



Houston Chapter United Ostomy Association

November 2004

Houston Chapter UOA
PO Box 25164
Houston, TX 77265-5164
www.uoahouston.org

"We help ourselves by helping others to help themselves."

"UOA is a volunteer-based organization dedicated to providing education, information, support and advocacy for people who have had or will have intestinal or urinary diversions."

Monthly support and information meetings are held in two locations for member convenience.

Central Group

Monthly: Third Monday
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: American Cancer Society Building
6301 Richmond Avenue, Houston
Contact: Ed Wood 281-493-5015
(ewood6@houston.rr.com)

Meeting: November 15, Monday evening

Program: Bridgett Wilson, Dietitian

Ms. Wilson, a Dietitian at West Houston Medical Hospital, will present our program in November. As every ostomate knows, diet is a major factor in living successfully with an ostomy. Come prepared to participate in this meaningful presentation.

Northwest Group

Monthly: Tuesday following the third Monday
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: NW Medical Professional Bldg. (The Cali Bldg.)
17117 Cali Drive (This location is just off of
1960 and West of I-45. Turn north on Cali
Drive from 1960. At the stop sign turn left on
Judiwood and left again to park behind the Cali
Building.)
Contact: Bill Propst 281-320-8005 propst@neosoft.com

Meeting: November 16, Tuesday evening

Program: Sterling Medical Representative

Jenny Jansson-Smith with Sterling Medical will be with us for a presentation and discussion of the services they offer.

J-Pouch Group

Monthly: Third Monday
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: American Cancer Society Building
6301 Richmond Avenue, Houston
Contact: Ron Meisinger 281-491-8220

Meeting: November 15, Monday evening

Program: Round Table Discussion

Ulcerative colitis and the J-Pouch connection.



HAPPY

THANKSGIVING!!!

Patient Visiting and Support Services

Doctors and ET Nurses please note: Upon request from a doctor or nurse, a specially trained visitor will be sent to visit an ostomy patient before and/or after surgery. The visitor will be matched as nearly as possible according to sex, age, and type of ostomy. There is no charge for this service. The visitor does not give medical advice.

Please contact our Visitor Coordinator, Dorothy Andrews at 713-789-4049.

We are a health support group, a non-profit, tax-exempt, organization of volunteers whose purpose is to provide mutual aid and education to persons who have ostomies and to their families. Membership fees and donations are tax deductible.

Chapter News

The flu virus hit early for us in October. Both the ConvaTec representatives, from Houston and Dallas, were under the weather and unable to speak at our meeting. We hope to reschedule them the first part of 2005. During the meeting, we had a roundtable discussion and did some chapter business. Welcome to Elizabeth Imula as a first time visitor.

Some of you have received for the last time a dues notice of \$28 to be sent to Chuck Bouse for both the National and Local UOA dues. Starting in 2005, you will receive an invoice for **national** dues of \$17.50 to be sent directly to the National UOA address in California. You will also receive an invoice for **local** dues of \$10.50 to be sent directly to our Treasurer, Chuck Bouse. The first part of next year Chuck will send the **local** dues invoice to members who are scheduled to renew during the first six months of the year. In June or July, Chuck will send an invoice to those who are due to renew in the second half of the year.

On Saturday, February 12, from 9AM to 12 Noon, the Houston Chapter will have their biannual Visitors Training. This will train new visitors and will renew, for another two years, the visitors who previously have been trained. We will use the new training video that was produced by the Fort Worth Chapter of UOA.

November 8, a preliminary meeting will be held to form a new satellite in the Baytown area. It was voted to donate \$30 to help with publicity expense. Cindy Barefield will lead the meeting and it is hoped that some members from the Houston Chapter will be able to attend.

A very special thanks to Bill and Margo Propst for hosting and providing the ribs and chicken for the Fall Picnic at their house on October 16. It was a very enjoyable time and was nice to see everyone.

November 20 is the date for the "Cancer Patient Perspectives Meeting" at the JW Marriott Hotel, 5150 Westheimer (see details on Page 9). Those who can participate must have had colon or rectal cancer. The meeting will present the latest treatments now available and participants will have an opportunity to give their input. Also, participants are encouraged to bring a friend or loved one with them. Register on the internet at

www.CancerPatientsPerspectives.com or call 1-800-535-0109.

