
Antelope Valley Ostomy News

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

November greetings, everyone! I hope you are all doing well. As the season changes, it is now time to get ready for the "H" – word...yes, the *holiday* season is soon upon us, and we have some important dates for you to put on your calendars.

November 18th (Saturday) You are cordially invited to attend a party in honor of our friend Augusta May who will be celebrating her 65th birthday. Augusta is traveling back to Lancaster from Stockton for this special occasion. Augusta invites all her special Ostomy support group friends, (old and new) to join us in the celebration! This potluck get-together will be in lieu of our regular meeting Sunday, Nov. 19th. The gathering will be held at the clubhouse at the Hacienda Mobile Home Park, 2330 E. Ave. J-8 in Lancaster. The party starts at 2:00 PM. Directions are attached.

November 19th (Sunday) - NO REGULAR SUPPORT GROUP MEETING THIS MONTH! We will reconvene at our regular support group meeting on the third Sunday of January, from 2-4 PM at the Senior Center in Lancaster.

December 9th (Saturday)

Annual Christmas Party! Mark your calendars now for the event of the season! Our AV Ostomy Group Christmas party will be held at the Hacienda Mobile Home Park club house (thank you again, Marty and Gerry Anderson for arranging the party room and decorations!) We will choose a charity to support, and have a potluck feast! Don't miss it! (4:00 PM to 7 or 8PM)

January 21st (Sunday), 2007!

Happy New Year – We will have our regular AV Ostomy Support group meeting at 2PM in the meeting room at the Senior Center, Lancaster. Newsletter and announcement will be sent later.

So!! We have lots going on. I would like to encourage any newcomers to feel welcome to join us for our get-together November 18th. It will be lots of fun! For more information, please call Ann at 661-269-9509. See you soon!

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Via: The Innermost News, Monterey City & the G.B. News Review

Your ultimate goal is to take personal charge and live a happier life—despite having ostomy surgery. Here are a few strategies that can help you to better handle your ostomy and improve your overall health, happiness and productivity. Be a person, not a patient. Make this the foundation of your thinking. You are a person who has had ostomy surgery, not an ill person. The only time you are a patient is when you're in the doctor's office or in the hospital. The way you see yourself living with an ostomy is an essential part of coping successfully. Understand the unique way that your ostomy affects you and your life - Identify the ways that your ostomy causes problems for you. You'll want to identify them and then determine how you're going to deal with them.

Set overall goals for improving your life: Improve your ability to adapt to your situation. Improve your coping style. Set reasonable, realistic, achievable goals. Aim to regain control of your life. Do things that you like and spend less time with things you dislike. Enhance positive relationships. Improve participation in your social network. Improve your life satisfaction and quality of life.

Pinpoint what you need to help improve your life. Think about all the difficulties that you are having living with your ostomy. Write these down on the left side of a folded piece of paper. On the right side next to each item, write down things you can do to improve each one. Note as many alternatives as you can. Ask others for additional ideas, especially if you're not sure what to do about certain things. Keep adding to your list and plan how you will use

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these ideas to improve your life.

Anticipate the negative. There are negative things that can happen during your life with an ostomy (leakage, skin irritation, depression, fear, sexual concerns) but some of these could also happen if you didn't have an ostomy. The more you anticipate and prepare—the better you will cope.

CONTINUE YOUR SOCIAL LIFE WITH AN OSTOMY

Via: The Pouch, N. Virginia & GB News Review

Your social life can be as active as it was before surgery. You can enjoy all activities: meeting people, attending concerts, sporting events, civic and social club meetings, parties, religious occasions, or whatever you enjoyed before. The first time you go out of the house after surgery, you may feel as if everyone is staring at your appliance, even though it is not visible under your clothing. You can feel your appliance on your body, but no one can see it. Keep these questions in mind: Did you know what an ostomy was or where a stoma was located or what it looked like before you had surgery? For those with colostomies or ileostomies, you may also worry about your pouch filling with gas and sticking out under your clothing. A quick trip to the restroom can take care of this problem. If you are worried about your pouch filling up immediately after eating at a social event, remember, people without ostomies often need to go to the restroom after eating, and nobody will think it is unusual if you do the same. You probably will find that you need to empty your pouch less often than you need to urinate. You may be wondering about your relationships with others. Now that you have an ostomy, you may feel that it will change your present relationships and decrease new opportunities for friendship and love. True friendships and deep relationships on any

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level are built on trust and mutual understanding. These qualities depend on you and other persons. You have the same qualities you had before surgery, and your ability to develop friendships is unchanged. If you care about yourself, others will feel your strength and will not be deterred. If your ostomy does cause a break in friendship, a relationship, or even marriage, this relationship was not built on trust and mutual respect and probably would have crumbled some time in the future anyway.

