The MailBag

February 2023

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

Mövibrace Abdominal Ostomy Belt for Post-Operative Care after Colostomy or Ileostomy Surgery

Abdominal ostomy belt for post-operative care after colostomy or ileostomy surgery.

•Helps prevent the formation of an abdominal hernia with strong even support for the abdominal wall.

•Adjustable ring hole around the stoma (diameter 3.14 in.), supports your urostomy or colostomy bag by holding it up against your body, preventing it from pulling and weighing down your stoma.

•Belt height 8 inches - fits right or left stoma

•Ribbed fabric prevents wrinkling and bunching

•Breathable material with sweat management qualities

•Hook and loop straps make it easy to wear, provide ample adjustability and compression.

•Adjustable for use on either left or right side

•Unisex - For use by men or women

•Material: 40% cotton, 35% polyester, 25% elastane

•Color: Black

- Sizing: Measure around center of Stoma for size (If you are in between sizes we recommend the next size up)
  - Small 26-30", Medium 32-36", Large 38-42", XL 44-48", XXL 50-54"

NOTE: This brace is currently not coded for Medicare or Insurance Reimbursement.

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

Ostomy Discounts offers ostomy supplies at great prices to uninsured or underinsured ostomates: https://ostomydiscounts.com/

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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: **February 19th**
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 -**February 14th** @ 6 pm
Saddlebrook Rec Center (near Polo Field)
Masks Required
Contact Linda tvostomy@gmail.com

10 Things I Wish I Could Tell Myself Before My Ostomy

By Amy Oestreicher, featured on ostomyconnection.com

When I first got my ostomy, I felt very alone. I felt self-conscious of the smell and sound, and sometimes I longed for my old body. When I couldn't take self-loathing anymore, I decided to make friends with it. I reached out. I inquired about support groups in my area and realized there are many people like me. I realized my ostomy is a beautiful thing and has enabled me to do all the things I've been able to accomplish over the years. It is my uniqueness.

These are 10 things I would have liked to tell myself when I first had an ostomy - 10 things I didn't know but eventually learned, which I am so grateful for today:

1. What it was: I had no idea what an ostomy was before I had one. But I have a confession: I didn't realize exactly what it was until a year later! Coming out of multiple surgeries, I had so many bags and new anatomical surprises to think about that a little pink bulge on my belly seemed to be the least of my problems!

I've learned things in the past 10 years that have shocked, scared and relieved me, such as: you can't actually feel your stoma - no nerve endings! I've had three ostomies and four ileostomies over the years. I didn't realize how different they were. Once I learned about the differences and functions of each, I was better able to take care of them.

2. What my limits were: When I saw that I'd have to live life with a bag stuck to my side, I assumed I'd be "fragile" for the rest of my life. But believe it or not, there are so many active ostomates out there! Swimming, karate, ballet, yoga - I've done everything I did before my ostomy and more.

3. There are so many strong ostomates: I was privileged to be the Eastern regional recipient of the Great Comebacks® award and meet five other amazing ostomates doing incredible things. There is a huge, supportive ostomy community. Did you know Great Comebacks® was founded by former NFL linebacker Rolf Benirschke?

4. Ostomates excel at innovation and inventiveness: It turned out I was able to do all those things I thought I couldn't - but that didn't mean it was easy. Some of the best things in life take work, and that makes you appreciate it even more. Let's just say that ostomy wraps, stoma guards and pouch covers have become good friends of mine, all products that were created by ostomates.

I've also created a workshop for ostomy patients and healthcare professionals!

5. How Amazing My Body Is: I have a new respect for my body and the way it can function now.

6. Judgment Hurts, But Fear Hurts More: Stay informed and know the facts. The more I actually understood how an ostomy worked, the more I realized how wonderful it was. After that, I took it as my responsibility to educate others. Instead of wondering if I was being "judged" by others, I took it as a privilege to inform them.

