

UOA Jacksonville Chapter #211

# The Mailbag



Meetings are held at the Baptist Medical Center  
8th Floor - Meeting Room C - 3rd Sunday of each  
month 3PM

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**Please plan to join us  
Sunday Jan. 18th  
starting at 3 p.m.**

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & VISITATION COORDINATOR

I would like to thank everyone for attending the December meeting at Patti's new store. I was unable to attend because I had a knee replacement and was recovering from it. I heard that who every attended has a great time with the gift exchange and all the good food. I know everyone was very happy with Patti's new store as it tripled or even more in size. The employees love it and so will their customer's once they get use to finding the location. Again thank you for attending, I heard we had a good crowd.

We I have good news, I have speakers book up thru May. So here is the list of guest speakers for 2004:

- January 18, 2004: Hollister
- February 15, 2004 Community Hospice speaking on the 5 wishes
- March 21, 2004: Speaker, speaking on vitamins (a friend of Patti)
- April 18, 2004: (hope to get someone of Elections office)
- May 16, 2004: UOA Jeopardy by Patti and Van from Convatec

If anyone knows of any other speakers for 2004, please notify me so I can work on them.

We did get a visitation call for the month of November and that was given to Sandy Davis and Judy Jackson. I also received two calls in December, one I give to Patti and the other I am giving to Beth because it is urostomy patient. So we have received three call between November and December 2003.

Well, I look forward to seeing everyone at the January 18, 2004 meeting at Baptist Medical Center, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Function Room C. Again thank you for your attendance at the December meeting.

Sincerely,  
Brenda L. Holloway  
President, UOA Chapter 211  
Jacksonville



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## HOSPITALIZATION

### Advice for Getting the Best Hospital Care: Speak Up!

If you ever find yourself in the hospital, you'll likely have many health care workers taking care of you. While they take every precaution to make sure there are no errors made while treating you, sometimes errors can happen. By taking an active role in your care, you can make sure the care you receive is right for you.

Do your homework. Make sure that the hospital you're being treated at has experience in treating your condition. If you need help getting this information, ask your doctor.

See that health care workers wash their hands before caring for you. This is one way to prevent the spread of germs at home and infections in a hospital. Ask about services or tests. Make sure to ask what service or x-ray is being done to make sure you are getting the right test. In the example of a knee surgery, be sure that the correct knee is prepped for surgery. A tip from the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons urges their physicians to sign their initials on the site to be operated on before surgery.

Ask about what to do when you get home. Before leaving the hospital, be sure the doctor talks to you about any medicines you need to take. Make sure you know how often, what dose to take, and any side effects to expect from the medicine.

Speak up. If you have questions or concerns, be sure to ask.

Make sure your primary care provider/doctor is in charge. Having one person understanding your health condition and history allows you to get the right care, in the right place and at the right time.

Tell health care workers about yourself and your condition. You might think everyone that provides care or service to you in a doctor's office or hospital knows all about you. but they may not. Be sure to tell them.

Take family or a friend to doctor or hospital visits. Taking another person along provides another set of ears to listen when things are explained. It also gives you someone to help you or speak up for you if you can't.

More is not always better. Find out why a test or service is needed and how it will help you. It is possible you may not need it. Be sure to consult with your doctor. If you're still unsure, get a second opinion.

Be sure to always get test results. If you have a test taken, don't assume that no news is good news. Ask your doctor or nurse to explain the results of the tests.

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## WOUND MANAGEMENT

### The Perineal Wound

If you are a new ostomate and had your rectum and anus removed as part of your ostomy surgery, you will have what is called a perineal wound, the area of the perineum where the anus and rectum used to be. This area requires a great deal of care and attention and can be quite tender for a long period of time. - You may feel like you will never be able to sit comfortably again, and eating and watching TV while standing up is no fun!

The area may take a long time to heal, because it takes a long time for scar tissue to fill the opening. The amount of time can vary from two months to more than a year, depending upon the individual circumstances. This area does not usually have a good flow of blood that is necessary for quick healing!