Tuesday evening, December 7, we will have our annual Holiday Dinner at Pine Forest Country Club. The cost is \$22 per person. Please send checks, payable to Houston Chapter of UOA, to Chuck Bouse, 12427 Millbanks, Houston, TX 77031. Your check is your reservation. **The deadline for signing up for the dinner is December 2.** Look for more details on Page 7.

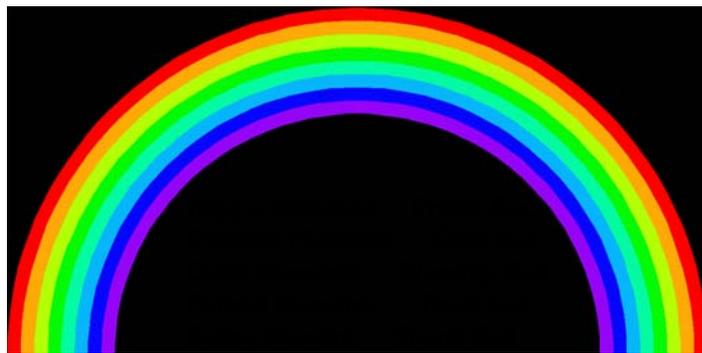
We continue to wish the best for the recovery of Leon Mucasey, Tom Andrews, Ricky Cassell, and Harold Richmond.

Our thanks to those who have donated supplies to us for distribution. In the past year, we have received 94 boxes of wafers, 79 boxes of pouches, many tubes of paste and boxes of skin prep. We could use anyone who would like to help in collection and organization of donated items as they are received.

Bridgett Wilson, a dietitian at West Houston Medical Hospital, will be our speaker on November 15. Hope to see everyone there.

Ed Wood
President

P.S. Remember to use your special UOA numbers at Krogers and Randalls when purchasing all your holiday grocery items.



"Find the good — and praise it."

- Alex Haley

ANNIVERSARY GIFT

After seeing the following suggestion in the Tyler Chapter newsletter, it was decided to offer the same to members of the Houston Chapter.

As you celebrate the anniversary of your ostomy surgery each year, consider making a monetary gift to the Houston Chapter UOA. A gift of \$1.00 for each year you have had your ostomy is a guideline; however, each person determines the amount, if any, he/she wishes to give. If you desire to make such a gift, make your check payable to Houston Chapter, UOA and please send it to:

Houston Chapter, UOA
Attn: Chuck Bouse, Treasurer
P.O. Box 25164
Houston, TX 77265-5164

We encourage you to bring your spouse or significant other and members of your immediate family to our meetings.

MEMORIAL FUND

The Houston Chapter of UOA has established a Memorial Fund. Donations can be made to the fund to memorialize or honor individuals. All donations should be made payable to the Houston Chapter of UOA and sent to:

Mary Harle
9643 Winsome Lane
Houston, TX 77063-3725

When sending a donation, be sure to include the name of the person being honored so that appropriate acknowledgement can be sent.

HEALTH QUESTION GOT YOU STUMPED? Try AARP's Guide

From AARP Bulletin, October 2004

Puzzled by a health-related question? You may find an answer at www.aarp.org/healthguide.

The new AARP Health Guide is a compendium of current information on medical conditions, tests, treatments, prescription drugs, Medicare rights and benefits, self-help groups, clinical trials and alternative medicine.

This easy-to-use resource provides authoritative information from the world's largest medical library, the National Library of Medicine at the National Institutes of Health, and from several other health-related sources.

The guide can help people age 50-plus manage their health care. AARP cannot answer questions about specific cases, however, or make treatment recommendations. Those questions should be directed to a health care provider.

Donation of Supplies

If you have ostomy supplies that you no longer use, please consider donating them. The Houston Chapter of UOA is contacted on a regular basis by individuals who are in need of donated supplies of all kinds. This is one way that you can assist your fellow ostomates in the Houston area. Please contact Ed Wood at 281-493-5015 with any questions.

ROOM DEODORANT

Via The Austi-Mate Journal, Austin, TX Chapter

Have you saved any of the cotton stuffed in pill bottles? Place a roll of cotton in a bottle of peppermint oil (available at pharmacies). Make sure the bottle has a good stopper. When changing or emptying your pouch, just remove the bottle top and pull up a bit of cotton. It works like an air spray and has a pleasant fragrance that does not pollute the air.

For a purchased room deodorant, you might try "Citrus Magic" spray. It is more expensive, but works very well.

ATTENTION... Ostomates and Medical Personnel

Clarice E. Kennedy, Certified Enterstomal Therapist and Immediate Past President of the Houston Chapter, UOA, is available for consultations by appointment only at Spring Branch Medical Supply at 8700 Long Point Road, Houston, Texas. Clarice is an ostomate herself and has over 30 years of knowledge and experience to share with anyone who has questions about, or needs assistance with, the care of an ostomy both prior to and following surgery. The Houston area is fortunate to have such a dedicated individual available for personal consultations. Appointments can be made by calling Clarice at 713-647-8029.

Disclaimer: The information contained within this newsletter is presented expressly for informational purposes only and may not be applicable to everyone. It should not be substituted for professional medical care or attention by a qualified practitioner. Always check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your condition.

FLU AND THE OSTOMATE

Via Metro Maryland and New Life Newsletter, Charlotte, NC

Winter is approaching and that means a risk of the flu. It's best to be prepared and know what to do.

For new ostomates, this could be a time of real concern and a new experience in coping, for flu not only brings headaches, muscle aches and pains, upset stomach, but that "bogeyman" of the ostomate, diarrhea, often occurs.

For the **colostomate**, should you have diarrhea, it would be wise not to irrigate at this time for nature is actually doing the job for you. After the diarrhea stops, the colon will be sluggish for a few days, so leave it alone a little longer. Give the colon a chance to return to normal before resuming irrigation.

Always drink plenty of liquids, get proper rest, and carry an extra supply of pouches. If you customarily wear a closed pouch, when diarrhea strikes, wear a drainable bag until the siege is over. Suggested diet for stomach flu is hot tea, ginger ail and pretzels.

For the **ileostomate**, diarrhea can present an even greater problem. Along with an excess of discharge, there is loss of electrolytes and vitamins necessary in maintaining good health. You may experience thirst, slowly rising fever, weakness, mental fuzziness and reduced urine output. More serious results could be muscle contractions, abdominal distention, lack of alertness and, in extreme cases, convulsions. You must, therefore, restore electrolyte balance as soon as possible. Eliminate solid foods. To regain lost potassium drink tea, Gatorade, bouillon, ginger ale, and plenty of water. To regain lost sodium eat saltine crackers or salted pretzels.

Vomiting also brings a threat of dehydration. By all means, call your doctor if either vomiting or diarrhea symptoms are severe and continuing.

The **urostomate** should be sure to keep electrolytes in balance, and follow the same general instructions as for colostomates and ileostomates.

No ostomate should take medicine for pain or a laxative without a doctor's order. Do not use an antibiotic for colds or flu unless a doctor orders it. Antibiotics have no effect on a virus but do kill bacteria (both friendly and unfriendly). They can change the proper balance of normal bacteria in the colon. If this balance is disturbed it may cause diarrhea.

Drugs or certain foods can cause constipation in colostomies, but this can be prevented by drinking plenty of fluids. Increased water intake in the ileostomate results in increased urine output rather than increased water discharge through the appliance during colds or flu.

When returning to a normal diet, use fiber-free foods at first, then gradually increase to a regular, normal diet.

*You must
restore
electrolyte
balance*

THE OSTOMY SECRET

Via the Austi-Mate Journal, Austin, TX Chapter

Rehabilitation of an ostomate is a step-by-step procedure:

1. Successful surgical procedure by the surgeon.
2. Sympathetic and adequate nursing care.
3. Support of the stoma therapist at bedside.
4. Instruction in self care.
5. Supportive family understanding.
6. Psychological support from local ostomy chapter visiting service pre- and post-operatively.
7. Self acceptance.

