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# Antelope Valley Ostomy News

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atw@antelecom.net

<http://www.avosg.org>

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



November greetings, everyone! I appreciate the great turn-out for the September meeting! I enjoyed sharing my trip to Africa, and once again, I thank you all for the support and encouragement prior to the trip.

In this edition of the newsletter is an invitation for people with ostomies to complete an on-line (internet) survey. I have included the note from the UOAA (United Ostomy Associations of America) which provides details about the survey.

Our next meeting is coming up soon – Sunday, November 16<sup>th</sup> ! We will meet again in the conference room at AV Home Care. The directions are on the back of this newsletter. We will have a guest speaker: Tami Host from Coloplast will join us and give us some updates. I really look forward to seeing you all at the meeting!



**SUBJECT: INTERNET STUDY**

Well it is almost Halloween, but

the following most certainly is not a "trick" and could provide the members of your support group with a very nice "treat".

Please spread the word to your membership that they can participate in a paid research study about the Internet!

If they have an ostomy, or plan to have surgery, here is an opportunity for them to share their opinions about online communities and the Internet by participating in a research study being conducted by C3Life.com, a website supported by Hollister Incorporated.

Participant's opinions will be collected through one-on-one telephone interviews taken over the next two weeks. The interviews will be about 45 minutes long and will be completely confidential. Each person's comments will be combined with the comments of other interviewees and the data will be used to improve C3Life.com. No one who is interviewed will be identified in any materials or on the website.

As a way of thanking them for their participation each person interviewed will receive a \$75 Visa gift card.

To apply for the interview, cut and paste the following link into your web browser:

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=ADvFEiTV0fDQBGmqr4OxEg\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=ADvFEiTV0fDQBGmqr4OxEg_3d_3d)

Best wishes for now,

Ken Aukett, UOAA president



## Vitamin B12, Folic Acid and Potassium *~via UOAA Updates*

Did you know that there is only a small section of the intestine that absorbs vitamin B12? It is located near the point that the small and large intestine join. In the ileostomate, especially if there have been revisions, too much of the small intestine may have been used up and the area which absorbs vitamin B12 may be gone. The ileostomate can then no longer absorb vitamin B12 from food or even from supplements.

The answer to this problem is vitamin B12 shots usually 1cc, given anywhere from each week to once a month, depending how the patient feels. The "worn-out" feeling that one has occasionally can develop into a constant thing. That is a pretty good indication of vitamin deficiency.

In case of a suspected deficiency, there are three elements the doctor should check: vitamin B12, folic acid and potassium. The shortage of any one or all three can keep us down and without any pep or ambition even to do our daily chores. B12 and folic acid interact to the point that a deficiency of any one might be mistaken without complete tests for the deficiency of the other. Each of us needs both to make the other one work right.

There is no danger of taking too much vitamin B12; the body throws off what it does not need. Folic acid should not be taken in large doses. Studies are not really complete, but it seems that the most a person should take is 0.4 milligrams per day. Potassium in natural foods cannot be overdone. The greatest source is bananas, with orange juice also being very good.

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However, if you have a shortage of potassium, which can also lead to a run-down feeling, you probably cannot get enough from foods without gaining weight.

An ileostomate who cannot absorb enough vitamin B12 from food or from pills, must take shots. Folic acid and potassium can usually be absorbed in pill form, but the ileostomate should watch that the pills are not going through the digestive tract whole, without being absorbed by the body. If an ileostomate feels tired all the time, he/she should consult his/her physician.



## ODOR PROOF OR ODOR RESISTANT ~ *V. Alterescu, RN ET Metro MD*

Many pouches are touted as being odor proof. What does this mean? I certainly have detected odor through many an odor-proof pouch, and, I have concluded that all pouches will allow some odor to permeate through them, over time. The important issue here is time. Certain pouches were just not designed to be worn for very long. The newer two-piece set-ups that are incredibly expensive, and ever popular, allow a person to change a pouch frequently while leaving the adhesive barrier on the skin. On the other hand, many other types of pouches will be odor-resistant for longer than the two-piece system. If it were up to me, no pouch would be called odor-proof. They are all odor-resistant. But they can only resist for so long. There are essentially three ways that odor can permeate an ostomy pouch. First, the pouch could be leaking, a seam could split or the adhesive seal might not be intact. This would result in odor. Second, the

