The MailBag

August 2022

The Ostomy Support Newsletter Of Jacksonville, Ocala, Amelia Island, Gainesville, & The Villages

OstoTees

This month at the August Jacksonville zoom meeting we will have a presentation on OSTOTEES – don't miss it.

LAYERING WITH OSTOTEE UNDERSHIRTS

Our customized undershirts for men and women are perfect for working or exercising, especially when it's hot outside. Please watch the videos at our website www.ostotee.com on how to best utilize our customized ostomy undershirts. Each shirt is unique so also watch the Stoma Measuring Guide.

New products coming out very soon! Stay tuned…

Medical Care Products, Inc.
(904) 733-8500
(800) 741-0110

Check Out The MailBag Now On FaceBook
https://www.facebook.com/JaxUOAA/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel
Find all the past issues of the MailBag at http://ostomymcp.com/id6.html

Jacksonville
Contact Information:
Patti Langenbach
(800) 741-0110
(904) 733-8500
patti@ostomymcp.com
Support group meets the 3rd Sunday of each month 3 p.m.
4836 Victor Street
Next Meeting: **August 21st**
Also join us by Zoom
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/94640600811
Meeting ID: 946 4060 0811
or call +1 301 715 8592 US

Gainesville Support Group
Contact info:
JoAnne Bell at 352-284-4214
Meets the 1st Sunday of each month
(except Holidays)
at Hope Lodge2121 SW 16th St
Gainesville, FL
Next meeting: **TBA**

Ocala Support Contact info:
Karen Franco 352-304-1309
Meets the 2nd Sunday of each month (except July & Aug) at 2 p.m. at the Sheriff's Station 3260 SE 80th Street between Ocala and Belleview.
Next Meeting: **TBA**

Citrus County Support Group
Has Disbanded
To find a support group
in your area visit:
https://www.ostomy.org/support-group-finder/

Amelia Island Area
Ostomy Support Group
(904) 310-9054
Meets second Monday of each month at 6:30pm
Next Meeting: **TBA**

The Villages Ostomy Support
We meet on the 2nd Tuesday evening of each month at 6:00 PM at (except July & August
Linda Manson
tvostomy@gmail.com
865-335-6330
Next meeting - **August 9th** @ 6 pm
Saddlebrook Rec Center (near Polo Field)
Masks Required
Contact Linda tvostomy@gmail.com

DO I HAVE A PARASTOMA HERNIA?

By Robin Glover UOAA

No need to be alarmed, but if you have an ostomy you already have a hernia! When the surgeon opened your abdominal muscles to pull your intestine through, they technically gave you a hernia. But we're not talking about that kind of hernia. We're talking about parastomal (peristomal) hernias. That's when more intestine than planned pushes through your muscles and causes a bulge at your ostomy site.

You can tell if you might have a parastomal hernia by a noticeable bulge or by placing your hand over your stoma and seeing if it protrudes out when you cough. (This doesn't count as an official diagnosis. You'll probably also want to talk to your doctor.)

What Is a Parastomal Hernia?

A parastomal hernia is like any other hernia. They happen when an organ pushes through a weak spot in the muscle. For people with an ostomy, the organ is your intestine and the weak spot is in the same area the surgeon created your stoma.

While every effort is made to close everything and ensure a tight, snug fit, some extra intestine can force its way through and push against your skin. (This is as opposed to a prolapsed stoma when extra intestine is actually coming out of your body.)

Parastomal hernias usually happen within the first one to two years after ostomy surgery, but can occur later. While people without a parastomal hernia will tell you they're mostly asymptomatic, those with one will likely beg to differ. Parastomal hernias can cause discomfort and pain and make it difficult to keep your appliance on.

Dealing With a Parastomal Hernia

One of the most frustrating things about having a parastomal hernia is dealing with leaks. Every parastomal hernia is unique and they come in all shapes and sizes so finding the right pouching system is important. It can take some experimenting and ordering plenty of free samples from ostomy supply companies to get it figured out. If possible, you should also consult with a Wound Ostomy Care nurse. In fact, you should probably do this first. It can save you plenty of time and frustration. Check out this link for resources on finding one. **Ostomy nurses are out there and ready to help!**

Preventing a Parastomal Hernia

The best way to prevent a parastomal hernia is to listen to your doctor. When they say to not lift anything over 10 pounds for 4-6 weeks after surgery, don't do it! You should also always be careful about what you lift and use proper form no matter how long ago your surgery was. It's also a good idea to wear an ostomy support belt or undergarment when you're working out or doing any strenuous activity, and to apply pressure to your stoma when you cough or sneeze.

Strengthening the area around your stoma site can help, too. **But, as always, check with your doctor before beginning any sort of exercise routine.** (Also, as always *again,* quitting smoking and/or maintaining a healthy weight can make a big difference.)

How Do You Fix a Parastomal Hernia?

Well, there's no simple answer. Like every parastomal hernia is different, so are our bodies and the surgeries we've had. It will take consulting with your doctor or a WOC nurse to find a plan of action that's specific to your needs.

But something you can do right now is find support from the ostomy community. We are a tight-knit group (and just not our sutures!) of people always eager to help and offer a listening ear.

Robin Glover is a writer based in the Houston area. He has a permanent ostomy after being diagnosed with Crohn's Disease in 2017.

