

MORRIS COUNTY OSTOMY ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

AN AFFILIATE OF UNITED OSTOMY ASSOCIATIONS OF AMERICA, INC.

PROPER CARE AND STORAGE OF OSTOMY SUPPLIES

Ostomy supplies are not inexpensive, to say the least. So, it is important to understand how to apply them properly with the fewest errors possible and equally important to know how to take care of and store supplies until use. Proper care may avert the need to discard unused supplies and thus be as economical as possible.

Be sure to read carefully the instruction sheet included in the box or guidelines on the container for specific recommendations for a given product.

Generally, all ostomy supplies should be stored in a cool, dry location. Too much heat can melt or weaken many of the materials used in ostomy wafers, pouches, and accessory items. Avoid leaving supplies in a hot car or in direct sunlight. Review instructions periodically to refresh your memory and to see if any recommendations have changed over time.

Keep supplies such as wafers and pouches in their original box. By doing so, you save the brand name, product identification number, and the lot and date information for those items. Perhaps you will never need this information, but in the event you do, the box you have saved will provide the information you (or someone helping you) will need for reorder or to report any quality control problems.

Some ostomy supplies do have a "shelf-life." Be sure to check for dates that may be recorded on their containers. If you find you have a box with an expired date, check with the manufacturer, your local supplier, or an ostomy nurse for advice on usage.

While you do want to keep a "stock" of supplies so you are always prepared to change out your system, avoid the practice of stockpiling too much so your reserve will be as fresh as possible. Of course, this depends on factors such as availability, proximity to a local supply house, or shipping issues. Purchase supplies from a trusted vendor-one you know will provide good service as well as stock/ship current stock.

Reporting defective supplies: If you determine your supplies are defective in spite of proper use and storage, contact the manufacturer at their toll-free number to report the problem and receive product replacement or adjustment. Let your supply source know of your report to the manufacturer. They need to be aware of problems; however, the complaint needs to be directed to the manufacturer to ensure the defect can be addressed.

Source: Teresa Murphy-Stowers, via *The Arizona The Mail Pouch*

WINTER 2014-15 NEWSLETTER

www.ostomymorris.org

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LIVE WELL

If anyone walked a mile in the shoes of an ostomate, how would they feel? Maybe a little tired, but their ostomy would work just fine.

What does having an ostomy mean to you? Survey says: good health, no pain, belonging to a group of strong, caring, and compassionate people. Ostomates: savvy individuals who've learned how and where to get and share knowledge, help, humor, and hope.

Okay, there hasn't yet been a comprehensive survey. Are you living as actively as you'd like to? If not, why? An ostomy is merely tissue that's been surgically relocated and designed to function smoothly. Even if a temporary ostomy doesn't work correctly and trouble-free, it may only need a little extra attention and care. You and your ostomy deserve the time necessary to be taken care of really well. After that, let your heart and brain take charge.

Living through health problems that led to ostomy surgery, you no doubt gained strength and fortitude. Your ostomy won't break and neither will you. You might develop feistiness and greater determination. You may also discover more bad hair days are more likely than bad ostomy days, especially in a tropical, humid climate, during blistering winters, or in the windiest rainstorms.

If you're not sure whether activity is medically or physically all right for you to do, before you stop yourself from trying, ask your physician and WOCN if actual medical or physical restrictions prevent you from participating in or learning to water ski; play the guitar; swim; play canasta or poker; scuba dive; speak Spanish, French or Italian; dance (ballet, tap, waltz, samba); eat Cajun, sushi or Greek foods; hike, canoe, or kayak; take a trip by car, bus, ship, plane or train; ride a horse; run a marathon; walk 30 minutes; do yoga; golf; garden; sing or laugh.

Ostomies don't prevent working, traveling, living anywhere, swimming, scuba diving, hiking, or water skiing. Don't allow inaccurate information or a negative attitude prevent you from doing what you want. Adjust your attitude with realistic information. Just as you adapted to the ways your body changed as you were growing up, and as an adult too, you can adapt again and resume living as millions of other ostomates have done.

Learning how to take care of an ostomy is not as difficult as originally learning, earlier than you may remember, to walk, or later to learn how to drive a car, or to wear contact lenses or bifocals. Ask questions. Terrific at sharing information, ostomates are resilient, inventive, practical, and creative. At ostomy association meetings, notice how well people look. That's due to deliberate effort and an optimistic attitude. Give yourself the same quality of care you expect from your doctors. Don't ask less of yourself.