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pouch could actually be permeated with odor from the stool. Third, the tail of the pouch may not be clean. Setting the first reason aside, let me concentrate on permeation of odor through the material. Most pouches will be odor resistant for one day. After that, there is a whole realm of pouch materials that will begin to exude odor. Rubber and vinyl pouches are less odor resistant than saran lined pouches. This could in part be the reason your pouch is not odor-resistant for longer. Rinsing a pouch out is primarily a waste of time. For one thing, it takes longer to empty the pouch and you need more materials around you. The water, especially, if it is warm, will open the pores of the pouch and, last, rinsing can affect the seal. The interior of your pouch may be clean, but it does not serve a functional purpose. Frankly, it does not matter if the interior of your pouch is clean any more than it matters if the interior of your colon is clean. The most important portion of the pouch that should be cleansed very thoroughly is the tip of the drainable pouch. Rinsing the interior may actually increase odor permeation. Cleaning the tail will avoid any odor that may occur as a result of having any fecal residue on the tail of the pouch. Therefore, I often recommend that a person carry one of those little alcohol wipes (that are individually wrapped in foil) to clean the tail of the pouch.

#### **Reducing Your Risk of Pneumonia ~**

*UOAA Update 10/08*

Although certain organisms are more contagious than others, it is unusual to “catch” pneumonia from someone else. You usually develop pneumonia because your own immunity is weakened.

To fortify your natural resistance to pneumonia: get vaccinated. Because pneumonia can be a complication of the flu, getting a yearly flu shot is a good way to

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prevent pneumonia. In addition, get a vaccination against pneumococcal pneumonia at least once after age 65 or if your doctor recommends it sooner due to your condition.

Wash your hands. Your hands come in daily contact with germs that can cause pneumonia. Wash your hands frequently to decrease your exposure.

Do not smoke. Smoking damages your lungs’ natural defenses against respiratory infections.

Take care of yourself. Proper rest, diet and moderate exercise can help keep your immune system strong.

Although most cases of pneumonia do not prove fatal, you do not want to mistake pneumonia for a cold or flu and leave it untreated.

#### **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS** *Via: Kitnap County Ostomy Association*

**Q:** *My Stoma tends to bleed quite a bit when I change my appliance Is this okay?*

**A:** Your stoma is very vascular, which means that there are many tiny blood vessels at the surface. Therefore, it is expected that it may bleed slightly when touched. However, the bleeding should stop right away. (This is similar to when you brush your teeth and your gums sometimes bleed.) Your stoma should not, however, bleed drops of blood or have clots (clumps of old blood) on it. If this happens, you can apply gentle pressure and an ice pack and you should expect to see the bleeding stop within five minutes. There are a number of reasons that may cause your stoma to bleed. First, inspect your stoma carefully with the mirror. Check to see if there is a raw area from your appliance rubbing on the stoma. Stoma bleeding can also occur if the stoma is rubbed too hard. So when cleaning the mucous and stool from your

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stoma, gently wipe it away and avoid rubbing. The medications that you take can sometimes cause bleeding. Heparin and Coumadin are two medications which thin blood and prevent clots. Some pain relievers, such as Motrin and aspirin, can also thin blood. If bleeding continues to be a problem, please contact your doctor and ET nurse.

**Q:** *Can you cause any damage to the Stoma by sleeping on it?*

**A:** It has not been my experience that patients with an ostomy have damaged their stoma by sleeping on their stomach. If you have concerns about this, you could put a small pillow or cushion under your hip to raise it up enough to release any direct pressure that may occur.

