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THE OSTOMY RUMBLE

PUBLICATION OF THE OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP OF MIDDLE GEORGIA

Next Meeting

Our next support group meeting is **Sunday June 25, 3:00 P.M.** at the Coliseum Medical Center in Macon off of Coliseum Drive. The entrance is on Hospital Drive which is up the hill from the entrance to the Macon Coliseum.

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THE OSTOMY RUMBLE

JUNE 2017

Our Program Guest this Sunday will be Courtney Willis from the American Cancer Society who will update us on their activities, nationally and locally. They do a wonderful job in the fight against cancer and have had many successes in the prevention and cure of many forms of this dread disease. Many of our members are grateful cancer survivors.

Our future meeting in July will be our Summer indoor picnic, more about that in the July Newsletter.

On page 4 of this Newsletter is an article about swimming with an ostomy. In addition to the information in that article, there are two other sources you may want to consult. They are Ostomysecrets.com and Hy Tape. Ostomysecrets.com is an internet company which sells a variety of apparel products for male and female ostomates including swim wraps and some undergarments. Hy Tape, also known as "Pink Tape", is a waterproof tape which keeps moisture out and helps secure the wafer. The tape is also useful against the ever present perspiration which accompanies outdoor activities during summertime in Georgia. Hy Tape is available at most ostomy supply places in a variety of widths.

OUR MISSION

We are a volunteer charitable group affiliated with the UNITED OSTOMY ASSOCIATIONS OF AMERICA (UOAA) which is a national organization composed of numerous support groups similar to ours. We maintain a visitor program in which we visit

with persons and their families, at their request, to discuss life with an ostomy and address the many concerns they may have. All of our visitors have ostomies and have been through this change in lifestyle quite successfully with pleasant, hap-

py, and thankful attitudes. An ostomy can be a very good substitute for natural human plumbing and is certainly preferable to continued catastrophic illness.

Visit our web site at
osgmg.org.



OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP OF MIDDLE GEORGIA

Emotional Issues of Ostomy Surgery

By Mark Shaffer, UOAA UPDATE

As a new ostomate you can expect to experience a number of often conflicting emotions during the weeks and months following your surgery. Relief that the ordeal of surgery is over and that your recovery is progressing, joy because you're still alive, and perhaps hope because you feel better than you have in years and new possibilities are opening for you. These are some of the more positive feelings you will experience. But you may also find yourself frightened and confused. It is a natural and nearly universal experience for a new ostomate to become frustrated with that new appliance and to worry about how life will change because of it. It is also common for a new ostomate to engage in a trace (or more) of self-pity (the "why me?" syndrome). These negative feelings can combine to cause introversion, depression and even a kind of immobilization where it is just too frightening to walk out the front door, and resuming your place in the world seems beyond all possibility.

First, and foremost, as a new ostomate you should try to stay focused on the things that are positive in your life. I have yet to meet an ostomate who, given a choice between "ostomy" and "no ostomy," would choose to have the surgery. But your decision was more complicated than that and probably involved choices between life and death or between a meaningful life and a life dictated by debilitating illness. Always remember that while an ostomy might not be the kind of thing you would ask Santa for, it is invariably better than the alternatives. You are alive and nothing else (including that clumsy-clod feeling you get when you change your new appliance) is as important as that.

Second, don't ignore the negatives. Denial gets you nowhere and negative emotions will not go away simply because you ignore them or pronounce them uncontrollable. There are several ways to address these issues. I'm a big fan of UOAA meetings. At these meetings, you see and meet other ostomates and soon learn that we look like everyone else and lead lives that are really no different than those lived by others. Amazon.com has a nice collection available or you can call your local bookstore. Surgical-supply stores sometimes carry helpful literature or (as is true with virtually any ostomy-related issue) your WOCN nurse can help.

You are unique, so be sure to consult your doctor or WOC nurse before trying products or methods that are mentioned in this newsletter.



OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP OF MIDDLE GEORGIA

The Gift of Time

Adapted By *The New Outlook*

What does your ostomy mean to you? Does it create a persistent nuisance, need constant care, present difficult problems, embarrasses you, leaks at irregular intervals, and makes you resentful?

On the other hand, do you relegate it to a significant but minor part of your daily routine, and now enjoy a new lease on life? What would have happened to you if the surgery had not been performed? You probably had to choose between a pine box six feet under or a bag on your tummy. That does not leave much room for negotiation.

A surgical diversion to create an ostomy or internal pouch is usually done as a life-saving procedure. Some are temporary solutions to an acute problem, and some are permanent diversions. Some are done as cures for whatever ailed you in the first place, and some alleviate worry, pain, misery and medical expenses.

All of them buy you the special gift of extra time. What are you going to do with that precious gift? Are you going to waste it or are you going to do something productive or memorable with it? Are you going to crawl into a psychological hole and remain there, feeling sorry for yourself until your time runs out? Alternatively, are you going to appreciate and live life to the fullest, making good use of the gift of time that you have remaining? The choice is yours. Choose wisely.



JUST FOR FUN

Hospital regulations require a wheel chair for patients being discharged. However, one student nurse found an elderly gentleman already dressed and sitting on the bed with a suitcase at his feet, who insisted he did not need any help to leave the hospital. After a chat about rules being rules, he reluctantly let her wheel him to the elevator. On the way down, she asked him if his wife was meeting him. "I don't know," he said, "She's still upstairs in the bathroom changing out of her hospital gown." Excerpted from *The New Outlook*, Ostomy Association of Greater Chicago



Visit our web site at
osgmg.org.

Next Support Group meeting on 25
June, 3:00 P.M.

“BACK IN THE POOL” (seasonal repeat article)

Swimming is an excellent exercise and activity you can enjoy with family and friends. So, why are so many of us afraid to get back into the water? Here are some of our issues and solutions.

I’m afraid that my pouch will leak or come off while I’m in the pool. This is by far everyone’s number one concern. The thing to remember is that your pouching system is designed to be leak-free and water-proof, and your wafer adhesive actually gets stronger in water. As long as your seal is strong and intact, strap on your swim fins and jump in. Check out these tips:

1. Don’t go swimming immediately after you have put on a new pouching system.
2. Make sure your pouch is empty.
3. Picture framing your wafer with water-proof tape isn’t necessary, but may give you the extra confidence you need.
4. Avoid wearing pouches with filters in the pool. Water may get into the pouch through the filter. Filters may become ineffective after they are wet.

I’m concerned that people will be able to see my pouching system under my swimsuit.

Dark colored suits with a busy pattern will camouflage your pouch better than light colors like white or yellow, which can become almost transparent when wet. Consider the following tips:

1. Women, choose a suit with a small, well-placed ruffle or skirt.
2. Men, choose a swimsuit with a higher cut waist or longer legs. Add a lycra or spandex undergarment. Consider a tank top to cover any scars and/or a waist high stoma placement.
3. Colostomates who irrigate may wish to wear a smaller, non-drainable pouch.

I’m embarrassed about changing into/out of my swimsuit in the locker room and people noticing my ostomy pouch. If you are a little modest, try to find a spot that is out of the way or a time that it is less crowded. Some tips follow:

1. You may wish to change and towel off in a convenient bathroom stall.
2. Put on a dry, oversized shirt as a cover-up while you change.
3. A dry suit is easier to take off than a wet one. Relax by the side of the pool with a good book or a talkative friend before heading for the locker room.
4. Wear your swimsuit under a jogging suit/sweat pants and don’t worry about changing at all.

What about using the hot tub or Jacuzzi? Go ahead. Again, as long as your pouch seal is good and your pouch is empty you should have no problems with your ostomy.