Ostomy Tips: Ballooning

Kelsey Scarborough

Ballooning. A common occurrence.

I work a very busy job. I am constantly running to get things done and because of this, I do not always have time to empty my pouch. The less I am able to empty my bag, the more likely I am to have my filter become clogged and experience ballooning.

For those who have not heard the term ballooning before, it is used to refer to an ostomy bag that is puffed up (like a blown-up balloon) due to gas from the digestive tract exiting through the stoma into a person's ostomy bag. This is inconvenient and it happens to all ostomates, and, as mentioned above, filters do not always prevent it.

Here are some ways to reduce ballooning, as well as some ways to handle ballooning since it cannot always be avoided.

Diet:

To reduce the occurrence of ballooning, one can take steps to reduce gas production. Paying attention to your diet can help reduce your gas production and thus, ballooning. Foods that tend to cause more gas than others include beans, some fruits (apples and pears), some veggies (asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots), dairy, grains, nuts, and carbonated beverages.

While some foods are known to cause gas, people may be affected differently by different foods. Foods that make one person gassy may not cause gas in another. Thus, Eric of Vegan Ostomy suggests keeping a food diary in order to track which foods may individually make you gassy.

Eating Slow:

In addition to *what* you eat, being mindful of *how* you eat is important. Eating slowly is very important if you have an ostomy. When we eat slower, two important things happen: we allow our bodies time to tell us we are full before we are overstuffed, and we swallow less air. It takes our bodies some time to communicate to the brain that we are full. If we eat too quickly, we risk overeating before we have had the chance to feel full. Furthermore, when you eat quickly you swallow air. Air that is swallowed goes into your digestive tract and can cause bloating until is comes out your stoma as extra gas. Thus, eating slowly will reduce ballooning by reducing overeating, and reducing the swallowing of air.

Habits:

Other habits that cause air to enter out digestive tract and become gas are drinking through a straw, chewing gum, smoking, and drinking carbonated beverages. All of these occurrences cause air to be swallowed and become gas.

Above are some ways to reduce gas, but gas cannot be eliminated as it is part of digestion. So what about the gas that cannot be avoided that causes ballooning?

Filters:

Using a bag with a filter will reduce ballooning majorly. These filters not only eliminate the gas in the bag automatically, but also scentlessly. That is, the gas is removed without a smell, so no one around you knows it is happening.

Protect your filter:

These filters, however, can become clogged. This can happen because of high output, pancaking, or getting the filter wet. With high output, the filter is likely to become clogged and that cannot really be avoided. For pancaking and getting the filter wet, however, there are some ways to protect your filter.

As discussed in my **pancaking article**, a filter can work too well and cause a vacuum in your pouch, leading to pancaking which can clog your filter. This can be avoided by placing a filter-sticker or some medical tape over your filter to prevent it from creating a vacuum and removing the sticker or tape as needed to let gas out. This is the same way you can protect your filter from getting wet. Placing a sticker or medical tape over it when bathing or **swimming** will prevent the filter from being compromised by getting wet. While baths and swimming may ruin your filter if not protected, a shower is not likely to harm the filter, but protecting it may be a good idea just for good measure.

Burping your bag:

Another way to deal with bag ballooning is to burp your bag to let the gas out. This does allow the gas smell to escape the bag and is best done in the bathroom. It may also be helpful to use a **pouch deodorizer/ lubricator** if you tend to burp your bag a lot and/or biologic odor-reducing spray.

For a one-piece pouching system, the gas must be burped out of the end of the pouch where you empty it. For a two-piece pouching system, the air can be let out of the bag through the end as discussed above, or it can be burped out of the wafer/pouch connection.

Bag vents:

If you are uncomfortable burping your bag, you can purchase bag vents. These do not prevent the smell like a filter does so again it is helpful to use a pouch deodorizer/ lubricator in your bag with these and/or biologic odor-reducing spray. These are like a small valve with a "door" that you open and close to let gas out.

You can purchase a vent such as the Osto-EZ-Vent.

Ask Nurse Brown, CWOCN

Showering With an Ostomy

Dear Nurse Brown, I really enjoy a long, hot shower. The problem is my pouch gets wet and then takes too long to dry. Is there a way to keep my pouch dry in the shower?

W.R. Dear W.R., There are many products on the market to cover your pouch, but with a long, hot shower, even the steam will dampen the pouch. Have you tried drying your pouch and wafer using a hair dryer on a cool setting? You can also fold your empty pouch up during the shower and secure it with a clip or large bobby pin. This can limit the amount of the pouch that gets wet and then towel dry or use the hair dryer. Some ostomates that use a two-piece system keep a "shower pouch" that they only use during showers, replacing it with the pouch they were going to wear, and allowing the wet pouch to dry until the next shower. Get more Ostomy Answers in the 88-page Summer issue of The Phoenix, the official publication of UOAA.

UOAA's 8th National Conference-Postponed

AUGUST 10, 2023 - AUGUST 13, 2023

https://www.ostomy.org/event/uoaa-8th-national-conference/

Visit the Peristomal Skin Assessment Guide for Consumers
http://psag-consumer.wocn.org/#home

UOAA COVID-19 UPDATES

UOAA will update this blog post with any information that may affect our community.

https://www.ostomy.org/coronavirus-effects-on-the-ostomy-community/

UOAA Discussion Board
https://www.uoaa.org/forum/index.php

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To: