



WEB SITE: www.ostomysolano.org

SOLANO OSTOMY NEWS

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OSTOMY ASSOCIATION OF SOLANO
P.O. BOX 5142, VACAVILLE, CA 95696



DATE: February 3rd and February 17th ****VIDEO METINGS****

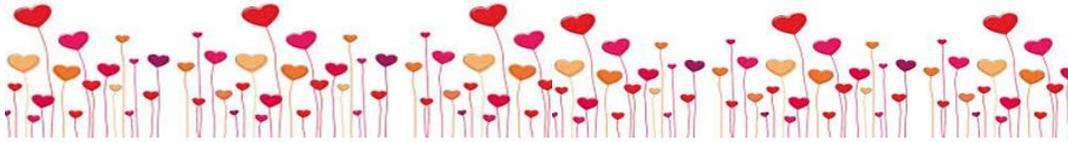
HOSTS: February 3rd at 7:00 pm - Peggy Terry, CWOCN & Dan
Guest – Cassandra Wunschel – Territory Manager - Convatec

February 17th at 7:00 pm – Mary Lou Santillo, CWOCN & Dan
Guest – To Be Determined- Working on Details

REFRESHMENTS: BYOB (Bring Your Own Beverage)

WHERE: In Your Living Room, Kitchen, Dining Room – You Pick It

The documents contained within this newsletter are presented expressly for informational purposes only. In no way are any of the materials presented here meant to be a substitute for professional medical care or attention by a qualified practitioner, nor should they be construed as such. ALWAYS check with your doctor or CWOCN.



Just a Few Comments

February Already? It's nice that we have had lots of rain this year, but we are now falling behind. I am hoping February and March bring much more rain along with spring flowers. We need to fill those reservoirs before summer. I am sure that we all feel that the COVID, in its various forms, seems to be going on forever. I am looking forward to when we can have unrestricted family and friend interactions, begin to travel again and have at least a somewhat normal life (whatever that turns out to be).

As you know. I am trying to divest myself of the leadership role in our group. I have not had anyone show an interest in taking over this role. I still want to be an active member in the group, and I am willing to continue many of the behind-the-scenes work, but just want a break from the planning and execution of the group's activities and meetings. If you know anyone who might be interested, please let me know.

At the Last Online Video Meeting on January 20th, we had **Noelle Schuyler** from **11 Health** and **Danielle Gulden** from **11 Health** and (**Double Baggin' It**). Both were very interesting and encouraging ostomates whom have both been through the long process of living with an ostomy. **11 Health** is a group that has a new high-tech approach to ostomy care. www.11health.com

Please be safe out there and remember that even though we need to isolate ourselves and take precautions for a bit longer this year, we can hopefully look forward to a **great new year**.

Don't forget Your Favorite Valentine!

Upcoming Meetings – Add to Your Calendars – Details to Follow

February 3rd - Online Video Meeting - 7:00 PM –Roundtable Discussion

Special Guest – Cassandra Wunschel – Convatec

February 17th - Online Video Meeting - 7:00 PM – Roundtable Discussion and Support

Tentative Special Guest – Details to be Forthcoming



Ask Nurse Coulter

Urostomy Pouch Color

My mother has a urostomy and is staying at a nursing facility after a recent fall. When I visited, I noticed that her pouch and drainage bag look purple. When the bag was emptied though, the urine wasn't purple at all. Should I be concerned?
J.I.

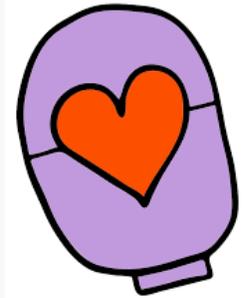
Dear J.I.,

You have encountered a rare, and initially disconcerting phenomenon known as **PUBS** or "**purple urine bag syndrome**." A small amount of blue and red pigments in the urine combine to make it purple. Over time, the color becomes

concentrated in the plastic of the drainage system. The purple color does not mean that your mother has an infection or disease. PUBS is not considered serious. People who most commonly experience PUBS are elderly women, people who are confined to bed, patients who are constipated and those who have impaired memory. **Alkaline urine and elevated bacteria levels in the urine may also contribute to PUBS.** This occurrence is not specific to people who have urostomies. In fact, it is most common in patients who have intact bladders that are catheterized.

The exact reason the purple color occurs is still somewhat of a mystery, but it is believed to be related to the **metabolism of tryptophan**, one of the building blocks of protein. You may know that protein makes up muscles, digestive enzymes and chemicals that help our brains work. **Bacteria in our guts may break the amino acid down and cause the blue and red pigments to form. Taking steps to prevent urinary tract infections, to stay hydrated and to prevent constipation may also reduce the chance of the purple color from occurring.** These include drinking water with electrolytes, avoiding alcohol and being active.

Talk with the nurse supervisor at your mother's facility and ask what they are doing to help her stay healthy in these ways. At the same time, be sure that your mother's pouch is being changed about every four to seven days. Only use a bedside drainage bag for sleeping. Medicare covers two of these bedside drainage bags per month. At home, your mother probably empties that bag every morning and flushes it periodically with a solution of 50% water and 50% white vinegar which keeps the bag clean and fresh.



