

OzPoz FAQ, Welcome and General Information

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Welcome to OzPoz. This document tells you about the list, gives some guidelines and information for posting, and forms the terms of service for the OzPoz mailing list (ozpoz@ozpoz.org). You should familiarise yourself with the information below, and keep a copy of this document in case you need to refer to it later.

What is a mailing list? [1.] Like its paper equivalent, an internet mailing list is a list of names and addresses that mail is to be sent to. On the internet what this means is that members of the list can send email messages to a central email address, and that message is then distributed to all of the members of the list. The re-distribution of the message to its recipients, and the administration of membership of the list is taken care of by a computer program housed on the website ozpoz.org.

Who and what is this list for? [2.] OzPoz is an internet discussion list, in operation since February 1996, for both emotional support and sharing medical information for *gay men who are HIV-positive*.

Although HIV/AIDS affects people throughout society, some gay men living with HIV feel more comfortable discussing certain issues in a strictly HIV+ gay male environment. OzPoz seeks to provide a safe place of this sort, and is for this purpose only. Carers, lovers or friends of people with HIV, researchers, clinicians and observers are requested not respect our privacy and not subscribe, *unless they are HIV-positive gay men themselves*.

OzPoz has an Australian focus, but we welcome subscribers from anywhere in the world.

This is a *closed* list. Requests to join OzPoz are dealt with by the facilitator who must confirm that prospective subscribers meet the membership requirements outlined below.

This is a *private* list. The list of subscribers is available only to the facilitator and will not be shared, sold, or passed on by OzPoz. While we take all reasonable steps to ensure the privacy of OzPoz members, remember that there are limits of the degree to which information in email messages can be kept secure.

Who runs OzPoz? [3.] OzPoz (the mailing list) and ozpoz.org (the web site) is hosted, operated and facilitated by Paul Kidd, an HIV-positive Australian gay man with a longstanding involvement in the internet and the HIV+ gay community.

OzPoz is not affiliated with, or funded by, any other organisation.

How do I join? [4.] Joining OzPoz is simple, but there are several steps to the process. If you've joined other internet mailing lists, the process is much the same:

- (a) You send a subscription request to OzPoz via email or on the web. *Either* send a blank email message to ozpoz-join@ozpoz.org; *or* go to <http://lists.ozpoz.org/listinfo.cgi/ozpoz-ozpoz.org> and follow the instructions.
 - (b) The mailing list software sends a confirmation email to the address you specified to confirm that your email address is valid. *You must follow the steps outlined in that email before your subscription request can be processed.*
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(c) Your subscription request is then be passed on to the facilitator. In most cases, the facilitator will contact you to confirm that you meet the eligibility requirements for membership.

(d) The facilitator then approves (or declines) your subscription request. You will receive an email informing you of this.

If you have difficulties with the subscription process, contact the facilitator directly at owner-ozpoz@ozpoz.org, and he will be happy to assist you.

Now I'm subscribed, what do I do?

[5.] It would be nice if new members posted a short introduction about themselves to the list. Just a few lines about who you are and what you're interested in is all that's needed. See the next section for details on how to send a message.

How do I send a message to the list?

[6.] To send a message to the group, just email ozpoz@ozpoz.org and your message is automagically distributed to the whole group (including back to you). If your message doesn't appear in your own mailbox straight away, don't re-send it – it can take a while for the list computer to send out all the copies of the message that it has to.

Messages to the list can only be posted by list members. If your message originates from an email account other than the one you're subscribed as, it will be 'held for approval' – you may get a message from the list server saying "Your message to ozpoz@ozpoz.org awaits moderator approval." If this occurs, try re-sending your message from the account you first subscribed to OzPoz from.

If you have more than one email account, be sure to always send OzPoz messages from the same account.

What can I post to the list?

[7.] OzPoz is an *unmoderated* forum. Members are free to post whatever they wish without censorship, subject to the guidelines below.

