



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

If errors are noted in your name or address, please bring these to my attention. If you know of someone to add or delete from our mailing list, please notify me. I can be reached at work, 325-670-4302, or by e-mail, callen@hendrickhealth.org. We are now sending our newsletter electronically to those who request it be sent that way.

Please send me your e-mail address if you would like a link to the newsletter.

If you know of someone who would be a good speaker at one of our meetings, please contact us.

– Charlotte Allen, MSN, RN-BC, CWOCN



LAST MEETING

At the November 12 meeting, Joel Mathew from ConvaTec gave a presentation. We learned about accessories to use with your current pouching system. We had a good turn out, even in the cold windy weather.

NEXT MEETING

For the December 10 meeting we will have a potluck. Please bring a finger food and a \$5-10 item for the gift exchange. This is always a fun time, and we encourage you to bring your spouse, friend, family member, etc. It will be a great way to kick off the holiday season.

We meet in the Diabetes Center at 1742 Hickory St. (corner of Hickory St. and N. 18th St.) at 6:30 p.m. Hope to see you there!

CONTACT US

For more information, please contact us at 670-4302.

Newsletter Editor & Professional Advisor:

Charlotte Allen, RN, CWOCN

670-4302

email: callen@hendrickhealth.org

Ten questions to ask before you choose a health plan

From the UOAA 11/2018

Whether you are reviewing the different plans offered by your employer annually, looking for a supplemental Medicare plan or purchasing your own insurance on the marketplace, think of it like comparison shopping for a new car. You need an affordable plan that fits your budget. Warning: just because the sticker price is a great deal (low premiums) doesn't mean it is a good plan for you. What bells and whistles (coverage) do you need? Does the dealer (insurance broker) measure up?

Consider what is important to you and how you might have to make some concessions. For example, is the priority to have coverage for your ostomy supplies or to be able to go to your preferred doctor? In other words, depending on the plan you may have to decide to pay out-of-pocket for one service so that you get coverage of another more expensive service.

As you shop around ask questions like the following so that you can choose a plan confidently:

1. What type of plan is it?
2. Is your trusted medical provider that you want to keep visiting participate with the plan (i.e., are there limits on choosing your doctors or medical facilities; in-network vs. out-of-network)?
3. Does the plan have any restrictions on pre-existing conditions? (Be cautionary with new short-term plans.)
4. Does the plan provide coverage for all of your ostomy supply products and not just ostomy supplies and what are all the benefits covered (e.g., vision, routine exams, ambulance, etc.) and what is excluded?
5. Does the plan have a formulary for ostomy supply coverage (i.e., restrict you to use only certain manufacturer brands or a particular supplier)?
6. Does the plan provide coverage for specialized visits with a certified ostomy nurse or have limits to the number of visits for specialized care (e.g., physical therapy)?
7. Do you need referrals or prior authorizations?
8. If you are on any medications, is your prescription on your insurer's formulary/preferred drug list or does the plan cover your prescription drugs? Plans handle prescription costs differently.
9. How much will you pay out-of-pocket before your health plan starts covering your healthcare services (premium, deductible, coinsurance, copay)?
10. Does the plan offer any financial assistance to help offset out-of-pocket costs?

Ostomy Myths vs. Reality

The truth about living with an ostomy

After ostomy surgery, you may find helpful tips and tricks from other people living with an ostomy in online communities, support groups, forums and more. Weeding through the fact and fiction can be difficult. Our me+ team of certified ostomy nurses and product specialists have outlined some of the most common myths they hear to provide you with the truth about living with an ostomy.

Myth: Only use the ostomy pouching system that you were fitted with in the hospital or doctor's office. You should not explore new products on your own.

Fact: In the weeks and months following ostomy surgery, you may find your stoma and body changing. In the first few weeks and months post-surgery, your ostomy pouching system may need to be changed.

Myth: All ostomy products are the same. It doesn't matter what type of pouching system you wear.

Fact: There are a large variety of ostomy products available to fit the needs of each person living with an ostomy.

Myth: Your stoma should not change size after a few months after surgery

Fact: In the weeks and months following ostomy surgery, your stoma may change in size and appearance.

Myth: Having skin irritation is a normal way of life with an ostomy.

Fact: If the skin around your stoma becomes damaged, it could be painful and lead to infection. It also becomes more difficult for the skin barrier of your pouching system to adhere to your skin. Prevention is the key to maintaining both healthy peristomal skin and your comfort.

Myth: If you have an ostomy, your significant other will not love you the same way.

Fact: It is common to have anxiety about relationships following ostomy surgery. Whether you're looking for a partner, have been dating a few months or married 25 years, ostomy surgery will have an impact on you and your relationships.

Myth: Odor is a part of life when you have an ostomy.

Fact: You will become more comfortable with your ostomy pouch over time, and will gain confidence in its ability to retain odors.

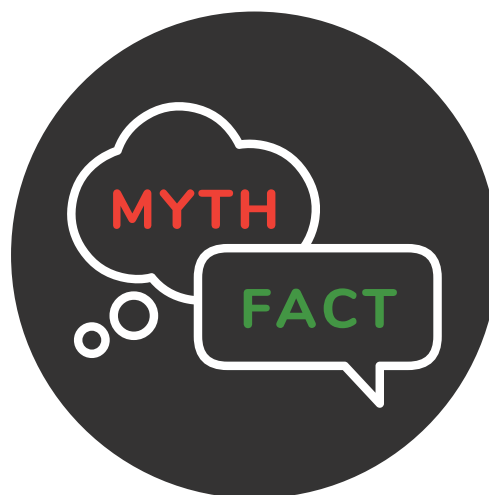
Myth: People living with an ostomy cannot fly because the cabin pressure can cause the pouch to fail.

