http://themorningbulletin.com.au/your-story)

## IN BRIEF

### Beef-inspired art on show

REID'S Gallery and Gift Shop opens with a new exhibition next Tuesday, April 21, at the Walter Reid Cultural Centre.

Artists have created a range of hand-crafted arts and crafts:

paintings, jewellery, pottery, embroidery, cards, and fibre creations; sewn, spun, woven, felted and patchwork items, with many in a beef theme ready for Beef Australia 2015.

The exhibition will be open from 10am to 3pm daily and until 6pm Wednesdays and Thursdays, until May 31.

### Monto reunion

THE annual Monto reunion will be held at the North Rockhampton Bowls Club (in the Back Bar) on Sunday, April 19. It will run from 9.30am to 3.30pm.

All former Monto people welcome. Contact Don Bellert on 0428 211 287.

### Tai chi classes

AUSTRALIAN Academy of Tai Chi will resume classes for Term 1 at 6pm on Wednesday, April 22, at the North Rockhampton Uniting Church Hall, corner of Berserker and Robinson St.

Beginners of all ages and fitness levels are welcome to learn this enjoyable art of relaxation.

For information phone Debbie 0401 469 397.

### All aboard for family fun

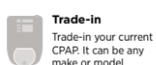
THE Archer Park Rail Museum is holding a family fun day on April 26 at the museum on Denison St from 9am until 1pm.

Cost is \$2 entry, children under 14 years free, \$2.50 for a tram ride. There will be exhibits, live music, markets, vintage cars and a sausage sizzle.

## Trade-in Offer



## Trade-in and save!



**Trade-in**  
Trade-in your current CPAP. It can be any make or model.



**\$250 off\***  
You will receive a \$250 credit towards a new F&P ICON+ CPAP machine.



**New CPAP**  
Get an even better night's sleep with the latest CPAP from Fisher & Paykel Healthcare

**Fisher & Paykel**  
HEALTHCARE

Offer available from 1st April 2015 to 31st May 2015.

\*Additional terms and conditions apply. See in store for details.

**Daniels**  
SURGICAL & HEALTH EQUIPMENT

Cnr Fitzroy & Alma St, Rockhampton  
4922 7148  
[www.danielsurgical.com.au](http://www.danielsurgical.com.au)

TRADING HOURS:  
Monday - Friday 8.30am - 5pm  
Sat 9am - 12pm

## DISCOUNT DRUG STORES

more than just low prices

## FREE MEDICATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

- ✓ Receive an SMS, voicemail or email reminder when your next prescription is due
- ✓ Have your medication dispensed before you arrive in the store to save you time
- ✓ Never lose or forget your script again - we'll keep these on file for you
- ✓ We'll even remind you when you need to make a new appointment with your doctor

**START TODAY!**  
Speak with our staff in-store



Shop online & SAVE TIME!

Visit [southrockhampton.discountdrugstores.com.au](http://southrockhampton.discountdrugstores.com.au) for a fast and easy way to shop via click and collect or postage!

## SOUTH ROCKHAMPTON DISCOUNT DRUG STORE

8/111 George Street, Rockhampton QLD 4700

PH: (07) 4921 3300 FAX (07) 4836 4009

E: [strockhampton@discountdrugstores.com.au](mailto:strockhampton@discountdrugstores.com.au)

TRADING HOURS: MON - FRI: 8.30AM - 7PM SAT: 8.30AM - 5PM SUN: 9.00AM - 12PM  
Proprietor: Anna Chao