7. Everything Is Connected: Take care of your full self, emotional, spiritual, mental and physical. If you're stressed, you might be bloated or feel pain or discomfort. Remember to take deep breaths in difficult times.

8. The People Who Love You, Love You: If you're just getting comfortable with your ostomy, remember that your support system loves you for who you are. You are more than your ostomy. Reach out when you feel alone and never forget how loved you are.

9. Eat Fresh: You are what you eat, so eat whole and nourishing foods. Your ostomy will thank you, and so will you!

10. Life Can Go On: Throughout the years, I've been strong, determined and willing to do whatever it took to stay alive. I've dealt with tubes, bags, poles, you name it. And if this ostomy is all that I'm left with after everything, then I am truly grateful. More than that, I thank my ostomy for enabling me to live life to the fullest, to my fullest. I call it my Harry Potter thunderbolt scar: a symbol of strength, courage, individuality and life.

There are a few things I didn't know before my ostomy. But what I look forward to most is everything left to learn. Thank you, ostomy, for making the world a wide open door once again.

A Nurse Invented That?

Inventiveness, Ingenuity, and Innovation in Nurses.

This should surprise no one. Who else but a nurse, most likely the person responsible for cleaning the patient, would come up with a practical and sanitary method for containing fecal matter expelled from an uncovered stoma?

Before this innovation, after ostomy surgery, patients were typically sent home to fend for themselves. Available collection devices were cumbersome and unsanitary. Typically held in place by straps encircling the abdomen, these devices failed to effectively contain the fecal matter or the odor it produced.

Elise Sørensen, a Danish nurse, had come across many patients with a colostomy, including her own sister who had the surgery at the age of 32. Elise was determined to find a remedy which could help the patients who encountered many problems when dealing with a colostomy. In 1954 Elise Sørensen obtained patent on an ostomy pouch, which was very similar to the one we know today. The ostomy pouch was liquid tight, made of a thin elastic material, hermetically sealed and clinged to the skin surrounding the stomal orifice. Following several refusals, Elise Sørensen contacted the plastic manufacturer Aage Louis-Hansen from Dansk Plastic Emballage to put the ostomy pouch in production. Aage Louis-Hansen´s wife Johanne Louis-Hansen was also a nurse and therefore knew the problems which many of the colostomy patients were facing. She could see the potential in the ostomy pouch and convinced her husband to put them in production.

Elise Sørensen and her sister showed up at the factory and in collaboration with the foreman they began to produce the first pouches. These were handmade and then tested by Elise’s sister. The result was so good that after a short while Elise asked the factory to produce more pouches. The foreman made 952 pouches, which Elise gave to colleagues and patients to try-out. The demand grew rapidly and in 1955 Elise Sørensen and Aage-Louis Hansen signed a license agreement, which gave Elise 7 øre (approx. 2¢) for each ostomy pouch and a great deal of the production was sold abroad.

In 1963 Elise was elected nurse of the year by The Danish Nurses’ Organization. The company Coloplast, which has its headquarters in Humlebæk north of Copenhagen, was founded in 1957 based on this ostomy pouch production. Today Coloplast is a world-wide company with more than 7000 employees. **Sources: Medscape.com/nurses, guideservicedanmark.dk**

Just a Few Tidbits

Don’t feel that having an ostomy makes you less of a person or some freak of nature. There are lots of us and most of us are glad to be alive.

Build a support system of people to answer questions when you have a problem. Consider and know who your local ostomy nurses are. https://www.wocn.org/

Don’t play the dangerous game of making your appliance fail by putting off a change. There aren’t any prizes given for the longest wear time except accidents.

Don’t wait until you see the bottom of your supply box before ordering more. Always expect delays in shipping when calculating delivery times – although most suppliers can deliver ostomy supplies to you in a day or two.

Zip-lock sandwich bags are useful and odor-proof for disposal of used ostomy pouches. Don’t get hung up on odors. There are some great sprays, drops and some internal deodorants. Remember, everybody creates some odor in the bathroom.

