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# Antelope Valley Ostomy News

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March 2009

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**Local News** ~ by Ann Wright, RN,  
CWOCN, CNS, Editor Lancaster News



Early spring greetings, everyone! I hope this finds you all doing well and anticipating some warm, nice weather!

Many thanks to Michelle Frick, our speaker at our January meeting. Michelle is the Director of the Healthy Homes Program at AV Hospital and provided us a nice overview of the program to which we have donated gifts at Christmas. It was an interesting discussion and a chance to find out first-hand where our donations go.

As you may know, I am in the process of formalizing our "membership" process to help us determine the number of members we have for voting purposes and fees for UOAA membership. If you have not yet returned the envelope and membership form that I sent with last month's newsletter indicating whether or not you would like to be a member and sending in your annual \$10.00 dues please do so as soon as possible.

Our next meeting will be on Sunday, March 15, 2009 at 2:00 PM in the conference room at AV Home Care. Address and directions are on the back page of the newsletter. I encourage you to attend...we have a wonderful group of people with whom you may share your experiences. We are also planning to have Tami Host from Coloplast in attendance to show us new ostomy products. So, we look forward to seeing you March 15<sup>th</sup>...We want everyone and anyone who can to attend our support group meetings...after all, SUPPORT is what we are all about!



## MARCH is **NATIONAL COLON CANCER AWARENESS MONTH!**

Since colon cancer is the third highest cause of death in America, and is the reason for a great many ostomies, we need to pay attention to it and to help spread awareness of the value of early screening – especially to the relatives of our own members – and others in our communities.

Awareness Month is being kicked off this year with **Dress in Blue Day** on March 6, 2009. Blue is the color that has been adopted by the colon cancer awareness folks, and appears in the national symbol, the blue star you see above. There are a variety of activities going on around the country and we hope you share with others as well.

## **ANTACIDS & ORANGE JUICE DON'T MIX**

*Dayton Ostomy Chapter & GB Support Group*

"Avoid drinking orange juice for at least three hours after taking antacids that contain aluminum, such as Maalox or Mylanta," cautions William Ruderman, MD, chairman of the Department of Gastroenterology at the Cleveland Clinic in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Orange juice increases the body's absorption of the aluminum in these antacids as much as tenfold and aluminum accumulation can cause calcium loss, which contributes to Osteoporosis.



## TOP TEN TIPS FOR HANDLING LEFTOVERS

~ Via: South Beach website & Greater Orlando, Central FL Ostomy Chapter

There's nothing like eating a great dish two (or three or four) nights in a row. At the same time, it's better to rid your fridge of some leftovers before they turn into a dangerous meal. If you're wondering whether to eat or to toss what's left of last week's dinner, check out this list of answers to 10 frequently asked questions about leftovers.

1. **How long before I need to refrigerate my leftovers?** Within two hours of purchase or preparation. Be extra careful about getting meat and dairy products into the fridge promptly.
2. **How long can I keep refrigerated leftovers?** About three to five days.
3. **How do I store leftovers?** Store in airtight shallow (1-to 2-inch deep) containers to allow adequate circulation of cool air.
4. **How long can I keep cooked lean meat and meat dishes?** Three to four days in the refrigerator and two to three months in the freezer. Raw beef can be stored for six months to a year in a freezer set below zero degrees F.
5. **How long can I keep cooked lean poultry and poultry dishes?** Three to four days in the refrigerator and four to six months in the freezer at below 0 degrees F. Raw poultry can be stored for nine months to a year in a freezer set below 0 degrees F.
6. **At what temperature should I keep my refrigerator?** 40 degrees F (or slightly lower)
7. **What's the best way to keep track of how long my leftovers have been in the fridge?** Label and date every container and keep the older containers toward the front of the fridge.
8. **What if I'm unsure how long my leftovers will keep?** Check them daily for signs of spoilage, such as an odd odor or color, and be on the lookout for any indication of mold.
9. **Can I taste leftovers to see if they are still**

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**fresh?** If in doubt, throw it out. Never taste a questionable leftover.

10. **What if my refrigerator is too full for everything?** Clean it out, getting rid of old leftover containers or questionable foods. Cold air needs to circulate to keep foods fresh.