- (a) Feel free to share information (medical and otherwise), experiences, feelings, and opinions in a compassionate and supportive way.
 - (b) Light-hearted, humorous or just plain funny posts are encouraged. This list is to keep us laughing as well as keep us informed.
 - (c) Respect each other. No blaming the victim or telling people they'll die if they don't follow your treatment ideas.
 - (d) Accusations of blame or guilt are never welcome, particularly when directed at an OzPoz member or the HIV+ or gay communities generally. Discussion of issues surrounding guilt or responsibility is OK.
 - (e) Some things are *off-topic*, and we ask that members not engage in discussions about:
 - (i) the supposed mental health or personal behaviour of an OzPoz member (except where the member has volunteered information about himself and the discussion is conducted in a non-judgemental way);
 - (ii) whether or not AIDS is caused by HIV infection (we are all entitled to our own opinions on this matter, but for the sake of establishing common ground, the assumption is that HIV leads to AIDS and that conventional medical treatments have a valid role in managing HIV infection);
 - (iii) subjects which have been recently dealt with or have in the past led to fruitless or unpleasant discussion; or
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(iv) any matter which the consensus agrees is irrelevant, inappropriate or deliberately inflammatory.

In the event that the facilitator considers a post or discussion *off-topic*, he will suggest that the topic be closed, and unless there is a consensus that the conversation should continue, further discussion on that topic will not be permitted.

- (f) No advertisements for commercial services are permitted. Notices of community events, or services provided by list members, are generally OK if they are non-commercial in nature.
- (g) Please take the time to make your message the best it can be. Consider your posting carefully before sending it out. Is it appropriate to an e-mail support group? Will it further the purpose of the group? Remember, your message will be seen by lots of people who are taking their time to read it. Proper spelling, capitalisation, punctuation, and line and paragraph breaks will help make your message more readable.
- (h) Post text messages only. Small images and other attachments may be permitted at the discretion of the facilitator. Sounds, movies and attachments which are not relevant to the discussion are not permitted.
- (i) Remember: the internet (and mailing lists in particular) have their own history, customs and rules of etiquette. If you're new to all this (or even if you're not) it's worth taking a little time to learn what these are. You can get a few tips on mailing list etiquette by visiting <http://www.firststep.com.au/articles/list-etiquette.html> or <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>.
- (j) Reposting, publishing or otherwise sharing material from OzPoz outside the list is expressly forbidden, unless you have first obtained the approval of the author(s) of the material you want to repost.

I haven't received any emails from OzPoz. What's wrong?

[8.] Like many similar lists, OzPoz goes through cycles of increased and decreased activity. There is no 'active facilitation' on OzPoz to keep the conversation going, so discussion depends on member input. If things are quiet and you wish there was more discussion, it's up to you to kick things off. Don't be afraid to post a brief "hello world" message, a question or an idea for discussion.

Can I post anonymously?

[9.] Messages to OzPoz are automatically de-identified to protect the privacy of members. What this means is that your name and email address (the "From:" and "Reply-to:" headers) and some other identifying information are removed from your email message before it is redistributed to the list.

If your email program adds a signature with identifying information, remember to turn this feature off before sending if you don't want to be identified.

In order that members of the list get to know one another and have a sense of who is who in a conversation, it helps if you "sign" your posts by putting your name at the bottom of each message (you can use your full name, just your first name or a pseudonym).

Please be cautious about posting to OzPoz any information which you do not want made public. While we all work together to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of our discussions, and while the mailing list software is set up to be as secure as possible, the internet may not be the best place to share material which is sensitive in nature. Please use your own judgement before posting.

What happens if I breach these guidelines?

[10.] The facilitator reserves the right to revoke your OzPoz membership if you breach the guidelines in this document or for any other reason if your actions negatively impact the harmony and order of the group. In most cases, the facilitator will endeavour to resolve the problem with you before taking whatever action he deems necessary, however in more serious cases the facilitator reserves the right to unsubscribe members breaching these guidelines without warning.

If you are removed from the list, you are welcome to discuss the matter with the facilitator, who may restore your subscription with whatever conditions he deems appropriate, however the facilitator's decision is final.

How do I get off the list?

[11.] You can *cancel* your membership any time by *either* sending a blank email message to ozpoz-leave@ozpoz.org; *or* going to <http://lists.ozpoz.org/listinfo.cgi/ozpoz-ozpoz.org> and following the instructions there.

If you wish to *temporarily suspend* your membership (if you're going away on holiday, for example), you can do this through the control panel – see below.

How do I use the control panel?

[12.] You can control many aspects of your membership through the web-based control panel at <http://lists.ozpoz.org/listinfo.cgi/ozpoz-ozpoz.org>. To use this facility, you will need to know the email address at which you're subscribed and your OzPoz password. If you don't know your password, you can have a reminder mailed to you – just follow the instructions on the control panel.

(The address of the control panel is included at the bottom of every message sent via OzPoz).

With the control panel you can:

- Change your email address (for example, if you're moving to a new ISP)
- Unsubscribe from the list.
- Change your password.
- Temporarily disable delivery of list messages (set *Mail delivery* to "disabled") if you need to take a break from the list.
- Switch to digest mode (if you'd rather receive a single message each day with all that day's posts, rather than individual messages).

If you have difficulty using the control panel, contact the facilitator (ozpoz-owner@ozpoz.org) who can help you set up your subscription the way you want.

I'm not a lawyer, but I play one on TV. Does OzPoz have some important-sounding legal 'fine print' I should be aware of?

[13.] OzPoz ("the mailing list") is operated as a free public service by Paul Kidd ("the Host"). By subscribing to the mailing list you acknowledge and agree as follows:

- (a) The Host gives no warranty, guarantee or representation about the accuracy, reliability, timeliness or otherwise of the information contained on the mailing list.
- (b) To the full extent permitted by law the Host disclaims any and all warranties, express or implied regarding:
 - (i) the accuracy, reliability, timeliness or otherwise of any information contained or referred to on the mailing list;
 - (ii) the merchantability or fitness for any particular purpose of the mailing list or of any service or product contained in or referred

to on the mailing list.

- (c) The Host will not be liable under any circumstances for any damages of any kind recognised by law (even if it has been advised of the possibility of such loss of profits or damages) which are the consequence of you acting or failing to act on any information contained on or referred to on the mailing list.
- (d) The Host does not guarantee or make any representations that the mailing list is free or will be free of software viruses such as worms and Trojan horses.
- (e) The Host is not liable to you for any defamatory, offensive or illegal material on the mailing list, whether caused through negligence of the Host or through any other cause.
- (f) The Host accepts no liability for opinions expressed on the mailing list, and the contents of postings are not the opinions of the Host unless otherwise stated.
- (g) Individual treatment strategies and decisions should always be made in consultation with professional medical advisers. Neither the Host nor the subscribed members are qualified to give medical advice.
- (h) The mailing list is an unmoderated, closed discussion group and not a public medium. The Host is not the publisher of any material disseminated via this mailing list and accepts no liability for the content of messages.
- (i) By subscribing, accessing or posting to the mailing list, you agree to indemnify, and keep indemnified, the Host against any claim arising out of your use of the mailing list.
- (j) The Host reserves the right to withdraw or withhold the mailing list service from any person at any time and for any reason without penalty.
- (k) [Privacy Statement] Any information provided by you to the Host will be used for the sole purpose of providing you with the mailing list service, and will not be passed on to any third party except as provided for by law. The Host will take all reasonable steps to secure any personal information provided by you, however due to the technical limitations of the email medium, the Host makes no representation as to the security of information posted by you to the mailing list service.
- (l) These terms of service and usage guidelines may be amended by the Host at any time.

If you have any question about OzPoz that's not dealt with in this document, please don't hesitate to drop me a line and I will do my best to help.

Paul Kidd (paul@ozpoz.org)
OzPoz Facilitator