Dr. Hans Selye gives us the secret. He states that when one gives of himself to others after surviving trials and tribulations, he is filled with a strong and revitalized source of energy, directing his energy in providing comfort to those in need. We need **you**. Do you need the secret of good health?

What do you do in case you start seeing spots before your eyes?

Quit reading Dick and Jane books!

A GIFT OF TIME

Via the Re-Route & GB News Review

What does your ostomy mean to you? Does it mean a constant nuisance and care, problems, embarrassment, leakage and resentment? Or...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 hadn't been done? Did you get to choose between a box six feet under or a bag on your belly? That doesn't leave much room for negotiation, does it?

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 a lot of worry, pain, misery and medical expenses. All of them buy you a **gift of precious extra time**.

For those who have been given that gift of precious extra time, what are you going to do with it? Are you going to waste it - now that you have 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, or are you going to appreciate and live life to the fullest, making good use of the time you have left?

THE CHOICE IS YOURS!!!

HELPFUL OSTOMY HINTS

Via *The Austi-Mate Journal*, Austin, TX Chapter

For Colostomies: If you use just a pad instead of an appliance, use a little K-Y Jelly over the stoma to keep things soft and lubricated. If you irrigate: allowing too much water to enter the stoma too quickly may allow a bit too much pressure to develop. This may cause a sudden evacuation of waste but can leave much of the feces still in the lower part of the colon, along with most of the water. Periodic evacuation may follow over the next hour. This is not really diarrhea, but is simply a delayed emptying of the colon.

For Ileostomies: Usually ileostomates experience hunger more often than other people. When this happens, they should drink fruit juice or water and eat soda crackers, followed by a meal as soon as possible. If you do need to eat a snack at bedtime or during the day in order to ward off nausea, try to cut down on calories somewhere else in the daytime or you will gain weight. Never skip meals in order to lose weight. An ileostomy keeps working whether the ostomate has eaten or not.

For Urostomies: If it is necessary to have a urinalysis, remind the nurse to take the specimen directly from the stoma, not from the appliance. If you are out of Uri-Kleen, soaking your urinary pouch in straight white vinegar for thirty minutes will kill all common bacteria found in urine. Mucous in the urine is normal. The ileal conduit is made of mucous secreting intestinal tissue. It doesn't stop doing its job even though it is transporting urine.

Added Tip: If you use a two-piece system, the pouch may not be totally secured when you snap it on and could fall off when half full. Make sure the pouch is snapped to the flange securely. Start snapping it together at the **bottom** and work your way to the top. Give a little tug on the pouch to test its lock, but make sure you hold the faceplate/wafer so you don't break the seal.

FOR THOSE WHO ENJOY LANGUAGE... (or severe distortions thereof)

A man's home is his castle, in a manor of speaking.

Dijon vu - the same mustard as before.

Shotgun wedding: A case of wife or death.

Reading while sunbathing makes you well red.

When two egotists meet, it's an I for an I.

A bicycle can't stand on its own because it is two tired.

What's the definition of a will?...It's a dead giveaway.

A lot of money is tainted. 'Taint yours and 'taint mine.

He often broke into song because he couldn't find the key.

Every calendar's days are numbered.

A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.

Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.

Acupuncture is a jab well done.

NORTHWEST GROUP HAPPENINGS

The picnic on October 16th was great! We were fortunate to have good weather this year. We had a fair turnout with 15 people attending...a good mixture of the Northwest and Central Groups. All the food was wonderful but Gay Nell's apple dessert won top spot, in my opinion.

This month will be a regular meeting with a program by Jenny Jansson-Smith of Sterling Medical.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Regards,
Bill Propst

The ABCs of Ostomy Care

(Continued from last month)

From ConvaTec's *Health & Vitality* publication

L IS FOR LESS GAS

If flatulence is a problem, try avoiding these known gas-producers: beans, broccoli, cabbage, cucumbers, mushrooms, onions, and carbonated drinks. Some people are lactose intolerant, which means dairy foods cause gas and diarrhea. Gas production also goes up when you add more air to your digestive tract by drinking through a straw, chewing gum, smoking, or talking while you eat.