It is very important that the outer part of the wound does not heal before the inner part, lest abscesses and fistulae may form. Fluids may accumulate in these areas, forming pockets, allowing infection to set in. Some surgeons pack the wound with gauze and leave it open to allow healing from the inside out. Other surgeons believe that the skin should be stitched together. This requires drainage tubes and the use of absorbent pads.

While you are waiting for the perineal area to heal, you may be more comfortable sitting on a soft cushion. It is not a good idea to sit on a "doughnut cushion" because it causes the skin to pull outward, putting more strain on the area and causing pain. Stretching the area can also slow down the healing.

Sitz-baths can be both soothing and helpful. Park your derriere in warm water. Not only is this pleasant, relaxing and comfortable, but it can stimulate the blood circulation for better healing. To further reduce the healing time, keep the area clean. Use a hand-held shower spray twice a day for ten minutes (or as directed by your doctor). To avoid infections, follow doctor's order to a "T."

## VISITING PROGRAM

### More Precious than Gold: The Value of an Ostomy Visitor

There are times when a person can make a difference that no one else can make... so it is with the ostomy visitor! Your value is literally beyond measure. It's like dropping a pebble into a pool. It may seem like a small thing to those of you who volunteer...yet the rippling effect is expansive. Who know how far it might go? You help someone at a time when they are very vulnerable. They in turn might be the visitors of the future.

Do you remember your ostomy visitor? Just when you thought that you couldn't possibly deal with this operation, a friendly face appeared at your hospital door (or home). This person assured you that he or she had once been the patient in the bed. They could also empathize with your aches and pains, your depression, and your fear of the future.

You can reflect back on your questions when you first had surgery. Am I still lovable? How will I ever wear clothes? Will there be an odor? Won't the pouch leak at an embarrassing moment? How well you probably remember these feelings. The visitor somehow made you feel lovable. The idea dawned that if he or she could make it, you would too.

The possibility of participating in your own ostomy care didn't seem quite so overwhelming. Perhaps you could begin learning ... one small step at a time. Yes, you might be thinking, wasn't that visit the beginning of a turning point? There was much to be done and perhaps miles to go, but that was the First Step. You are Living Proof that life goes on. You are out there doing the very thing that the new patient wonders about. You are indeed a Symbol of Hope in the midst of their pain, confusion and fear. Making a visit may seem like a small thing to you. It is like lighting a candle in the midst of darkness. It is helping them to help themselves. Your generosity of time and caring is indeed "More Precious Than Gold." If you weren't blessed with an ostomy visitor, then remember the struggle you had to find the answers to your questions before you could become one who was "More Precious Than Gold" to the person with a new ostomy.

**UOA Jacksonville Chapter is now on the Web**  
<http://www.ostomymcp.com/chapter/Jaxchapter1.htm>

### How to Get More Out of Your Doctor Visit

(Via UOA Chapter Leader Resources)

*Have you ever gone to a medical appointment only to find yourself unable to remember the details of your health history or are struggling to recall your questions to the doctor? If so, you are not alone. It can be tough explaining your symptoms or understanding your doctor's advice, especially if you are not feeling well. Medical professionals at the Lutheran General Hospital offer this advice for making the most of your doctor visits:*

**Organize a health file:** It is always useful to have the information about your past medical history on hand. Bring a detailed list of previous medical issues - for example, the dates you had surgery and what was done, medications taken and any reactions. Also bring pertinent information about your family's health history, such as incidences of heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, diabetes or other medical health concerns (make a note of age of onset, too). Keep records of immunizations. Ask your doctor for copies of your medical records and any relevant test results to keep in your personal files. Don't forget to keep a list of previous doctors' names, addresses and phone numbers (if available), too.

**Prepare for your appointment:** Plan ahead by arranging for your medical records from laboratories or previous physicians to be transferred to your doctor's office. When scheduling appointments, ask if certain days of the week are less busy. Having your appointment on a "light" day, neither you nor the doctor will feel rushed; you are more likely to cover all the issues you want to discuss.