Having an ostomy might mean better health now and living longer. Decide each day what you would like to do. Socialize with other

people, or spend time alone. Count on the people most important to you to remain loving and supportive. Call people you'd like to see. Let your family and others know when you want them to join you in various activities. Don't think of, or expect the worst from, anyone, including you.

An ostomy gives you health and options. Consider the Spanish proverb: Living well is the best revenge. Live well!

Source: Lynne Rich, Ph.D, UOAA Update, October 2014

LEARNING TO LIVE WELL: TESTIMONIALS

"When I first had the ostomy I was a little shocked. I only knew 2 people before who had an ostomy and they had both died so I thought I would die soon as well. It made me think that I should enjoy life as long as I could. This was in 1997...Resuming my hobbies was a little difficult at first, especially in the changing room where I swim. Walking around with the pouch visible. But I explained that I had surgery and now nobody, even myself thinks about the pouch anymore. Even sitting in the sauna and when the pouch makes a sound – we just laugh"

Mogens

"After my surgery I woke up the next morning and quickly found out that I had a pouch on my stomach. I wouldn't say I was shocked but I felt a bit odd...is this going to stay there...When I learned that the ostomy would be for life I stopped feeling sorry for myself because I knew I had to live with it and just make the most of it. Today I have no problems having a stoma and tell it to whoever wants to listen. I change the pouch on the golf course – even next to the trash can if I have to"

Henning

Source: Coloplast Consumer Care

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.org. Their address is 4018 Bishop Lane, Louisville, KY 40218.

OSTOMY PROCEDURES THAT CAN BACKFIRE

There are times when we think we're doing the right thing, but get ourselves into trouble. Here are some instances to think about:

Alcohol: Alcohol is a powerful drying agent. Prolonged contact with the skin can have serious consequences.

Clamp Usage: Wrapping the drainable pouch tail around and around the clamp before closing it. This will not make the clamp work any better. All it will do is spring the clamp out of shape, which will ensure that the clamp won't work for future application and it will make releasing excess gas more difficult.

Releasing Gas: Snapping the pouch off the face plate to expel gas. This doesn't do much for odor control! It's much better to hold the tail of the pouch beyond the clamp with a tissue, open the clamp and allow the gas out through the tissue with deodorant. Then use the tissue to clean out the end of the pouch and replace the clamp.

Normal Wear Time: You shouldn't wear the appliance until it leaks. The object is to change the appliance before leakage occurs. This way, the skin gets the best protection and care. Three to five days is normal wear time. Some people report seven days, but manufacturers feel that this may be pushing their products to their limits.

Washing Pouches: Washing pouches and using the same pouch for months will eventually saturate the plastic of the pouch with odor of the chemicals and no amount of washing will get rid of it. It is recommended that you throw the pouches away when you throw the face plate away.

Experimenting With Appliances: Although it's fine to experiment with new appliances, especially if you're unhappy with your usual equipment, you'll generally get the best service from the equipment you have the most experience with.

Ignoring Skin Problems: All skin problems are easier to manage if they are treated early.

A Full Pouch: Letting your pouch get full before emptying it can separate a two-piece system. Try to empty your pouch when it's one-third to one-half full.

Seat Belts: A well-placed and adjusted seat belt shouldn't interfere with stoma function or damage your stoma. True, in an accident your stoma may be damaged, but it's a lot easier to repair a stoma than a crushed skull.

Wound Ostomy Nurse: It's not a good idea to try to live with a condition you can't correct yourself. When in doubt, see your friendly wound ostomy continence nurse (WOCN) or your doctor.

Source: UOAA Update November 2014

DUES

If you haven't already sent a check or cash, 2015 dues are due.

Dues are still \$20.00, and you can send to:

George Salamy, Treasurer

30 Wyckoff Way, Chester, NJ 07930

MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. and end at 9 p.m.

January 21, 2015

details to come

February 18, 2015

Coloplast representative

E. Commodity

March 18, 2015

180 Ostomy Supply Co.

Seth Clark

April 15, 2015

Healthy Eating

Debbie Nichols

Certified Nutritionist

May 20, 2015

Strides Toward Healthy Living

Jean Marie, MSW Carol

Simon Center

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.

MCOA

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