“WORD PLAY” ~*Oliver Goldsmith (Sincere apologies to Mr. Webster!)*

1. **Coffee** (n.), a person who is coughed upon.
2. **Flabbergasted** (adj.), appalled over how much weight you have gained.
3. **Abdicate** (v.), to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
4. **Esplanade** (v.), to attempt an explanation while drunk.
5. **Willy-nilly** (adj.), impotent.
6. **Negligent** (adj.), describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightie.
7. **Lymph** (v.), to walk with a lisp.
8. **Gargoyle** (n.), an olive flavored mouthwash.
9. **Flatulence** (n.) the emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller.
10. **Balderdash** (n.), a rapidly receding hairline.
11. **Testicle** (n.), a humorous question on an exam.
12. **Rectitude** (n.), the formal, dignified

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demeanor assumed by a proctologist immediately before he examines you.

13. **Oyster** (n.), a person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddish expressions.

14. **Circumvent** (n.), the opening in the front of boxer shorts.

15. **Frisbeetarianism** (n.), The belief that, when you die, your soul goes up on the roof and gets stuck there.

16. **Pokemon** (n), A Jamaican proctologist.

A “SOFT TOUCH” ALL WINTER

Via: Los Ileos News & Hemet– San Jacinto, CA

Winter skin problems can occur whether you are indoors or out, male or female, young or older. Here is some advice from several prominent dermatologists.

* The dry skin syndrome affects only the top layer of skin, the stratum corneum. It is as thin as tissue paper and it is composed of flattened dead cells manufactured in the layer below. Water and body oil move from the live skin to the outer layer. The oil keeps the water from evaporating quickly and it is the water that makes skin moist.

* Moist or dry skin is due, in large part to heredity. The trick is to alter the environmental elements that trigger dry skin. Oddly enough, winter skin problems begin indoors. The heated air absorbs moisture, and draws it from every available source. The skin is a natural target. Here are some easy to follow hints to make life better for your skin.

1. Turn down the heat in your home.
2. Feed moisture into your home so humidity can protect your skin. If you have central heating, you can add a humidifying unit, or you can buy an inexpensive humidifier for your rooms. They are very helpful in bedrooms and can keep you from having puffy eyelids and dry throats.
3. Substitute a quick shower, or at least a short warm bath for a long hot soak in the tub. Take it easy with the bath soap in the winter. A luxurious lather feels good to the

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touch but is bad for your skin because it washes away the skin's own protective oils.

4. Apply a moisturizer to the skin right after the bath or shower. (Ostomates, omit the cream on the abdominal area.) Pick a product you really like and use it faithfully. The only part of the skin that dries out is the top layer, no matter what manufacturers say. Of course, you know to drink enough water.

5. Invest in a good pair of rubber gloves and use them for those cleaning agent and solvent jobs. Wear gloves when outdoors. If your hands are extremely dry, sleep in cotton gloves after putting on cream.

6. Avoid too tight clothing. They rub against dry winter skin; it itches, you scratch, the cycle goes on.

7. There are two other winter skin problems: frostbite and winter sunburn. With frostbite, warm the area with blankets, a bare hand or room temperature water; never with snow or vigorous rubbing. Always wear sunscreen when venturing outdoors. Have a happy comfortable winter.

Editors note: I remember reading somewhere that itching dry skin can be helped by putting some oatmeal in a small cloth sack and let it stand in your bath water. It seems to relieve the itching.

POINTERS FOR THE NEW OSTOMATE

Via: Big Sky Informer & Hemet-San Jacinto, CA

* There is no answer for "Why me?" but it is normal to ask the question and you do need to work through the answer to this.

* Each person's ostomy is different, even as our fingerprints are different.