**Q:** *How do I know if Irrigation is right for me?*

**A:** Irrigation is a procedure that some colostomates can use to cleanse their colon, making it unnecessary to wear an appliance. Only a select group of people is able to irrigate. To find out if you are a possible candidate, answer the following questions: 1. What type of colostomy do you have? You must have either a sigmoid or an end colostomy so that your stools are less frequent and firmer. Although I have seen a very motivated person with a transverse colostomy irrigate successfully, this is not usually recommended. 2. Do you have a normal bowel pattern through your colostomy? If you are a person who has a large bowel movement once or twice daily through your stoma on a regular basis, you may be an excellent candidate to irrigate. 3. Are you determined to learn to Irrigate? Irrigation takes a lot of motivation and patience to work. You will need to spend approximately an hour every day at the same time training your bowels to irrigate. It may take days to weeks before you finally see results and are able to wear a stoma cap instead of your pouch. 4. What is the

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reason that you have a colostomy? Some disease processes can cause weaknesses or fistulas in the bowel, making irrigation dangerous. These conditions include Crohn's disease, Diverticulitis, and recurrent cancer. If you've answered the above questions and feel that you may be able to irrigate, contact your doctor and ET nurse and they will be able to help teach you how to irrigate successfully.

**Q:** What exactly is a CONVEX wafer?

**A:** A convex wafer has a back surface that curves in toward the abdomen; it appears slightly cup-shaped vs. flat. They are used to improve wear time, reduce leakage problems and prevent irritated peristomal skin, when indicated. Examples of the need for a convex wafer would include retracted stomas, a soft abdomen, stomas in creases or folds, or even a history of frequent leakage in some cases. Occasionally, a support belt is added to assist with the convexity.



### HINTS & TIPS ~ Via Evansville News

~ Rounding off the square edges of a firm wafer, or skin barrier, will decrease the chance of the belt catching on the corners.

~ Male ostomates who suffer painful collisions between the pouch tail clip and key organs, should try angling the pouch toward a pants leg instead of pointing it straight down. Wear briefs and pass the pouch through a leg opening in the brief to hold it in place.

~ To slow down stoma activity, before changing appliances, eat a tablespoon of

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creamy peanut butter beforehand or eat four or five marshmallows, fifteen minutes before changing.

~Spearmint is one of the gentler mints. 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.

~ Stretch away tensions. When a headache begins, STRETCH. It helps ease tense necks, headaches, and lower back pain. Stretching brings needed blood to tight muscles and a feeling of well being. Stretch slowly, hold, do not bounce or strain.



### Did You Ever Wonder...

~ why women can't put on mascara with their mouth closed?

~ why "abbreviated" is such a long word?

~ why you have to click on "Start" to stop Windows 98?

~ why the man who invests all your money is called a broker?

~ why there isn't mouse-flavored cat food?

~ who tastes dog food when it has a "new & improved" flavor?

~ why they sterilize the needle for lethal injections?

~ why they don't make the whole plane out of the material used for the indestructible black box ?

~ why sheep don't shrink when it rains?

~ why they are called apartments when they are all stuck together?

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~ if con is the opposite of pro, is Congress the opposite of progress?

In case you need further proof that the human race is doomed because of stupidity, here are some actual label instructions on consumer goods:

- On a Sears hairdryer: Do not use while sleeping... (darn, and that's the only time I have to work on my hair).
- On a bag of Fritos: You could be a winner! No purchase necessary. Details inside (the shoplifter special?)
- On some Swanson frozen dinners: "Serving suggestion: Defrost." (but, it's "just" a suggestion).
- On Tesco's Tiramisu dessert (printed on bottom): "Do not turn upside down." (well...duh, a bit late, huh!)
- On Marks & Spencer Bread Pudding: "Product will be hot after heating." (...and you thought????..)
- On packaging for a Rowenta iron: "Do not iron clothes on body." (but wouldn't this save me more time?)
- On Nytol Sleep Aid: "Warning: May cause drowsiness." (and...I'm taking this because???.....)
- On Sunbury's peanuts: "Warning: contains nuts."(talk about a news flash!)
- On an American Airlines packet of nuts: "Instructions: Open packet, eat nuts." (Step 3:maybe,uh...fly Delta?)
- I don't blame the company. I blame the parents for this one:On a child' superman costume: "Wearing of this garment does not enable you to fly."
- On a Swedish chainsaw: "Do not attempt to stop chain with your hands." (..was there a lot of this happening somewhere?)