Beryl of Wisdom

Beryl Evans, RN, MS, has been a certified wound ostomy nurse for 49 years and helped thousands of patients and their caregivers through her work at hospitals, clinics and The Pouch Place, a nurse-owned and managed ostomy supplier: www.pouchplace.com

Traveling with your stoma

Some day (hopefully soon) we may be back to a safer world after the COVID-19 pandemic wanes and our thoughts may turn to traveling again. Traveling with your stoma should not pose any problems if your stoma is included in your plans. Here are a few suggestions to make your traveling more enjoyable.

1. Make a list of the supplies you will need for the time you will be traveling and add some extras as a precaution. Unexpected travel delays, new activities, new food and supplies exposed to heat while traveling may necessitate more frequent changes.



2. Empty often and whenever the chance arises. Infrequent rest stops, long flights and scarce rest rooms may not allow you to empty as often as you normally would, so look for opportunities to do so.

3. Wear stretchable, looser clothing to allow the pouch to fill without pressure. Sitting in the same position for long periods of time can make pants and skirt creases tighter across the abdomen, so give your pouch some extra room.

4. When traveling by car, have your supplies stored in the back seat rather than in the trunk which is less accessible and can be hotter. Put them on the floor and cover them to protect them from the sun. You might consider storing flanges, seals and strips wrapped securely in Ziplock bags with an ice pack. Always take your supplies indoors when possible to prevent damage from heat or cold.

5. If flying, carry several changes in your carry-on luggage and check the rest. You will need several changes while you wait on luggage if it gets lost or delayed. Be sure to carry scissors and no more than three ounces of liquid deodorizer

per TSA regulations. "Ostomy scissors" are allowed under the regulations if they are four inches long or less. If you think there is a risk TSA will not allow your scissors, cut several flanges ahead of time. If you or your carry-on is chosen to be searched, tell the agents you are an ostomate and have ostomy supplies.

You can request a private screening if you prefer, and you are allowed to have a travel companion with you during it. It may be helpful to carry a copy of the Travel Communication Card available from United Ostomy Associations of America (ostomy.org/ostomy-traveland-tsa-communication-card) The card is for information purposes only, but will inform the agent of your condition. It also has the contact information for TSA Cares (1-855-787-2227) where, if contacted 72 hours before your flight, they provide a Passenger Support Specialist at the checkpoint for passengers with medical conditions, special needs or disabilities.



6. Keep a list of the stock numbers of all products that you use in case you need to order more if you extend your travel or if there is an emergency. You can order from Amazon and many online ostomy supply websites and have the order shipped quickly to your location. Having your product numbers will help you find what you need and ensure you're getting what you want. With a little planning and a few precautions, traveling with your stoma should be no problem. Happy travels.

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What to do when you feel overwhelmed with ostomy life

Expert advice for ostomates when it all feels like too much.

[Stephanie Brenner, LCSW](#)

Oct 10, 2019

The experience of managing an ostomy or chronic illness can be a lot to handle. Add in the demands of family and work from our busy lives and it all feels totally overwhelming. Nowadays, "stress" seems to be a normal part of life. It might seem like there's nothing you can do about it but you have a lot more control than you might think. Here are eight tactics to help you deal with ostomy overwhelm.

1. Know how long things take - I'm notorious for assuming tasks take much less time than they actually do. For instance, I'll block out 15 minutes for a pouch change and then my stoma decides it's going to take 30 minutes. I've learned this simple rule: whatever time you think a task will take, double it. That way, when your stoma suddenly acts out, you'll feel prepared because you know there's extra time to apply the wafer properly. We all know that rushing a pouch change = leaks = more stress!

2. Simplify your life - Is your life too complicated? Take a few minutes and look at everything you do in a day and ask yourself if there's a better, easier way. This may involve saying "no" to things you've planned. Your to-do list is probably making you anxious and stressed and overwhelmed. Technology can help us organize our lives when it comes to ordering ostomy supplies. Many [medical suppliers](#) offer automated reordering and there's also a handy app called [Ostobuddy](#) which alerts you when you're running low or when to refill a prescription.

3. Start daily habits - One of the most important things you can do for yourself is self-care. As soon as I wake up, I start each morning with a hydration routine. Next, I might take vitamin supplements if I'm not eating well. Then, I'll pack healthy snacks for the day ahead and always carry my water bottle. I make sure to change my pouch prior to eating breakfast and make sure I carry extra supplies in my purse. These daily habits allow me to feel prepared for the day. If you're not a morning person, you can plan these things the night before.

4. Allow for Murphy's Law - No week is complete without something going wrong, just plan on it. Take for instance that terrifying feeling of your ostomy appliance coming loose and the [bag splashing onto the floor](#), or a very inconvenient [leak at the shopping mall](#). Allow time in your schedule to prepare an emergency kit with extra clothes and ostomy supplies — always carry it with you! You're better off knowing these things are readily available just in case you need them.

