

# MORRIS COUNTY OSTOMY ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

AN AFFILIATE OF UNITED OSTOMY ASSOCIATIONS OF AMERICA

## Swimming With an Ostomy

By Laura Cox, Ostomy Lifestyle Specialist / Shield

The idea of submerging your new ostomy in water can sound scary. The thought of having a leak in a pool is terrifying. This was one of my biggest concerns when I first got my ostomy. I didn't even know what to expect when showering! I asked my surgeon about swimming, and he said to wait until my incisions healed. He told me, "After your incisions heal, swimming shouldn't be a problem!" He was right. With the correct supplies, swimming with an ostomy can be a fun, carefree experience!

The first important thing to know is if your wafers have a waterproof barrier. If it does not, or if your skin reacts poorly to a waterproof barrier, you have some other options! I know some people who are sensitive to waterproof barriers. They use Brava Strips around the barrier to allow their ostomy flange to be more "waterproof." There is also a product called Sure Seal. It is a thin, plastic cover that goes around your wafer and onto your skin. I absolutely love this product, and would highly recommend it as an option. It is important to take the Sure Seal off after you swim. I left mine on for a couple days and developed a mild yeast infection underneath. Now I generally swim without any extra products.



After you swim, you should check to see how the water affected your ostomy wafer. I have never had to change my ostomy directly after swimming, but ocean water seemed to decrease my wear time by about one day. I haven't noticed a decrease in wear time from freshwater or pool water. Just in case, I always pack an emergency kit of ostomy supplies to bring to the pool or beach with me.

Also, it's important to note that all of us have different comfort levels with revealing we have an ostomy. If you are not comfortable showing your ostomy when you swim you can order an ostomy swim wrap or other ostomy swim wear from Ostomy Secrets. I found a flattering one piece suit with side and back cut-outs from H&M. There are also numerous tankini and high waist bikini bottom options as well. For men, a swim wrap or a t-shirt will help conceal your ostomy.

With the right supplies and clothing options, swimming with an ostomy can be a great way to relax, get a work out in, or play around with the family.

Source: Insights: The Ostomy Association of Southern NJ

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NEWSLETTER

[www.ostomymorris.org](http://www.ostomymorris.org)

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## Hidden Disabilities Lanyard

By Claire Fernie, Fife, Ireland

**These lanyards are now available in the UK and at other European airports.**

Sadly, when we hear reports from individuals with a stoma about travelling by air, there appear to be too many instances where they have been made to feel embarrassed or singled out for inappropriate treatment, particularly when proceeding through airport security. One of our members had this in mind when, in spring of this year, she saw an item on ITV's 'This Morning' programme about a lanyard to discreetly identify travellers with a hidden disability at the airport. The television discussion centred on the case of a young boy with autism, but our member thought that the lanyard ought to be available to persons with ostomies, as well as to those with other conditions such as hearing, mobility or sight issues.

The idea behind the lanyard, and associated pin badge (see photo), is that they enable groundside staff at the airport discreetly identify passengers who may require additional support at the airport, and through security screening in particular. Airport staff will not go out of their way to impose unsolicited help (which could potentially embarrass the lanyard user) but they are expected to tailor their approach in recognition of a hidden condition. This does not mean that someone wearing a lanyard will not be subject to routine security checks. Airport security staff still have to meet their legislative obligation to ensure that no passengers are carrying prohibited substances.

Passengers with hidden disabilities or additional needs can obtain a lanyard and pin from the Special Assistance Reception at the airport. Some airports may also be able to send them out by post-check the airport's website or Customer Relations for more information. You do not need to provide proof of your condition to collect a lanyard and you can keep it for as long as you require it. You don't have to request Special Assistance at the airport to use a lanyard—that is, ask for a trained member of staff to help you navigate the airport, or for mobility assistance—but if you feel you would prefer to be accompanied through security, you can request Special Assistance.