Don’t feel you are an exception. If you have a urostomy, you might be concerned about urine odor. Certain foods can cause a stronger urine odor, but you can minimize that by drinking water or cranberry juice.

Carry an extra replacement pouching system in case you spring a leak while away from home.

Rotate the ostomy products in your emergency kit so they do not become outdated.

Re-measure your stoma to ensure the correct size of pouch and skin opening. The stoma will shrink in the first few months after surgery.

Read and learn all you can about ostomies. You will not only serve yourself, but you never know when you may find an opportunity to educate someone about the life-saving surgery that has extended so many of our lives.

Learn to be matter of fact about your ostomy surgery and never embarrassed. Few folks get out of this life without some medical problems and unpleasant situations with which to cope. You may be amazed at how people will admire your adaptability and courage.

In the beginning after surgery, almost everyone experiences some depression. If you fit into this category, you are certainly not alone. But it need not be a lasting condition. If the depression seems to linger, don’t be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help. There is help out there!

The bottom line is…we are alive! If we lived just a few years ago, or in another country, we might not be. Medicine and techniques today have given us an opportunity to experience this second chance. It is certainly an opportunity worth accepting and exploring. The most important part of you as a human being has not changed.

A LITTLE OSTOMY TEST

1. Your appliance has been on for 2 days and you experience a burning, uncomfortable sensation around your stoma.

You:

A. Ignore it. It seems to come and go anyway,
B. · Wait until the designated day to change your appliance.
C. Take a cool bath.
D. Change your appliance immediately.

The answer is D. Ideally, your appliance may stay on for five to seven days. However, if you experience burning or itchiness around the stoma, discomfort or pain around the stoma or discoloration of the adhesive, change your appliance regardless of the day. These signs usually indicate leakage. Stool or urine on the skin is very irritating. In addition, itching or irritation under the pouch can be due to dehydration. If you are pretty sure the appliance is not leaking and there is nothing externally wrong with it, try drinking a few glasses of water instead of removing the appliance. Don't be a hero. When it bothers you, change your appliance.

2. When you remove your appliance, you notice the skin around the stoma is reddened. To treat it, you:

A. Apply cool compresses for a short period of time before reapplying your appliance.
B. Apply a protective powder such as Stomahesive or Karaya to reddened skin areas, remove any excess, and continue with reapplying your appliance.
C. · Apply a soothing cream or ointment to the reddened skin areas.
D. Use an alcohol wipe on your peristomal skin.

The answer is B. It is important to observe the skin around the stoma. Use a mirror to help observe the skin and stoma. If the skin appears reddened, irritated or weepy, you may require a protective powder. You may need to change your appliance every two or three days until the 6 skin heals. White creams and ointments may be a reasonable solution for skin irritation in other areas of your body, they may not be useful around your stoma because your appliance will not adhere to moist or oily skin. Cool compresses may be soothing but cannot heal the skin. Alcohol will dry the skin which may cause it to itch.

2. Your neighbors invite you to a pool party.

   You:

   A. Decline the invitation since you cannot swim with an ostomy.

   B. Limit your fluid and food intake for 12 hours prior to the party so your stoma is not active.

   C. Accept the invitation.

The answer is C. If you enjoyed swimming before the operation, continue to swim after. For extra security while swimming, you may want to pictureframe the adhesive part of your appliance with a waterproof tape or apply a skin prep, directly over the adhesive-. Printed rather than solid colored bathing suits help to camouflage the outline of the appliance. Some women prefer bathing suits with skirts and some men prefer boxer-style trunks, but snug fitting suits may be worn to hold the appliance firmly in place. if f you have an ileostomy, limiting food and drink will not stop your ostomy from functioning. When the stomach is empty, the discharge is liquid, highly acidic and gassy. Skipping meals or limiting fluid intake leads to dehydration and/or electrolyte imbalance.

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/

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