M IS FOR MEAL PLAN

Colostomy and ileostomy patients benefit from staying on a regular meal schedule, since skipping meals causes an uptick in gas and watery stools. Some people find that eating six small meals a day, instead of three large ones, works best.

N IS FOR NO HEAVY LIFTING

Since it can injure your stoma, heavy lifting is one activity prohibited to people with an ostomy. But who enjoys moving pianos anyway?

O IS FOR OPTIONS

You don't have to use the same pouch system that you brought home from the hospital. Explore your options: You may want to use a drainable pouch on most days, and a closed-end pouch when traveling. If you have special needs, you might want to try out other ostomy systems or accessory products to get the best possible fit. Talk to your CWOC or ET nurse, who can make recommendations based on your situation.

P IS FOR POTASSIUM

This mineral is critical for health, and colostomy and ileostomy patients have an increased risk of running low — especially during bouts of diarrhea. Be sure to include high-potassium foods like bananas, fish, oranges, and yogurt in your diet.

(This article will be continued next month)



YET ANOTHER USE FOR DUCT TAPE...

Submitted by Bill Propst, Houston UOA Member

I recently used a 4-inch piece of duct tape to seal a blown wafer. I only needed the tape for about an hour and it averted a certain mess.

I have a colostomy and manage it with the process of irrigation. During the introduction of the water the wafer blew, a 'big time' hole. I knew I only had about one minute before I would have a mess. I grabbed a towel (just in case) and made a run for the duct tape in the garage. I made it but now I keep a small roll of duct tape in my bathroom just in case. I also resolved not to wear a wafer so long.

DID YOU KNOW????

- Coca-Cola was originally green.
- Men can read smaller print than women can; women can hear better.
- The average number of people airborne over the US any given hour is 61,000.
- The cost of raising a medium-size dog to the age of eleven is \$6,400.
- The world's youngest parents were 8 and 9 and lived in China in 1910.
- It is impossible to lick your elbow.
- The first novel ever written on a typewriter: Tom Sawyer
- $111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321$
- Half of all Americans live within 50 miles of their birthplace.
- Honey is the only food that doesn't spoil.
- Mel Blanc (voice of Bugs Bunny) was allergic to carrots.
- Bulletproof vests, fire escapes, windshield wipers, and laser printers were all invented by women.
- "I am." is the shortest complete sentence in the English language.
- The State with the highest percentage of people who walk to work is Alaska.

AND FINALLY.....

- At least 75% of people who read this will try to lick their elbows!!

RIGHT BRAIN / LEFT BRAIN - This will drive you crazy.....

While sitting in a chair, lift your right foot off the floor and make clockwise circles. Now while doing this, draw the number "6" in the air with your right hand.

Your foot will change direction and there's nothing you can do about it.

Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body - but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming....
"WOW - What a Ride!"



DON'T GIVE UP THE THINGS YOU LIKE TO DO

Via the Austi-Mate Journal, Austin, TX

Ostomates don't have to give up things: it's just that we may not be able to do them to the same extent and with the same vigor.

Avoid stress. Just driving to a meeting can be stressful. Get adequate sleep, and don't overeat. If you sleep 14 hours a day, something is bothering you and you are using the bed as a withdrawal from life. Even overeating is a withdrawal mechanism, and it causes the heart to work much harder. When did you last read a good book or visit a museum?

Keep alert, because that keeps your intellect functioning. If you believe you are something, you will become it. Find somewhere to go every day that you consider a job.

Don't worry about memory lapses; no one has a perfect memory. Don't get upset over little annoyances.