* Support and information received from someone who has an ostomy can be helpful. Ask your doctor or ET nurse to arrange an ostomy visitor.

* It is your ostomy; learn to manage it and don't let your ostomy manage you. In the beginning, it is normal for your ostomy care to be the center of your existence; however, with time and practice your ostomy and its

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care will become just a normal part of your life.

* Basic management skills can be learned, new experiences;

* Any problems that develop must be met and managed as they occur. With time and experience you will become comfortable with your ostomy care.

* You are alive! You will get better and stronger. Give yourself time to get over ostomy surgery and to adjust to this body change and adapt to your ostomy.

THE FUNGUS AMONG US!

By Kathy Dahn, RN, Riverside HealthCare Via: Kankakee Ostomy Association

My patients frequently tell me how good it feels when I remove the ostomy appliance and bathe the skin around the stoma with warm soapy water. A bit of itchiness at that point is normal. What is not normal is to have severe itching under the appliance while you are still wearing it. There can be several reasons for this but one of the most common is a fungal infection. This is not a cause for panic!! Many people worry that having a fungal infection indicates they are not clean and that is simply not the case. Fungus thrives where it is warm and dark and moist—a great description of the environment under an ostomy appliance! The peristomal skin (the skin around the stoma) will usually be a "hot pink" or strawberry-red when a fungal infection is present. The skin may be intact or there may be places where the top layer of skin is missing, leaving an open wound which is red and moist (and tender). The fungal infection can be treated in different ways with the main difference being the use of a powder versus a

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cream product. Regardless of whether you use a powder or a cream, your appliance will probably not adhere for as long a period of time as you are used to, so beware! (My sixth grade teacher used to say, "Fore-warned is fore-armed", so consider yourself warned!) Nystatin (Mycostatin) powder is a product that will combat the fungal infection. Powder is especially helpful when there are many areas which are open and moist. To use the powder, clean and dry the peristomal skin well, then apply a light "dusting" of the powder to the affected areas. You can place your appliance directly over the powder or you can apply a skin-prep over the powder to help achieve a tighter seal. Another method is to apply Lotrisone to the entire reddened area. Lotrisone is a combination product with clotrimazole to fight the fungus and betamethasone (steroid) to decrease the itching. By the time patients come to see us with a fungal infection, they are frequently so miserable with the constant itching that we elect to use the Lotrisone to give relief. At this point, I'm sure you're probably thinking....but Lotrisone is a cream and the appliance will just slip right off...and you're right! To help achieve a tighter seal, we then cover the Lotrisone with a "second skin" - Extra Thin Duoderm. Extra Thin Duoderm is just what it says it is—it is very thin and it adheres to the skin when the body heat softens the Duoderm. Skin prep can be applied over the Duoderm to increase adhesion, then the ostomy appliance can be placed in the usual fashion. The edges of the Duoderm can be secured with tape as needed. One little hint about using the Extra Thin Duoderm: if you are cutting a hole in the center to accommodate your stoma, you will need to cut the hole smaller than usual as the

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Duoderm tends to stretch somewhat when you remove the paper backing. There is no special amount of time that you will need to use the antifungal products. They can be discontinued once the peristomal skin looks and feels completely normal. If you have had your ostomy for years and never had a fungal infection before, you may wonder, why now? One reason is that our immune system becomes less efficient as we age. In addition, increased use of antibiotics not only kills the "bad germs" but wipes out our normal flora— the "good germs" that normally live in our body. Our normal flora help to keep the "bad germs" in check so when the normal flora is decreased; the fungus can take over—sort of a "when the cat is away, the mice will play" scenario. And of course, summer heat can cause moisture under the appliance through perspiration. I hope this helps to clarify some of the confusion about "the fungus among us".

Directions to Marty and Gerry's: Hacienda Mobile Home Park

2330 E. Ave. J-8
Lancaster, CA Phone: 942-1912

From Lancaster area take Ave J east to 20th St east, turn right. Turn left on J-8 and then right into the Hacienda mobile home park. The clubhouse is directly in front of entrance.

From Palmdale take 14 Freeway north to Ave. K exit, turn right. Go east on Ave K to 20th street east and turn left. Stay in right lane and turn right onto J-8. Then right into the mobile home park. The clubhouse is directly in front of the entrance. Marty and Gerry live in space # 71.