

The
Mailbag

The Ostomy Support Newsletter Of Jacksonville, Florida

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Next meeting will be the 3rd Sunday in January at 3pm

I encourage everyone to attend our meetings not just for you to get information and fellowship, but for you to share your challenges and successes with new or prospective ostomates. Remember when you had your surgery? Do you remember how you felt - your concerns and fears? All the professionals (Doctors, nurses, suppliers, vendors) can give information - only YOU can really share with a new ostomate the realities of surgery and beyond. We have been very lucky to have new ostomates and even someone who has yet to have surgery attend our last few meetings. This is an excellent opportunity to help your fellow ostomates!! Our next meeting is the **3rd Sunday in January - 3PM at Medical Care Products**. Please attend!

Patti Langenbach, Pres
Medical Care Products, Inc.

WORLD OSOMY DAY OCTOBER 3, 2009

**For more information please visit the
International Ostomy Association Website:
<http://www.ostomyinternational.org>**

Upcoming 2009 Events

Starting off in 2009 North & Central American & Caribbean Ostomy Association (NCACOA)

Regional Meeting February 4-7, 2009 will take place in the City of Colima, State of Colima, Mexico. If you are interested in attending this event please visit:

<http://www.ostomyinternational.org/Forms/NCACOARegioanlConference.pdf>

UOAA will be holding their 2nd conference. This one will held August 5-8 2009 in the city of New Orleans. If you are able to attend this event you will not only enjoy the conference but the city. Let the Good Times Roll. For more information please visit their Website: <http://www.uoaa.org>.

Depression and the New Ostomate

by Mark Shaffer, from Northern Virginia *The Pouch*; via
Chippewa Valley (WI) *Rosebud Review*

At a recent support group meeting, a subject came up that I found intriguing. One of the participants in the rap session stated that he found himself depressed and withdrawn even though it had been a year since his surgery. He wondered how long he could expect that feeling to last and, I think, whether it would go on for the rest of his life.

Some ostomates adjust almost immediately. These folks see an ostomy as a cure for an illness that threatened their lives or restricted their activities. Others take a few months, generally feeling better about the situation as soon as they master the fine art of pouch changing and maintenance. For many, ostomy surgery begins a process that appears to be, and is, very close to the grieving process, and like any grieving process, the amount of time needed to feel emotionally whole again will vary.

It took me almost two years following my surgery before I felt like I had regained my former personality and was ready to move on with my life. So there is no magic amount of time needed to adjust to your new ostomy. Allow yourself the time you need and realize that the feelings of depression and isolation will eventually go away. If the depression is severe, don't be afraid to seek professional help.

If your isolation is caused by a lack of confidence in your appliance, seek help from an ostomy nurse. If your appliance is working fine but you still feel separated from others, seek help from other ostomates. Go to a meeting and meet others in the same situation. If you don't already have one, call your local support group and ask for an ostomy visitor who can talk to you about how he or she managed post-operative emotions. But above all, give yourself time to adjust.

Have Adjusted to Your Ostomy When...

via Hemet-San Jacinto (CA) *Stoma-Life*

- You stop spending all of your spare time in the bathroom waiting for your stoma to work so you can empty the pouch right away.
- You can move about freely, without holding your appliance as though it might fall off any minute.
- You make that first trip to the mailbox without taking along your ostomy supplies.
- You stop grabbing your abdomen when the grocery clerk asks if you need help to the car with your bag.
- You go out for the evening and realize too late that you left your emergency kit at home.
- You begin to think how lucky you are to be alive instead of how unlucky you are to have an ostomy.

OSTOMY OUTPUT

via *NV Town Karaya*; and *Green Bay (WI) News Review*

What to do if your ostomy output becomes thin, watery, or greatly increases in volume:

- Never limit your fluid intake in order to thicken the drainage, since this can lead to dehydration.
- Avoid food which you know from experience makes drainage too loose and too frequent.
- Begin a low-residue diet, avoiding especially green beans, broccoli, spinach, highly spiced foods, raw fruits and beer.
- Add strained bananas, applesauce, boiled rice, tapioca, boiled milk and peanut butter to your diet.
- Pretzels help in thickening and add bulk to the drainage. The salt, also, helps to stimulate thirst.
- Many people lack an enzyme which is responsible for the metabolism of milk sugar (lactose). This condition can cause diarrhea, gas, bloating, nausea and cramping. The elimination of milk products may cause a dramatic improvement in the symptoms.