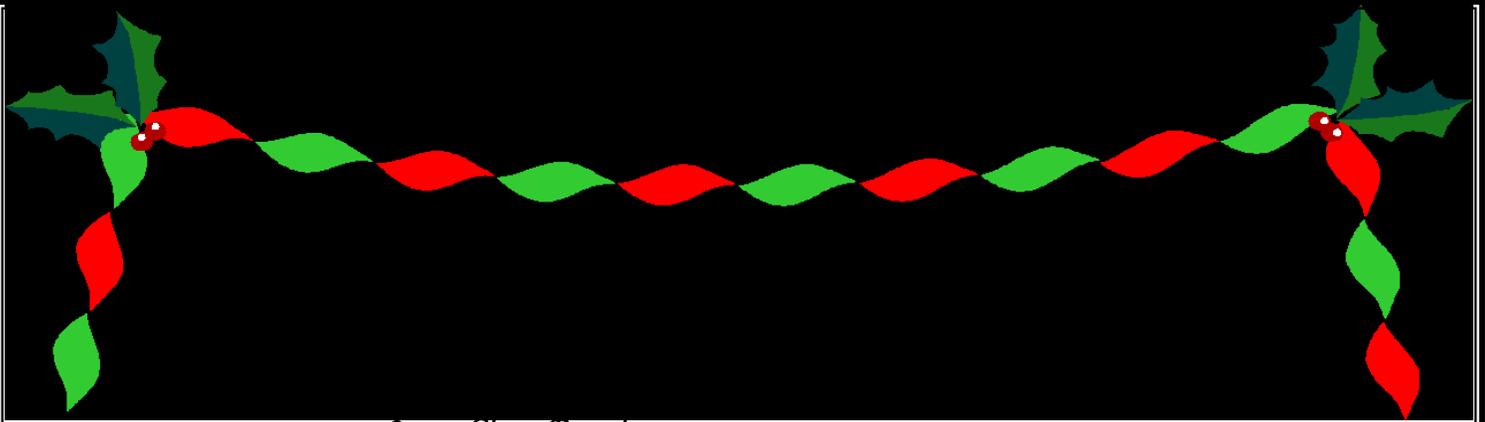
Tell yourself that you are going to have a good day. Tell yourself at night, "It has been a good day."

Give yourself pep talks. We love and hate each other at the same time...love someone as a human being but hate his behavior. Be honest. Get your hostility out. Don't be angry with yourself. Do things for others. Have contact with others.

Our bodies are only a conveyance for our minds. No one is more beautiful than each of us in our own right. Keep active and don't withdraw - so watch out when you stop going to parties.

There is no idealistic setting except as you make it for yourself. Stress and tension can lead to acid indigestion.

A happy mind should produce a happy stomach.



18003 Clay Road
Houston, Texas 77084

MENU: *Entrée Choices:* ~ Chicken Scallopini
~ 6 oz. Filet Mignon with Bearnaise
~ Herb Seared Salmon
(Includes salad, dessert, coffee or tea)

COST: \$22.00 per person (includes gratuity)*
Make checks payable to "Houston Chapter, UOA"

* RESERVATIONS CAN BE MADE BY CONTACTING ED WOOD AT
281-493-5015 NO LATER THAN DEC. 2. YOUR CHECK IS
YOUR RESERVATION.

** THIS SOCIAL EVENT REPLACES OUR REGULAR DECEMBER
MEETING.

*This dinner will be a wonderful start for your holiday season.
Come and enjoy the beautiful surroundings, great food, good friends, and door prizes.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

quick pick-me-ups

10 easy energy breaks to rev up your day

5-SECOND DE-STRESSER - *rub your earlobes*

This acupressure trick clears your head and dulls pain above the neck.

5-SECOND ENERGY BOOSTER - *down a glass of water*

Dehydration wears you down, even *before* you feel thirsty.

30-SECOND MOOD LIFTER - *laugh out loud*

Humor improves your mood and may spur you to take on more high-energy activities.

1-MINUTE STAMINA BUILDER - *focus on your breathing*

The deep abdominal kind will calm your heart rate and rush energizing oxygen throughout your body.

3-MINUTE ENERGY CHARGER - *take a hot/cold shower*

The water itself will wake you up. Then, when you switch from hot to cold, the temperature change will make you tingle all over.

5-MINUTE ENERGY CHARGER - *soak up (a little) sun*

Light stimulates neurotransmitters in your brain, such as serotonin and dopamine, which increases motivation.

5-MINUTE BRAIN REVVER - *take the road less traveled*

Even doing something as simple as driving or walking a different route to work stimulates brain pathways and raises your energy.

20-MINUTE DE-STRESSER - *curl up for a catnap*

So refreshing! But sleep any longer, and you'll feel even grogier.