General Tips:

- Take it slow the first time out. Save those strenuous swims and dives until later.
- Always leave a little air in pouch, to permit stoma drainage to fall down into the pouch.
- When sun bathing, take a magazine or book to the beach or pool. Lay it open over your pouch to protect your pouching system (wafer) from the heat of the sun.
- Test your pouching system...fill the bathtub with water and soak for a few minutes.
- Don’t talk about your ostomy surgery at the community pool. If asked, talk in private.

TEN (NEW) COMMANDMENTS FOR OSTOMATES

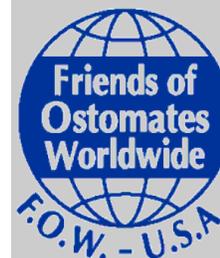
Vancouver Ostomy Highlife & Regina Ostomy News

1. Thou shalt allow thyself to be sad, or angry, or depressed on occasion.
Who said you always have to have a good attitude
2. Thou shalt not let the above emotions become a way of life.
3. Thou shalt seek help, education, and support if thine unhappy emotions overcome thee.
4. Thou shalt learn to care for thy ostomy. Letting others do it for you if you are physically able is a cop-out.
5. Thou shalt seek out thy ET nurse if thou art notified with thine products.
6. Thou shalt not hide thyself away. Get out and do the things you used to do. You can.
7. Thou shalt not be ashamed.
8. Thou shalt cultivate a sense of humor about thine ostomy. There are worse things. Far worse.
9. Thou shalt set an example to the non-ostomy world. An example of triumph over adversity, courage over pity, and pride over embarrassment.
10. Thou shalt help other ostomates. Join your local UOAA support group, donate money, and volunteer your time.

SHINGLES

UOAA UPDATE via *Ostomy News, Sonoma County*

If you have had chickenpox (and more that 90% of adults in the US have) you are at risk for shingles. It is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. Once a person has had chickenpox, the virus can live, but remain inactive, in certain nerve roots in the body for many years. If it becomes active again, usually later in life, it can cause shingles. the risk of shingles increases as you get older. this virus can be activated anytime, without warning. there is no way to tell who will get shingles or when it may occur. The first signs of shingles are often felt and many not be seen. these can include itching, tingling or burning. A few days later a rash of fluid filled blisters appears (only on one side of the body or face). the blisters may take 2 - 4 weeks to heal. Shingles can be painful and can cause serious problems. For most people, the pain from the rash lessens as it heals. After the rash heals, however, shingles may lead to pain that lasts for months even years. this is because the virus can damage certain nerves. Other serious problems that may be caused by shingles include skin infection,, muscle weakness, scarring or decreased vision or hearing. the older you get, the more at risk you are. this is because the body can't defend itself against the virus as well as it could when you were younger. there is now a vaccine available to prevent shingles. medicare and your medicare supplement cover a lot of the cost. everyone should get the vaccine - it's worth it!



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SKIN CARE

(by Kathryn Hoyman, WCON—Minneapolis Chapter)



Allergic Dermatitis

Allergic dermatitis is a skin reaction that is red, bumpy and swollen that has specific margins that mirror the causative agent. Allergic dermatitis is caused by an allergic skin reaction occurring when the body develops antibodies against an allergen—wafer, paste plastic, dye in tape, liquid plastics. When suspecting an allergy, check it out by skin testing. Apply product to another area of abdomen on healthy skin and leave in place as long as possible (a week) and check the reaction.

Allergic Reactions

Many times I hear that people are allergic to adhesive tape or paper tape or skin prep or any number of different products that are used in ostomy care. Allergies may occur with any product. They may occur with the first use of a product or after years of using a product without problems. Actual allergic reactions to ostomy products are not common. But, some people do have issues relating to an allergic reaction to certain products at certain times. And many people have sensitivities at one time or another.