**Bring your medication bottles:** Your doctor will want to know about the medications you are taking, their dosage and their frequency; how long you have been taking them and, possibly, to contact the prescribing physician. Having the actual bottle provides all this information. Don't forget over-the-counter remedies, vitamins and herbs you are taking. All these can impact your diagnosis and your treatment.

**Make a list of medical concerns as well as what you want from the doctor:** It's easy to feel tongue-tied, especially if it is your first visit with a new doctor. To ease some of this anxiety, write down your thoughts ahead of time. Having this information on hand will keep you from forgetting any questions you may have. A list is particularly helpful for those who have multiple health needs. It gives the doctor a complete picture of your concerns and helps prioritize issues that need to be addressed.

**Be prepared for questions about your symptoms:** Before your appointment take a few moments to really think about your condition. When did you first notice the problem? Have you had the problem before? What are your symptoms? How often do they occur? If you are in pain, would you describe it as a dull ache or a stabbing pain? What have you done for it? Does anything make it worse? Have there been changes lately in your life related to stress, medications, food or exercise? The more clearly you can define the health problems, the more likely your doctor will be able to find the best possible solution.

**Bring your personal planner with you:** At your appointment, having a calendar on hand can be helpful for many reasons: Write down when the doctor thinks you will start noticing improvements in your health condition, the dates and directions for receiving any lab test results and the date and time of your next visit. Your planner will also be useful for jotting down your doctor's advice for taking prescribed medicines or preparing for lab tests.

Editor's note: Schedule your appointment early in the day. There will be fewer patients ahead of you, i. e. possibly shorter waits, and doctor and staff won't be rushing to go to lunch or home.

*(Health Advocate, Lutheran General Hospital)*

## Ostomy Chat Room Weekly Meetings

**Yahoo Peoples with Ostomy2\*** - Mondays, 8:00 pm US Central time  
<http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/peopleswithostomy2>

**StuartOnline Ostomy Chat\*** - Tuesdays, 8:00 pm US Central time  
<http://www.stuartonline.com/chatroom.htm>

**Community Zero (Ostomy) Support\*** - Wednesdays, 9:00 pm US Eastern time  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ostomatessupport/>

**Shaz & Jason's Chat\*** - Saturdays, 8:00 pm UK time / 3:00pm US Eastern Time  
<http://www.ostomy.fsnet.co.uk/chat.html>

**Yahoo UK Ostomy Support\*** - 1st & 3rd Sundays, 8:00 pm UK time / 3:00 pm US Eastern Time  
<http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/ukostomysupport>

Use this form to join our chapter! Annual dues are **US\$25.00**. If you cannot afford to pay dues at this time, you may still be accepted as a "local-only" member.\* **You do not have to be an ostomate to be a member and/or support the work of UOA. All information on this form will be kept confidential.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone# Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work# \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Type of intestinal or urinary diversion: Colostomy \_\_, Ileostomy \_\_, Urostomy \_\_, Ileoanal Pull-thru \_\_  
 Continent Ileostomy \_\_, Continent Urostomy \_\_, None \_\_, Other \_\_

Please bill me for annual chapter dues of US\$25.00

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I cannot pay dues now and wish to be a local member only\*

You may use my name in chapter Newsletter & Directory: Yes \_\_ No \_\_

Mail to: Patti Langenbach, Treasurer, UOA Jacksonville Chapter ,  
 PO Box 10239 Jacksonville, FL 32247-0239



**United Ostomy Association , Inc**

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MEETINGS ARE HELD AT THE  
BAPTIST MEDICAL CENTER  
8TH FLOOR - MEETING ROOM C  
3RD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH  
3 P M

**UOA Jacksonville Chapter**  
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T O :

**Join us**  
**Sunday Jan.**  
**18th starting at**  
**3 PM**  
**Baptist Medical Center 8th**  
**Floor**  
**Meeting Room C**  
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