## DOCTOR & PATIENT COMMUNICATION

Via: Mesa-East Valley Chapter & The Phoenix, & Des Moines, Iowa

Talk to your doctor, too many doctor visits open with a general statement about aches and pains, followed by silence as patients wait for a diagnosis. But good medical care depends upon teamwork, with physician and patient proactively talking to and listening to one another. Physicians must often be private eyes before the healing process can begin. Body language is important, a patient's posture, facial expressions, speech patterns and even clothing can provide valuable insights to what lies behind "I don't feel well." Initial reasons given for visits to the doctor are often not the entire story. A patient sometimes suffers from underlying fears which must be dealt with by a perceptive physician. If you're worried about something that appears minor on the surface may in fact be more serious, ask the question. The doctor can understand your concerns and, in many cases, help dispel them. Here are some tips that can help you improve communications with your doctor. Write down your questions on paper beforehand; use these as a guide during your appointment. Be sure that you understand your diagnosis—the recommended treatment and the prescribed medication. Don't walk out with unanswered questions. Don't hold back family and personal medical history—for whatever reasons. If you are consulting other doctors, say so; even better, have those records sent ahead. Be specific as to medications you are currently taking—better yet—take your medication

bottles with you so the physician has an accurate picture of the prescriptions and dosages. Keep a list of your medication and dosages at home. It can be invaluable in an emergency. Know what preventive tests you should get and when. Be accountable for those tests. Take the initiative in following up with your doctor. If the relationship is not working, change physicians. As with other relationships, sometimes the chemistry just is not there. Two-way communications is a very important component in total patient care.



### CRANBERRIES—FOR AND AGAINST FOR UROSTOMATES~ Via: Snohomish Co., WA S. Brevard FL & Hemet-San Jacinto, CA

**FOR**—The secret ingredient in cranberries that is pivotal in preventing urinary tract infections (UTIs) is concentrate tannins in the juice, called proanthocyanidins. In a Boston study published in the Journal of the AMA, cranberry juice was found to be effective in reducing the incidence of UTIs and the need for antibiotic treatments. This has important implications for persons with ostomies and continent diversions. Recurrent UTIs can be common in persons who catheterize frequently. These can be more evident if proper hand washing and cleaning of catheters is not done routinely. In addition, a large proportion of women over age 65 will experience at least one UTI per year. How does this special ingredient in cranberry juice work? The tannins from cranberries simply prevent E-coli bacteria, the main culprit in urinary infections, from adhering to cells that line the walls of the bladder and kidneys. The bacteria thus will “wash out” before infection can develop. Scientists in the Boston study believe that the routine addition of cranberry juice to dietary regimes in circumstances where UTIs have a high incidence, would be sensible.

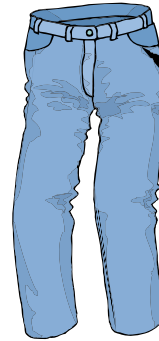
**AGAINST**—An article from the Mayo Clinic says drinking cranberry juice to prevent recurring bladder or urinary infections is an “old folk” remedy. Does it work? Maybe—but don’t count

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on it. A key to prevent bladder infection is blocking the growth of the bacteria that causes the infection. But scientists don’t know whether a realistic amount of cranberry juice can produce enough change in urine acidity to affect bacteria. The second theory is that cranberry juice keeps bacteria from “sticking” to the bladder wall where they multiply and cause infections. This theory was confirmed in the laboratory and in mice, but results vary in humans. We do know that taking 500mg of vitamin C (ascorbic acid) twice a day along with cranberry juice cause acidity of urine. Still, if you think you have a bladder infection, don’t try home remedies. See your doctor. The usual treatment is antibiotics and lots of liquids.

### BLUE JEANS & THE OSTOMATE~ Via: New

*Outlook Excerpted & Modified by the Editor*



Most ostomates can wear blue jeans just as normal people do. We have some concerns about wearing tight fitting clothes around the stomas and this is legitimate. But, if your jeans are tight around your stoma, they will also be tight around your waste.

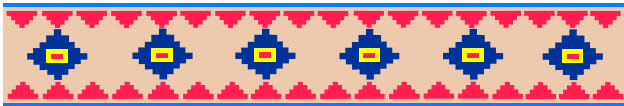
You will be more uncomfortable with pants squeezing your waist than your stoma. We have members coming to our meeting wearing jeans all the time. Most do not wear the waistband across the stoma. This might restrict to normal operation. There are many brands of blue jeans that are comfortable for a person with a stoma. Some jeans don’t have a very high rise, and the belt line hits right across the stoma. This is a problem. It is better not to wear any type of pants that have a waistband across the stoma. Khakis and most other pants have a high enough rise that this isn’t a problem. Also, some pants are pleated and allow room for expansion of the pouch as it fills—which isn’t the case with some jeans. The following is some information on brands that some of our members wear:

\* LL Beans most relaxed fit blue jeans with some elastic on the waistband, has the waistline too low and they weren’t very roomy in the midsection.