What to do if your ostomy output becomes thick, or if you develop constipation:

- Increase your fluid consumption, especially fruit juices.
- Increase the amount of cooked fruits and vegetables you are consuming.
- Very few foods need to be omitted from your diet because of fear of food blockage. Perhaps more important than the food in avoiding blockages is chewing well. You can reduce your intake of foods which are very high in fiber, and foods with seeds that are hard to digest if they appear to be a problem. Examples are Chinese vegetables, raw onions, nuts, pineapples, corn-on-the-cob, raw carrots, raisins, celery, mushrooms, popcorn, coconut macaroons and coleslaw.

Pouch Changes – How Often

via *Green Bay (WI) GB News Review* and *Seattle (WA) Ostomist*

This question is among those most frequently asked, particularly by ileostomates and urostomy patients. Like many other questions, there is no one answer that applies to all ostomates.

An informal survey revealed that people change their appliances as much as 3 times a day, and as infrequently as every 2 to 4 weeks. Obviously, there must be reasons for this great variation. After pointing out that the great majority of ileostomy and urostomy patients change in the range of once daily to once a week, let us explore some of the reasons. People on either side of this spectrum can have a skin problem or skin which is nearly indestructible. Some of the reasons for the variation in time between changes include:

Stoma length: A short stoma exposes the adhesive material to moisture which decreases wearing time.

Amount or consistency of effluent: Profuse effluent tends to loosen the seal.

Skin Type: Moist or oily skin tends to decrease adhesion time.

Skin Irritation: Decreases adhesion. The appliance should be changed more frequently to evaluate the success of your attempts to heal the skin.

Experience: Good technique, such as allowing glue (adhesive) to dry well, increases adhesion.

Personal Experience: Preferences, convenience and odor control.

Some of the Best Basic Ostomy Hints

via Austin (TX) *Austi-Mate*

Don't behave as if 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 our ETs and your officers who are listed on the back page.

Don't play the dangerous game of making your appliance last by over taping or 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 count on delays in shipping, holidays, etc. when calculating what is needed.

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 and some internal deodorants... Remember: everybody creates some odors in the bathroom. Don't feel you are an exception.

Hydration and electrolyte balance is of vital importance. Be sure to drink enough fluids to maintain good hydration [ileostomates, especially--Ed.].

Read and learn all you can about ostomies. You never know when you may find an opportunity to educate someone about the life-saving surgery that has extended so many lives. Learn to be matter of fact about this 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. Try something as simple as walking... long walks. If the depression seems to linger, don't be afraid or ashamed to seek help. There is help out there!

The bottom line is: We are alive!! In other times, in other countries, 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. You are still the SAME you. Never forget to actively celebrate LIFE and all it has to offer.

International Ostomy Association

Are you interested in Ostomy related news from around the world? If so please visit the IOA Website <http://www.ostomyinternational.org>. There you will be able view past issues of the **IOA TODAY** Newsletter containing Ostomy related reports from around the world. There is also an up to date section called Publications. There you will find a number links to **Ostomy related publications** from around the world.

You may visit this page via <http://www.ostomyinternational.org/publication.html>.

Also found on this page you will find

Ostomy Chat Room Weekly Meetings

Yahoo Peoples with Ostomy2* - Mondays, 8:00 pm US Central time
<http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/peopleswithostomy2>

Community Zero (Ostomy) Support* - Wednesdays, 9:00 pm US Eastern time
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ostomatessupport/>

Shaz & Jason's Chat* - Saturdays, 8:00 pm UK time / 3:00pm US Eastern Time
<http://www.ostomy.fsnet.co.uk/chat.html>

Yahoo UK Ostomy Support* - 1st & 3rd Sundays, 8:00 pm UK time / 3:00 pm US Eastern Time
<http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/ukostomysupport>

Use this form to join our chapter! You do not have to be an ostomate to be a member and/or support the work of UOA. All information on this form will be kept confidential.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone# Home _____ Work# _____

Email Address _____

Type of intestinal or urinary diversion: Colostomy __, Ileostomy __, Urostomy __, Ileoanal Pull-thru __
Continent Ileostomy __, Continent Urostomy __, None __, Other __

You may use my name in chapter Newsletter & Directory: Yes __ No __

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