

The Mailbag

The Ostomy Support Newsletter Of Jacksonville, Florida

Support group meets the 3rd Sunday of each month 3 p.m. 4836 Victor Street

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Next chapter meeting will
be held on January 16th.
3pm, 4836 Victor Street.



Jacksonville Chapter is now a member of the United Ostomy Association of America. Please take the time and visit their Website <http://www.ostomy.org>.

Public TV Documentary Movie

UOAA entered into a contract for the publication of a five-minute ostomy public awareness movie that will appear on public TV; the National Medical Report as shown on cable; network and international TV as part of Voice of America.

This excellently produced project—coordinated by UOAA President Elect Kristin Knipp—can now be viewed on the UOAA Internet site at www.uoaa.org/uoaa_psa.shtml. One may also view the movie at <http://uoaa.wordpress.com/>.

We encourage you to send one of these links to anyone with an interest in ostomy surgery; i.e., our members, local medical professionals, family and even friends who you might want to have better understanding about our organization.

Winter Ostomy Concerns

The Greater Louisville Newsletter

For those of us who live in northern climates and have undergone ostomy surgeries, it is important to use caution when shoveling snow. Because we have had abdominal incisions, we are at higher risk than the general public and must protect ourselves from stoma injury.

Keep in mind the following safety precautions when shoveling your way through the piles of snow that await us this winter. Because we are all different, check with your doctor to see if there are weight limitations for you to push or lift. Do a little at a time and rest in between; it does not usually have to be done all at once. Pushing snow may be easier than lifting every shovelful. Hold the handle slightly to the side of your body as you push the shovel along; that way if you were to hit an uneven part of the driveway or sidewalk, the handle would not suddenly poke into your abdomen or stoma.

Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after shoveling. Shoveling is strenuous exercise. Do not hold your breath while straining to lift heavy snow, breathe through the lift. Wear boots that have good grip, not ones that may let you slip and fall. If you are not physically up to shoveling safely, hire someone to do it or ask a relative or a friend to do it for you. It is not worth injuring yourself or facing additional surgery just to get it done.

The Winter of Life

The Regina Ostomy News

You know, time has a way of moving quickly and catching you unaware of the passing years. It seems just yesterday that I was a young girl, just married and embarking on my new life with my husband. Yet in a way, it seems like eons ago, and I wonder where all the years went. I know that I lived them all, and I have glimpses of how it was back then . . . of all my hopes and dreams.

Nevertheless, here it is, the winter of my life; it catches me by surprise. How did I get here so fast? Where did the years go; where did my babies go? Where did my youth go?

I remember well seeing older people through the years and thinking that those older people were years away from me and that winter was so far off that I could not fathom it or imagine fully what it would be like. However, here it is; husband retired yesterday and he is really getting gray. He moves slower and I see an older man now. He is in much better shape than I am, but I see the great change.

Not the one I married who was dark, young and strong, but, like me, his age is beginning to show; we are now those older folks that we used to see and never thought we would become. Each day, I find that just getting a shower is a real target for the day. Taking a nap is not a treat anymore; it is mandatory. If I do not on my own free will, I just fall asleep where I sit. Now I enter into this new season of my life unprepared for all the aches and pains, the loss of strength and ability to go and do things.

At least, I know that though the winter has come, and I am not sure how long it will last. Yet I am confident that when it is over that I will enjoy the spring in the arms of my loving Father, and wait in anticipation for my loved ones to come when their winter is over too. If you are not in your winter yet, let me remind you, that it will be here faster than you think.

Whatever you would like to accomplish in your life, please do it quickly. For remember that scripture that our life is but a vapor, it vanishes away. Do what you can today, because you can never be sure whether this is your winter or not. You have no promise that you will see all the seasons of your life; live for today and say all the things that you want your loved ones to remember.

The Woman Who Changed My Life

By anonymous

I just found this site today and thought that maybe I would share my story. If this missive helps someone, that is great. It will help me just to tell my story. I had ileostomy surgery in 1995; I was a 31-year-old male. I was single when I became ill and was not dating anyone at the time. In the years after the surgery, I secluded myself from the opposite sex. I was and still

am a nice looking man; funny, good personality and all that jazz—at least that is what my mother tells me.

When I went back to work, most of the people I worked with knew about my surgery. Of course, since I was a seemingly eligible bachelor to those around me, my male friend's wives and girlfriends were always trying to fix me up with someone. This went on for about 10 years.

Most of the time, I would cordially accept the set-ups, go on a single date and then wiggle out of any addition dates with the girls. I was always afraid of having a girl learn that I had an ostomy. I feared the worst at all times . . . you know: horror, rejection or worse . . . laughter and ridicule. Finally, I put a stop to everyone trying to set me up with dates. The last five years I have been completely alone . . . safe from emotional challenges but living a pretty miserable life.