**Source: Ileostomy and Internal Pouch Association, Ireland**



## How to Exercise with an Ostomy

By Laura Cox, Ostomy Lifestyle Specialist / Shield

It's a pretty well-known fact that exercise increases the release of endorphins in the human brain. This increased release is responsible for mood boosts and decreased pain perception. On top of that, exercise makes bones stronger, and the heart more efficient. These four very useful side effects of exercise are just some of reasons exercise is great for you!

First, it is important that you make sure you get your doctor's approval before you begin exercising again. Although you should wait a while until you intensely exercise, start walking as soon after surgery as you can handle! It's important to get your endurance back as soon as possible. When you feel ready, add other types of exercise like running, biking, hiking, swimming, Pilates, or yoga. I waited about three and a half months after surgery before I started lifting very light weights.

Having an ostomy makes it easier to become dehydrated, so it's very important to exercise with a water bottle nearby. I generally eat some carbohydrates an hour before I workout – just something small. This will keep the liquids from running through you too quickly, increase their absorption, and help you stay hydrated! I also take Imodium® about an hour before a workout to keep my ostomy bag from filling as quickly as it would otherwise. After your work out, make sure you eat a good meal.

After having any type of abdominal surgery, the risk of getting a hernia goes up. When muscle is cut, potential weakness at the site of the incision increases, so I like to play it safe by not doing any direct abdominal workouts. Instead, I do a lot of stability exercises in which the core is engaged but does not strain the abdominal muscles; these include holding yoga poses like the tree pose, high lunge, and one-legged seated chair. Engage your core and increase stability and balance by flexing your abdominal muscles in these poses.

Another way I avoid getting a hernia is by wearing a hernia belt or Spanx-type garments every time I workout. These products also make exercising more comfortable by keeping my ostomy in one place while I move around.

The most important piece of advice I can give is to listen to your body. If something hurts, stop! If you have a day when you wake up not feeling well, don't push yourself to get your workout in; aim for tomorrow. If you're not improving as fast as you would like, or cannot do the things you used to, don't judge yourself. Regaining strength is a long process that takes patience and tenacity. Take one day at a time. Likely you will go on to do all the activities you loved before surgery, and possibly even be capable of doing activities you weren't capable of before. If you haven't started exercising, I challenge you to get off the couch, get moving, and get those endorphins flowing!

**Source: Insights: The Ostomy Association of Southern NJ**

# You Can Always Learn Something New

By Karin, Newbieostomy

Whether you've been a part of the ostomy community for 20+ years or joined it yesterday, United Ostomy Associations of America's (UOAA) National Conference is worth attending. There are two main themes that come up time and time again when talking to people about their experiences at the conference: education and friendship. You can read about the bonds that are formed at the UOAA conference in the post Ostomy Camaraderie.

Regarding education, it doesn't matter if you just got your ostomy or you've had it for years, there's always something new to learn because technology advances and our bodies change over time. If you're like me, you've scoured the internet looking for answers to all your questions and have probably found quite a few answers hopefully here on ostomy.org or on my blog newbieostomy.com, but you might still have some other questions that are left unanswered.

Queue UOAA's National Conference. Held every two years UOAA does a fabulous job of bringing in professionals to share the most up-to-date research and information. At the last conference in Irvine, California they brought in doctors, surgeons, WOC nurses, nurses who also have an ostomy, a geneticist, a pharmacist, a psychologist, scientists, a dietician, TSA officials, and people with inspiring stories, and probably others that I've missed— all who are happy to answer your specific questions and share their knowledge. That's quite a toolbox for us ostomates to have all in one place!

This year in Philadelphia there are even suggested sessions and reserved meeting space for people with similarities. There is a Young Adult Track (Discount if 25 and under), Pediatrics Track and a Caregivers Track, so feel free to bring your family or partner along as well.