Allergic reactions are usually severe. They will cause blistering and wet, weeping skin wherever the products touch you. Two situations are frequently labeled as allergic by mistake:

- 1) First, if a skin sealant wipe is used, it needs to dry completely to allow the solvents to evaporate. If the pouch is applied while the solvents are still on the skin, sore skin can easily occur. Since the solvents can't evaporate through the skin barrier as they can through the paper tape collar, this will look like an allergy to the skin barrier.
- 2) Second, each time you remove a pouch, the adhesive takes with it the top layer of dead skin cells. This is called "skin stripping." Everyone's skin reacts differently to having tape removed. But it's important to be gentle and not remove a pouch more frequently than necessary. Skin that is stripped will be sore in some spots and not in others. Sometimes skin around the stoma becomes fragile and strips easily. A barrier, tape and pouch with a very gentle adhesive must be found.

To test whether you are really allergic, take a small piece of the test material and place it on any convenient part of your skin far away from your stoma. After 48 hours, take it off and see whether you are reacting. If pain, itching or blistering occurs, take it off immediately.

If it's an allergy you will react. If you have a history of allergies, test in this manner before trying on any new ostomy product. It is better to have half an inch of sore skin on your leg than around your stoma. You need healthy skin around the stoma for a good seal and satisfactory performance from an ostomy pouching system.

If you develop an allergy to a product you have used for a long time, you can call the manufacturer. They may have made changes in the manufacturing process. Calls from users are sometimes their first notice that the new improvements are or are not working.

PUSH THE SKIN - DON'T PULL THE TAPE

UOAA Update

Damaging the skin around a stoma (or anywhere else) is asking for infection. Don't peel your pouch away from your body. Hold the edge of the adhesive sections or tape, and **PUSH THE SKIN AWAY FROM THE TAPE.**

Take a good look at what is happening when you pull tape. The tape is pulled upwards, dragging the skin with it until it is pulling hard enough to break loose. It even looks painful. Sometimes the

skin breaks before the tape comes loose.

Now look at what happens when you push the skin away from the tape. It doesn't hurt; the tape is separated from the skin gently, and the outer layer of skin remains intact. People who think yanking it fast is best ought to take a good look at the skin afterwards. It is usually red and irritated.

If you have a leak, digestive enzymes in the discharge will excoriate your damaged skin quicker and

deeper than if your skin is OK or protected with some sort of skin preparation. The farther away from the rectal area the stoma is in your intestines, the stronger the digestive enzymes in the discharge (leak), and the sooner your skin can become excoriated. Pulling the tape off the skin can do great damage. It is extremely difficult to keep a pouch on an oozing surface. Learn to treat skin gently.



**Visit our web site at
osgmg.org.**

All meetings of the Ostomy Support Group are open to everyone with an interest in ostomy care; Ostomates, their spouses, families, and friends. We meet regularly on the fourth Sunday of the month except November and December. On the first Saturday in December we have a Christmas Party. The meetings start at 3:00 p.m. except for special occasions when the time will be announced.

**Next Support
Group meeting on
25 June, 3:00 P.M.**

Membership Application
Ostomy Support Group of Middle Georgia (OSGMG)

OSGMG Contact 478-477-8337

Membership in the Ostomy Support Group of Middle Georgia includes receiving the monthly newsletter, visitor training, regular chapter meetings on the fourth Sunday of each month excluding November and December, and other activities of the group. Dues and donations are tax deductible. (Please print legibly)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____ E-Mail Address _____

___ Permanent Colostomy ___ Temporary Colostomy ___ Ileostomy ___ Urostomy

___ Continent Pouch or J Pouch ___ Medical ___ Spouse ___ Other

___ I would like to be a member and enclose \$12.00 dues.

___ I would like to receive the newsletter but cannot afford dues at this time.

___ I do ___ do not give permission to use my name in the newsletter.

___ I am enclosing a donation for the chapter in the amount of \$ _____ .

Make checks payable to OSGMG and mail to OSGMG PO Box 945 Macon, GA 31202

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