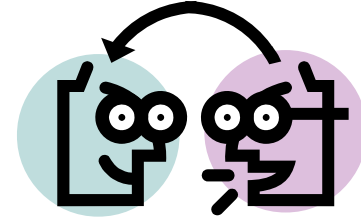
\* Try Lands’ End—they have an elastic waist

and pleated jeans. They are comfortable. You can look for them at [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com) or just call 1-800-356-4444 to order a catalog. They also have all shades of sports pants. Big and Tall men's store has options. The waistband of their jeans have a higher rise. They are comfortable and allow room for expansion. Try wearing shirts on the outside. You only need to tuck in with pleated slacks.

- \* J.C. Penney has some nice casual pants with full elastic waistband that are quite nice.
- \* Calvin Klein has high quality jeans that have a high rise and may be worn comfortably.
- \* Ralph Lauren also has quality jeans that are form fitting but have sufficient room to be comfortable to wear and yet be gentle around the stoma.
- \* Levi's and Lee have a wide variety of pants that are stylish and may flatter one's figure.
- \* Ladies may want to wear stretch jeans, and if all else fails, the good old maternity one without that cotton panel. \*Docker's makes a pleated jean that works very well with an elastic waist band. Likewise, Haggar makes an elasticized side button adjustable jean and slacks that are very comfortable and can be worn by ostomates immediately after ileostomy surgery. They can be purchased single or double pleated in almost all department stores. These suggestions are just a few based on experiences of many ostomates. Wearing clothes is very much a personal preference, just like it is to non-ostomates. Some ostomates may have issues because of the placement of their stoma or for other special reasons, but most of us do not. We wear whatever we like. If your stoma is above your waist, you will have special challenges to meet. You may also talk to your ET nurse. He/she can help. But if your stoma is lower than your belly button, like most of us, you can wear virtually any jean you want.



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### HINTS AND TIPS ~ Via: Hemet-San Jacinto, CA

- \* One cause of obstruction you don't think about is from too many "soft drinks". The gas from carbonated drinks can distend the bowel to a point that kinking can occur.
- \* The teabag is an ostomate's best friend. Tea is an anti-spasmodic and soothing to an upset stomach. It also provides fluids containing electrolytes and potassium so frequently lost from diarrhea.
- \* Gas problems can be relieved by eating several spoonfuls of yogurt or applesauce. \* \* Much air is swallowed at night while sleeping and this will result in gas. A few swallows of club soda will help to get rid of gas bubbles. You just burp them up. The manner of eating is also a factor in relieving gas problems. If you can avoid drinking while eating, the effluent will become thicker, and liquids can be ingested before and after the meal.
- \* If one can avoid greasy foods, this may serve to lessen gas problems. Also some roughage in the form of grain cereal will move food more rapidly through the digestive tract and lessen gas formation.
- \* Vitamin E and Fatty Soaps (Dove for Example) may be great for the skin but they can cause the appliance to fall off.
- \* Polident and Efferdent are very effective to soak your appliances: to deodorize, remove stains and clean. If it's good for your teeth, it is good for your appliance.
- \* Does your stomach gurgle? Try eating solid food first at meals and then drink. But be sure to get enough fluids too, so you don't become dehydrated.
- \* Eating bran muffins is a simple and delicious way for colostomies to solve a constipation problem.
- \* If stool sticks to the pouch and is hard to rinse out, spray the pouch with PAM before applying.
- \* When the lock is broken on the restroom door, a wad of folded tissue will sometimes hold it shut.

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\* Carry an extra tail closure or rubber band with you in case yours “goes down the drain”. It could prove critical to your entire program.

\* Ziploc sandwich bags are useful for disposing of used pouches and taking care of odor of used pouches.

\*Put down a few squares of toilet paper into the toilet bowl before emptying the pouch. The majority of the waste, hopefully, will be on that paper, which is then pulled away when you flush. I have also found this to be helpful when using the toilet on a plane.