Fact: People living with an ostomy can fly, ride in a car, take a train and use all the same modes of transportation they utilized pre-surgery.

Myth: I can't get my pouch or wafer wet, which means I can't enjoy water activities or bathe with my pouching system in place.

Fact: You can shower, go swimming or even get in the hot tub with your pouching system in place. If using a pouch with a filter, cover the filter with the covers provided.

Editor's note: This educational article is from a UOAA digital sponsor, ConvaTec. Sponsor support helps to maintain our website www.ostomy.org and the free trusted resources of UOAA, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.



G: Gifts

Used with permission from Brenda Elsagher from: *Id Like to Buy a Bowel Please: Ostomy A to Z*, www.livingandlaughing.com

My son had recently moved to Washington, D.C., so we communicated mostly by phone for several months following my surgery. The Christmas holidays approached and we discussed gifts. Jokingly, I told him I wanted a new colon.

Christmas morning arrived, and he

presented me with rolled up paper, like a tube. When I unrolled it, there were two dots, one over the other like: I looked at it and said, "Thank you, but what is it?"

He said, "I have given you a new 'colon' like you requested."

It was the best laugh I had in months.

Sue Brown, of Worcester, Massachusetts, has been an ileostomate since September 1999. She has one child and is a special education teacher that works with students who are too ill to attend school daily.

A Visit from St. Ostomy

By Marjorie Kaufman, Los Ileos, via Austin (TX) Austi-Mate;
and North Central OK Ostomy Outlook

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the flat,
There was general confusion including the cat.
The bathroom was strewn with the ostomy ware,
That I had abandoned in utter despair.
The courage I'd had in the hospital bed,
To follow instructions, had suddenly fled.
It all looked so strange, and uncommonly new;
I swore I would never know quite what to do.
Now which goes to which, and what sticks to what?
I fumbled each step, with my nerves overwrought.
And then in my anguish, I went to my room,
To settle my brains for a night full of gloom.
With a household a-flutter in holiday matter,
I shut out the sounds of excitement and chatter.
When out in the hallway I heard from below,
The sound of a voice with a jolly "Hello."
As I peeked through the door, up the stairway she came;
And she smiled when she saw me, and called me by name.
And I, in my wonder, just couldn't believe,
That ostomy visits were made Christmas Eve.
And then in a twinkling she put me at ease,
And said she could lessen my anxieties.
She was dressed all in white, in a form-fitting sheath,
With nary a sign of what lay underneath.
So trim and well-groomed, a delight to behold,
No one would suspect, unless they'd been told.
That standing before me so calm and serene,
Was the very first ostomate I'd ever seen.
Her manner so friendly, with faith and good cheer,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to fear.
My questions, like leaves in a hurricane flew;
And with each knowing answer, my confidence grew.
Then under her guidance each part fell in place,
As I conquered the problem I'd just failed to face.
And all of a sudden I knew I was free,
To live just as normal and happy as she.
For only an ostomate is really akin,
To the fears and frustrations that lie deep within.
Her time and her friendship so willing to give,
Will keep me remembering as long as I live.
And my family was grateful for what she had done,
For once more the evening was festive and fun.
Now each time I meet her, more clearly I see
The "Saint" who came calling with blessings for me!

Get Ostomy Answers!

Save
38%*

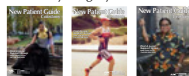
The Leading Source for Information, Education and Inspiration!

Each *Phoenix Ostomy Magazine* answers the many questions about returning to a full and active life after surgery. Topics include diet, exercise, intimacy, skin care, odor control, new products and so much more. Medical doctors and nurses offer concrete advice and solutions while personal stories show that almost anything is possible with an ostomy. - **Subscribe Today!**

Privacy Guarantee: The *Phoenix* is mailed with discretion. Your contact information will never be given, rented or sold to a third party.

FREE New Patient Guide!

Get real-world answers to common questions after ostomy surgery. Yours free with a subscription.



New Patient Guides are made possible by the UOAA, www.ostomy.org.



Choose Your FREE New Patient Guide: ☐ Colostomy ☐ Ileostomy ☐ Urostomy

☐ Please send me FREE ostomy product samples, special offers and product information**

☐ One-year \$29.95 (Save 25%*) ☐ Two-years \$49.95 (Save 38%*)



www.phoenixuoaa.org
or call 800-750-9311

Send Magazine To:

Name _____ Email (opt.) _____

Address _____ Apt/Suite _____ Phone (opt.) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Send Payment to: The Phoenix magazine, P.O. Box 3605, Mission Viejo, CA 92690

Satisfaction Guarantee!

*Based on cover price of \$39.95. \$29.95 for Canadian one-year subscription. U.S. funds only. **Your contact information will be disclosed to third party companies to fulfill the request. Published March, June, September and December. If you are not satisfied for any reason, we will gladly refund the unused portion of your subscription.

ASG0516