20-MINUTE BRAIN REVVER - *practice a new skill*

Learning a language or a challenging game like chess are two of the best ways to stave off mental fatigue.

20-MINUTE ENERGY BOOSTER - *opt for solo time*

One energy expert calls annoying people "energy vampires."

Plant your own garden and decorate your own soul, instead of waiting for someone else to bring you flowers.

YOUR NEW STOMA

(Take Me To An Ostomy Meeting)

Via *New Life Newsletter*, Charlotte, NC UOA Chapter

I am your new stoma,
Upon your tummy I lie.
I was created
So you wouldn't die.
 I may not always behave,
 But I certainly do try,
 Because I really do
 Hate to make you cry.
Because I'm new to you,
And you are so confused,
You are angry at me quite often
And you make me feel abused.
 I want to be your friend,
 I rely on you for care.
 But, true love between us
 I suppose would be rare.
I did not choose to be here,
Nor did you choose to be
The owner of a stoma,
Inexperienced as me.
 When I get a little older,
 With tender, loving care,
 I will learn to behave better
 While your body we both share.
You wish I'd go away
Through your tears and sorrow,
But, I'm here today
And I'll be here tomorrow.
 So, you may as well accept me
 And, we'll get along much better
 Try relaxing, and be patient,
 We will work it out together.
Though presently you think
That my actions are confusing,
Future stories about me
Are going to be amusing.
 You can't believe that now,
 But, trust me through your strife,
 Soon, you're going to thank me
 For a healthy new life.
Take me to the Ostomy meetings
And look around the place.
Listen to all the greetings
From ostomates with a happy face.
 They were once like you,
 So they understand.
 They've been through it too,
 They'll give you a helping hand.
That's what it's all about...
Mutual aid, friends and fun.
Today you may see the gray clouds,
But tomorrow you'll see the sun.

By Lydia Cappieola

COLOSTOMY HINTS

Via Lawton-Ft. Sill Chapter, Lawton, OK

In a normal state of health, the consistency of stool, which the bowel puts out, is related to what is put in. Timing and frequency of meals, emotional experiences, medicines, and sickness also play a role. This is true whether one has a colostomy or not.

Constipation is often the result of an unbalanced diet or too small an intake of food or liquids. A medicine may also be the cause. Fear may be at the root of it, or faulty irrigation practices. These are matters to talk over with your ET nurse or physician. If you have had constipation problems in the past, before, surgery, remember how you solved them and try the same methods. **DO NOT** use laxatives without asking your physician.

Diarrhea is usually a warning that something is not right. Diarrhea is defined as frequent, loose or watery bowel movements in greater amounts than customarily experienced whether one has a colostomy or not. Diarrhea must be distinguished from loose bowel movements. Loose bowels are common in transverse, as well as ascending colostomies. This is due to the shortened length of the colon and is not a sign of sickness or disease. Certain foods or drinks may produce diarrhea. If this happens, and you should discover which they are, avoid them.

If you have persistent diarrhea or constipation, talk with your physician or ET nurse. Discuss the foods and liquids you take, your eating schedule and quantities, and any medications you might be taking. Something may be prescribed for you to help slow things down or to stimulate the bowel—you need a well-balanced diet and sufficient fluids to obtain a good output.

Odors are usually associated with gas, loose bowels, or diarrhea. Some foods can produce odor, i.e., eggs, cabbage, cheese, cucumber, onion, garlic, fish, dairy foods, and coffee are among them. If you find one or the other bothers you, avoid it. Some medicines cause stools to have an odor, for example, some vitamins and antibiotics. Discuss this problem with your physician. He may be able to prescribe another type of medicine.

Odors may be particularly prominent with transverse colostomies. This problem may be combated by placing deodorants in the appliance and by frequently replacing pouches. It is best to use odor-proof pouches, which can be thrown away after a single use.

If the colon is emptied well, odors are likely to be less; irrigation may be helpful. It may be necessary to use an oral deodorant; there are several on the market. Discuss these problems with your ET nurse or physician.

*Ever wonder why women can't
put on mascara
with their mouth closed?*