\* Don't be afraid to take a shower without your appliance. Soap cannot hurt the stoma. Just rinse well.

\* After bathing with the faceplate off, hold a cold compress over the peristomal area for a few seconds to close the pores before replacing the appliance.

\* A bit of spearmint vinegar in a glass of water calms the stomach and digestive system. It also relieves gas and adds a tangy zest to iced tea.

\*A good rule to follow—if it is safe to put in your mouth, it is safe to put in your pouch. \*Try GREEN MINT MOUTHWASH as a pouch rinse.

\* Trouble with itching under the tape or Stomahesive? Mix 50% white vinegar and 50% water, apply gauze sponges and soak the skin for 5 to 10 minutes when changing your appliance. Be sure the skin is washed and rinsed well to remove the vinegar before applying the new appliance.

\* Use CERTS if nothing else is available. PEPTO-BISMOL is an effective deodorant. Take one tablet immediately after meals. Its effectiveness is lessened the longer you wait after a meal.

\* Eat parsley to eliminate odors.

\* You do not have to be a baby to discover the merits of Johnson and Johnson diaper liners. You may try them as a barrier between ostomy pouches and the skin. They come 60 to a box and cost under a dollar. (Editor's Note: I don't know how old this tip is, or if they are still available.)

\*Don't behave as if having an ostomy makes you less of a person or some freak of nature. There are lots of us and most of us are glad to be alive!

\*Build a support system of people to answer questions when you have a problem.

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\* Don't play the dangerous game of making your appliance last by over taping or putting off a change. There aren't any prizes given for the longest wear time except accidents!

\* Don't wait until you see the bottom of your supply box before ordering more. Always count on delays in shipping, holidays, etc. when calculating what is needed.

**Do you have any hints? Let me know and I will share them with our group!**

### **YOU KNOW YOU ARE LIVING IN 2009 when...**

1. You accidentally enter your PIN on the microwave.
2. You haven't played solitaire with real cards in years.
3. You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of three.
4. You e-mail the person who works at the desk next to you.
5. Your reason for not staying in touch with friends and family is that they don't have e-mail addresses.
6. You pull up in your own driveway and use your cell phone to see if anyone is home to help you carry in the groceries.
7. Every commercial on television has a web site at the bottom of the screen
8. Leaving the house without your cell phone, which you didn't even have the first 20 or 30 (or 60) years of your life, is now a cause for panic and you turn around to go and get it.
10. You get up in the morning and go on line before getting your coffee.
11. Even worse, you know exactly to whom you are going to forward this message.
12. You are too busy to notice there was no #9 on this list.
13. You actually looked (or scrolled if you first read this on the computer) back up to check that there wasn't a #9 on this list.

## **CONFIRMATION OF MEMBERSHIP**



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Ostomy Type \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason for Surgery \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Surgery \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Please consider joining the Antelope Valley Ostomy Group. To do so, please send this completed form with a check for **yearly dues** of **\$10.00** to **Gerri Godde, 6510 W. Avenue L, Lancaster, CA 93536**. Make checks payable to AV Ostomy Support Group. Meetings are held every other month (January, March, May, July, September and November) on the third Sunday of the month from 2:00 to 4:00 PM.

(\*Note: See below for meeting dates.)

**For additional information contact:** Ann Wright, RN, CWOCN, CNS 269-9509 or e-mail: atw@antelecom.net

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### **Where do your dues go?**

- Postage for newsletters and other mailings
- Support for the Youth Rally
- Annual dues to affiliate with the UOAA
- Off-set expenses for social gatherings
- Support to Friends of Ostomates Worldwide

**PLEASE help support us by paying your dues!!!**

**Newsletters are now available on-line! If you would like to receive your newsletter via e-mail please let me know. This could help save some postage as well as ensuring you are receiving your newsletter delivered directly to your computer!**

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**MARCH Meeting: Tami Host from Coloplast will be guest speaker...Join us March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 2:00 PM**

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Meeting location: Antelope Valley Home Care – 44335 Lowtree Ave. Lancaster  
Directions: From J and 15<sup>th</sup> St. West take Ave. J east one block to Lowtree. Turn right on Lowtree into the business park, then the first driveway, take a right. Look for the address on the door.

### **UPCOMING MEETING DATES**

( Tentative) Sunday, May 3, 2009 (First Sunday of the month this month only!)  
2:00 – 4:00 PM

Sunday July 19, 2009 (Third Sunday)