5. Be kind to yourself - If you're having ongoing issues with your ostomy, this kind of overwhelm can lead to feelings of depression and anxiety. This is not the time to beat yourself up. It's extra important to pay attention to your mental radio and turn down the volume on your inner critic station. Practice self-compassion by giving yourself some credit for everything you've been through. Read [inspiring stories](#) about ostomates who've been through similar things. Self-love is so important.



6. Lean on others for support - The first step is being honest. If you're living with chronic illness or an ostomy, and it's a lifelong condition, then you need help. Brene Brown found through her research that people tend to feel shame around the idea of "never being enough" ... at home, at work, never smart enough, never good enough ... it's no wonder so many of us don't bother to ask. Do not feel guilty about asking for help. When you ask in a considerate way and understand they may need to say no (see #2), there's no hurt feelings. It can be something as simple as a friend bringing a meal over if you're tired, or [help with ostomy supplies](#) if you're paying out of pocket. Never let your pride get in the way of asking for help when in desperate need.

7. Dump all your feelings onto paper - When you're fed up with your ostomy, sometimes taking time to write down your frustrations can help. I give my patients journals to help with this. One of my favorite assignments is having them [write a letter to their ostomy](#), expressing all their truest emotions and thoughts — the good and the bad. [Ranting](#) is welcome but including gratitude and appreciation is the key to acceptance.

8. Connect with others who understand ostomy life - There are many ostomates who have gone before you, and many yet to come. It's very helpful to connect with others going through similar experiences because we can all learn from each other. If you want a pen pal friend, [Girls With Guts has a program](#). UOAA has over 300 local support groups. There are private Facebook groups for [online support](#), and of course many ostomates are on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). Don't underestimate the power of peer support.

THE RULES: Just pick ONE (maybe two) of these tips to try today. I don't want you to become overwhelmed using them all!

by
[Stephanie Brenner, LCSW](#)

Stephanie is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Evanston, Illinois.

OSTOMY DIET GUIDELINES AFTER SURGERY

Chances are you will be able to return to your normal diet not too long after your operation. It is good to keep in mind that foods that were good and healthy for your body before your operation are still good for you. A well-balanced diet is recommended for most individuals.

Although your ostomy nurse more than likely will give you tips and advise you on your health and diet, here are some alternative helpful suggestions for maintaining a proper diet after your ileostomy or colostomy surgery.

Start Small

Ease your way back to proper nutrition with small quantities of food. It is recommended to eat 3 or more times per day in smaller quantities and portions. Try to eat these meals at the same time each day to help regulate bowel movements. Eating more frequently and in smaller quantities will help aid your body's ability to process food and help with unnecessary gas.



For the first several weeks after your surgery, eating simple and bland soft foods will be easier to digest. Keep in mind that chewing your food well also adds to the ease of digestion – the more broken up it is, the easier it will be to process. Take your time with introducing high-fiber foods back into your diet as these will be harder to digest and can cause blockages.

If you are trying new foods it is advised to try them slowly and one at a time. This will help you to have a better understanding of how your body works with the new foods and if any will cause excess gas, constipation, strange odors, or diarrhea. Slowly incorporate them into your diet and make note of how your body responds to them. Remember that every body is different and what affects someone else may not affect you in the same way, this is why it can be helpful to keep a journal or diary of how your body responds to different foods.

Drink Lots of Liquids

It is important to drink lots of liquids with an ostomy. If you have an ileostomy, even more specific ileostomy dietary guidelines will be helpful. Dehydration can happen as you lose more fluids daily after an ileostomy, due to the fluid not being reabsorbed into the large intestine. Make sure to hydrate even more on hot and humid days or if you are participating in active sports. (Sports drinks and other high electrolyte drinks can help with this.)

Coffee and tea are fine to drink, but water and juices are still better sources of liquid, so be careful not to use coffee or tea as a substitute for water.

Can I Drink Alcohol With my Ostomy?

Alcohol is fine in moderation, you may want to try one drink (or even a half) and wait and see how it affects your body. Like other carbonated beverages, beer may cause extra gas and uncomfortable bloating but every body is different and what affects one person, may not affect you in the same way.

Ostomy Problem Foods

Even though you can still enjoy most of the foods you loved before surgery, **there are some foods to be aware of after your ostomy,** specifically foods that are hard on digestion and can cause blockages. The following is a list of common foods that can cause problems, as they don't break down easily:

Nuts - Seeds - Popcorn - Dried Fruit - Mushrooms - Raw-Crunchy Vegetables

Eat these foods in small quantities and be sure to chew them well. If you think you have a food blockage, you should call your doctor or ostomy nurse. Having an ostomy certainly doesn't mean you have to completely change your diet. By steering clear of a short list of problem foods and making sure to stay hydrated, you can get back to enjoying the foods you love.



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NAME _____ PHONE _____

OSTOMY BIRTHDAY _____ EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

TYPE OF OSTOMY: COLOSTOMY _____ ILESTOMY _____ UROSTOMY _____

PROFESSIONAL OR OTHER OCCUPATION _____

IF YOU NEED A RIDE IN ORDER TO ATTEND THE MEETINGS, PLEASE CALL DAN BRUCE. HE CAN ASSIST IN ARRANGING TRANSPORTATION.

Happy Valentine's Day

