



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 325-670-4302 or by e-mail at callen@hendrickhealth.org.

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

For the June meeting we had a special speaker—Richard Valdez. He shared his mountain biking adventures. It was really an interesting topic. He even brought his special bicycle to show how it differs from a street bicycle.

Remember we do not have a meeting in July! Have a great summer!

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be August 8. Details of this meeting will be forthcoming.

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

CONTACT US:

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

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How Prepared Are You?

by Sharon Householder, Pittsburgh Ostomy Society, May 2016; via Pittsburgh (PA) *Triangle*; and North Central OK *Ostomy Outlook*

Medicare recently changed protocols and now reimburses physicians for time spent with their patients discussing end of life plans—about whether and how they would want to be kept alive if they become too sick to speak for themselves. This is not a ‘death panel’ that would limit care, rather a way to encourage people to have an active say about how they die—whether that means trying every possible medical option to stay alive or discontinuing life support if they do not want to be sustained by ventilators and feeding tubes. You now have the freedom to ask for medical advice when making those hard decisions.

Now for your plan...no matter what your age, one of the most important decisions you should make in addition to completing your ‘living will’ is to assign someone as your ‘health care agent’ or ‘medical power of attorney.’ (*This is different than a financial power of attorney.*) A health care agent is a person you choose in advance to make health care decisions on your behalf in the event you become unable to do so – any time you are unable to communicate, are severely ill or injured in an accident.

State laws vary regarding the specific types of decisions health care agents (HCA) can make. In general, an HCA can agree to or refuse treatment and can withdraw treatment on your behalf. Your HCA can use the information in your living will (also called a treatment directive), statements made by you in the past, and what he or she knows about you personally to make these decisions. For example, your agent can consent to surgery, refuse to have you placed on life-support machines, or request that you be taken off life support. Otherwise, the hospital, doctors or even a judge can make that decision for you.

A legal form, usually called a medical power of attorney, is used for documenting your choice of an HCA. These forms may be found online or through your lawyer. You must sign the form to make it valid and, depending on where you live, may be required to have the form notarized and witnessed. Be sure to tell your family members and doctors whom you have selected as your HCA.

Some important things to remember when deciding who you want to do this include:

- Your agent cannot be one of your medical providers or other person who might receive financial considerations in your treatment.
- Your agent will only make decisions when you are unable to speak so make sure they are trustworthy to do as you request.
- Your agent should be familiar with your medical history including how you manage your ostomy so they can make sure your caregivers understand your needs.

- Also, if you have a significant other to whom you are not related or married, make sure they are specifically included in your wishes and/or assigned as your agent. Since HIPAA privacy rules came into effect, nonrelated loved ones may not be allowed to take part in the decision making process, as one of my friends recently found out even though he and his partner had been together over 40 years.

I am sharing this because I recently had a near death experience while in the hospital. My children had been told I might not make it and were facing some hard decisions. A few years ago, I had completed one of many forms available that outlined what I wanted and didn’t want. I had given each of them a copy and talked to them about it so they were all very aware of my choices. I also had chosen a health care agent. She was the primary contact for all of the physicians caring for me and even went with me to ensuing provider visits until I was strong enough to once again make my own decisions. She was also my advocate regarding the ongoing care of my ostomy.

Luckily, I survived (or I wouldn’t be writing this). Did it make it easier for my children? In some ways yes. Because I do not want any life sustaining treatment there was no need for them to struggle with how to proceed at a time when they were already under stress. They knew what I wanted and had already agreed to abide by my wishes. In fact, for two days, my HCA made sure there were always two family members at my bedside so no one would have to relay my decisions alone and perhaps be swayed by the doctors.

Completing a living will and choosing a health care agent is essential in helping your family and friends make decisions during a stressful time. I would never have guessed that I would need this so soon and only did it because I attended a program at work, but I’m glad I did. It helped during a crucial time in my family’s life. Don’t be caught off guard – I encourage you to start working on this today!

Feel free to schedule time with your physician(s) to talk through your options and what each means, talk with your family and friends and finally, fill out the necessary forms and distribute them so your loved ones won’t be caught off guard when the time comes for hard decisions.