With dozens of sessions offered, it's can be hard to choose which one to go to if a couple of them conflict with each other. Luckily, each person has their own needs and interests, so it's likely that someone you know will go to a different session from you, which gives you both an opportunity to share what you've learned.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

### NEW FOR 2019

An Active Lifestyle Panel Discussion ... With ostomates of all ages that will feature a race car driver, a runner, an active grandmother and young professionals A Medical Marijuana Workshop A Caregivers Track ... Caring for male and female ostomates and coping with caregiver stress A Young Adult (21+) Track ... Adjusting to an ostomy, Body image and self confidence, Re-relationship considerations A Pediatrics Track ... Ostomy complications and troubleshooting, Adults who had an ostomy as a child



President's Reception  
Improv Comedy Show and Professional Vocalist  
Roaring 1920s Casino Night ... With games, prizes, photo booth and themed entertainment  
Fashion Show  
Closing Night Dancing,  
Desserts and Philly Delectables  
Morning Tai Chi and Exercise Classes  
NuHope Fun Run  
Hotel Near Museums, Shopping and Historic Sites ...  
Climb the Art Museum steps and take a picture with the "Rocky Statue"

### CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Early Bird Conference Pricing (through 5/31/2019\*)  
Individual: \$150  
Young Adult (18 - 25): \$120  
Children (5 - 17): \$25

### HOTEL RESERVATIONS

NOW OPEN!

Act Fast to Secure

the UOAA Group Discount Rate of \$159.

**For More:** <https://www.ostomy.org/2019-uoa-national-conference/>

# Morris County Ostomy Association

The Morris County Ostomy Association is a community-based, local organization made up of volunteers whose purpose it is to reach out to ostomates and their families, providing them with a network from which they can share experiences, obtain information, and gain emotional support.

The association's voluntary visitation program offers support on a one-to-one basis to patients and their families. The ostomy volunteer visitor is carefully chosen and trained. The visitor is well adjusted to his/her ostomy and is able to offer additional support and information on ostomy care and management at home.

The Morris County Ostomy Association holds regular monthly meetings. The meetings normally consist of an informal gathering of ostomates and individuals who may be contemplating ostomy related procedures. Families and friends as well as significant others are always welcome.

The evening usually involves an informal talk by a physician, a nurse specialist, a distributor of ostomy supplies, or social worker. Presentations are always on a topic of interest to the entire group. Most importantly, the meeting offers the opportunity for individuals to share information and discuss mutual interest and concerns.

## Donating supplies

Group members may send unused ostomy supplies to Friends of Ostomates Worldwide, an organization that provides ostomy materials to needy ostomates throughout the world. For more information about Friends of Ostomates, click "Donating Ostomy Supplies" on the list of links on [www.ostomymorris.com](http://www.ostomymorris.com).

## DUES

Dues for 2019 are now current.  
You may send a check or cash for \$20.00  
to:

George Salamy  
30 Wyckoff Way,

MCOA  
MORRISTOWN MEDICAL CENTER  
ATLANTIC HEALTH GROUP  
100 MADISON AVENUE  
MORRISTOWN, NJ 07092

## Meeting schedule

Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. and end at 9 p.m.  
in the Carol Simon Center  
of the Morristown Medical Center.

APRIL 17, 2019  
SHELIA MACKLE  
CONVA TEC REPRESENTATIVE

MAY 15, 2019  
JEFF HAMILL  
REGIONAL SALES MANAGER,  
ABC MEDICAL SUPPLY

JUNE 19, 2019  
JEAN ROSONE, MSW  
COORDINATOR ONCOLOGY SERVICES,  
ATLANTIC HEALTH

JULY 17, 2019  
RUBEN MERA  
HOLLISTER REPRESENTATIVE

NO AUGUST MEETING

SEPTEMBER 18, 2019  
JULIA WASSERBACK  
COLOPAST REPRESENTATIVE

NOVEMBER 20, 2019  
DETAILS TO COME

DECEMBER 18, 2019  
HOLIDAY PARTY  
SCHERING PLOUGH CONFERENCE ROOM  
6:30 PM