Two weeks before Thanksgiving, I met an old boy friend at a local golf course. I had not seen him in 20 years. We talked for about an hour, catching up and reliving old memories. Well, the Sunday before Thanksgiving there was a knock on my door and it is my old friend. He told me that his younger sister was coming into town and needed someone to hang around with through the holidays. She is two years younger than we are; we never actually dated in school but were very good friends.

I always thought about her in the years since high school; you know how one rethinks what might have been. I guess I thought she always had a crush on me, but I was shy and never acted upon my feelings. We went out for dinner with her brother and his wife the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, I was absolutely stunned at how beautiful she had become. We talked and laughed, just a great evening. We traded texts during the next morning and saw each other that Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening. I thought that she might just be interested in me as more than a casual friend, so I considered how to approach this whole ostomy thing.

I wanted badly to tell her about my ileostomy but was afraid she would instantly reject me . . . my ego is way too fragile. I guess I am not a very self-confident male after all. On Saturday night, I finally worked up the courage and told her everything from becoming sick, the ostomy surgery, how my life seemingly changed afterwards, how I was scared about getting close to anyone and how I led a miserable, lonely life for the past 15 years. It was as a huge weight had been lifted off me. She came and sat down next to me and told me everything was all right. She said that she sensed that something was troubling me but did not know how to bring it up. It was an emotional catharsis for me. My worst fear of having to tell someone I cared for about my surgery had passed. It was the absolute best outcome I could have hoped for happening.

She lives about seven hours away from my home by auto. Two weeks later, we met halfway at a B&B and spent a romantic weekend together. Remember, I was 46 and she was 44, we were not kids and things happened fast. During our stay, I had an accident. I felt the leak before it was serious and hurried to the bathroom to change. Unfortunately, I did not perform my normal pouching routine and early in the morning had another accident. This time, I took more care in changing my skin barrier and when I returned to bed, she was awake.

She asked if everything was fine and I explained what had happened, becoming a little choked up as I explained. When I gathered myself, I told her that she might be better off without me because of my freakishly mutated body—in retrospect this was a pathetically unmanly display of self-pity. I dressed and went out on the balcony, and then she came out to talk. She was crying and so was I—I was so ashamed. She wanted to know what the big deal was about having a leak . . . she thought it was nothing at all. The worst thing that could come out of it is doing a load of laundry. I realized that I had worked myself up for a completely stupid reason. She had the simplest answer to my problem while keeping it in the correct perspective.

The following week, I drove to her home to spend the week at her place. It is still difficult to understand the simple circumstances that led to this remarkable positive change in my life. If I did not meet her brother

again, I may have not been reacquainted with her. I realized how stupid I have been over these past 15 years. I actually thought I was living a good life. Now, I come to find out I could not have been more miserable if I had tried.

Anyone who is feeling the ridiculous way I did should take stock of their good fortune and not worry so much about things that are out of one's control. I almost declined my friend's offer to accompany his sister around for a few days. I could have gone on just as I had . . . safe, but miserable. A person just has to take a chance, extend oneself and hope things work out for the best. Even if they do not, the worst that can happen is that there is one more person who knows about ostomy surgery.

My Doctor Said I Have A Hernia

Dr. R.B. Kelleck, Great Britain, Via Snohomish Insights

The new ileostomate may find it difficult to believe that life without a colon can be completely healthy. To understand this, one needs to know what is the normal function of the colon or large bowel which has been removed. This organ is only found in land animals and its major function is to absorb water from the food residue. When animals first moved from the sea to the land they moved from a world where water was plentiful to one where it might be very scarce and they adapted to this by developing the colon as one means of avoiding dehydration. The only other substance that is absorbed from the colon is salt. All the other things we get from our food and which we need for energy and health are

absorbed from the small intestine which is unaffected by the usual operations for ulcerative colitis. People with an ileostomy get just as much food - whether carbohydrates, fats or proteins - as anyone else. The other function of the colon is to act as a reservoir for the waste products of the body until there is a convenient moment for disposing of them. This function is simply taken over by the pouch whether external or internal.



**Aug 7-11, 2011 • Third National
UOAA Conference
John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel,
Reno NV
For more information
please visit
UOAA www.ostomy.org**

Check Us Out On The Web

www.ostomymcp.cpom

IOA Today 4th Quarter 2010 Newsletter

IOA TODAY brings to you up to date **Ostomy related reports** from around the world.

<http://www.ostomyinternational.org/IOAToday/IOATodayFourthQuarter2010.pdf>

Other Websites Of Interest:
 United Ostomy Association of America: www.uoaa.org
 Your Ostomy Community Connection Center: www.c3life.com

Ostomy Chat Room Weekly Meetings

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

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

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

UOAA Chat Sundays 9pm ET / 6pm PT
<http://www.yodaa.org/chat.php>

Use this form to join our chapter! 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 __

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

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