SUGGESTED FOOD REMEDIES...

- A glass of grape juice works wonders in loosening a food blockage.
- Tea is antispasmodic and is soothing to an upset stomach and contains potassium.
- Orange juice provides twice the amount of sodium and 13 times more potassium than that found in the same amount of *Gatorade*.
- The large amount of pectin in applesauce tends to lower stomach gas noise and helps counteract the liquid discharge.
- Fats of all kind should be kept at a minimum by most ostomates. Fats induce an increase flow of bile into the intestines and make the body wastes more liquid and harder to control. They also tend to produce gas.



It’s Summer!

Summertime fun may include many outdoor activities and travel, but may also lead to some concerns about ostomy management. Let’s review:

Swimming is excellent exercise and an activity you can enjoy with family and friends. So, why are so many of us afraid to get back into the water? Check out these tips:

- Don’t go swimming immediately after you have put on a new pouching system.
- Make sure your pouch is empty and has a secure seal.
- Picture framing your wafer with waterproof tape isn’t necessary, but may give you the extra confidence you need.
- Take precautions against sunburn. Besides being bad for you skin, a bad sunburn can result in diarrhea and sometimes vomiting, thus depleting electrolytes. When sitting and soaking up the sun, protect/shade your pouching system by placing some covering across the outside (e.g., hat, towel, magazine).
- Monilia is a common summer problem. This raised, itchy, red rash on the peristomal skin is uncomfortable and keeps the pouches from holding well. If you suspect a monilia rash, consult an ostomy nurse.
- **Fluids and More Fluids** are needed during the hot summer months.
- Water is an essential nutrient needed by each and every body cell. Up to 75% of the body’s mass is made up of water. Water controls body temperature, serves as building material and solvent and transports nutrients. Thirst is a signal that the body needs fluids. Daily losses must be replaced. Encourage fluid intake of eight to ten (8 oz.) glasses of liquids each day.
- Any liquid containing water (soda, milk, juice, etc.) helps to meet your daily requirement. You can also get water from the food you eat (e.g., tomatoes have a total of 94% water content.)
- Water is an excellent natural beverage. However, over-consumption of water can wash away electrolytes in the body. Drink a combination of water and electrolyte beverages. The glucose ingredient in electrolyte drinks aids in the absorption of electrolytes.

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It's Summer!
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Summer Diets

- Remember the fiber content of those fresh fruits and vegetables—enjoy but chew, chew (ileostomates, especially).
- Add only one new food at a time to determine the effect (if any) on your output.

Trips for Traveling with Medications and/or Ostomy Supplies

- Keep your medicines (and emergency pouches) with you; not in the checked luggage.
- Bring more than enough medicine and/or ostomy supplies for your trip.
- Keep a list of all you medicines and/or ostomy supplies with you.
- Do not store ostomy supplies in your car, especially under the hot summer sun.



Get Ostomy Answers!

The Phoenix is the leading national magazine for ostomates, their families and caregivers. Each issue contains 72 pages of inspiration, education and information including new products, medical advice, management techniques, personal stories and more.



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MEMBERSHIP

The Hendrick Ostomy Support Group, Abilene, does not have a formal membership roster or dues. Just come on out if you wish to attend any meeting. For more information, contact: Charlotte Allen, Hendrick Medical Center • 1900 Pine, Abilene, Texas 79601 • Phone 325.670.4302 or email allen@hendrickhealth.org



Have a Laugh Today

Lexophilia is a word used to describe those that have a love for words, such as “You can tune a piano, but you can’t tuna fish,” or “To write with a broken pencil is pointless.”

A competition to see who can come up with the best lexophiles is held every year in an undisclosed location. This year’s winning submission will be posted in the next issue.

- When fish are in schools, they sometimes take debate.
- A thief who stole a calendar got 12 months.
- When the smog lifts in Los Angeles, U.C.L.A.
- The batteries were given out free of charge.
- A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.
- A will is a dead giveaway.
- With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.
- A boiled egg is hard to beat.
- When you’ve seen one shopping center, you’ve seen a mall.

NEWSLETTER

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Hendrick Ostomy Support Group

HENDRICK MEDICAL CENTER