



AFFILIATED SUPPORT GROUP

Affiliate Group #004

Clearwater Ostomy Support Group

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clearwaterostomy@gmail.com
SUPPORT LINE 727-490-9931



JUNE 2026

Next Meeting

Saturday, June 20, 2026

Support Meeting 10:30 am

Largo Public Library
120 Central Park Drive
Largo FL 33771

UPCOMING EVENTS

2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

Subject to changel

(no meetings for July or August)

September 19, 2026

October 17, 2026

Future dates and locations are still to be determined and confirmed.

the President's Message

Hi Everyone!

Summer is here! Well....don't forget rule #1—**HYDRATE, HYDRATE, and HYDRATE** some more!!!! Dehydration can be quite a problem for ostomates.

Quick Reminder—there are no meetings in July or August. We will meet on June 20th, but then we don't meet again until September 19th. If you need assistance during this time, our hotline is always available to you as is the Ostomy Clinic and Closet.

We hope you enjoy some outdoorsy things and extra time with your friends and families. This newsletter is dedicated to some of the fun Summer things you can still do—even though you have an ostomy!

Don't forget, we are meeting on June 20th...We hope to see you all there...

Blessings,

Marilyn



Our meetings are open to new ostomates, the experienced ostomates, the caregivers, the families, the healthcare workers, the support persons, the nursing students, the social workers and anyone who has a connection with ostomies and would like to join us. We welcome you all!

Also...

Welcome
New Members!



Tips & Tricks for Ostomy Patients

Managing an ostomy involves mastering pouch changes, maintaining skin health, and adapting daily routines. Essential tips include: change appliances when the pouch is 1/3 to 1/2 full, use adhesive warmers or a hair dryer on low to ensure a secure wafer seal, and empty the pouch before exercise or intimacy.

Pouch & Appliance Hacks

- ⇒ **Find the right product mix for you:** There are many ostomy products and accessories that are designed to ensure good skin health and help prevent leakage. Every stoma is unique, so you will need to determine what is best for **YOU** by working with an ostomy nurse, as well as by trial and error.
- ⇒ **The Marshmallow Trick:** Eat a few large marshmallows 20–30 minutes before changing your appliance. The gelatin helps temporarily thicken output and slows flow, making the change cleaner.
- ⇒ **Optimal Timing:** Change your pouching system first thing in the morning before you eat or drink, when stoma output is usually at its lowest.
- ⇒ **Heating the Wafer:** Warm your skin barrier (wafer) with a heating pad or hair dryer on low before applying. Body heat melts the hydrocolloid into your pores for a stronger, longer-lasting seal.
- ⇒ **Prevent Splashing:** Drop a few squares of toilet paper into the bottom of the toilet bowl before emptying your pouch to stop splashing.

Peristomal Skin Care

- ⇒ **Put a high priority on ostomy skin health:** Damaged skin around your stoma can be hard to manage because you need to place the ostomy pouching system over the irritated area. This is why being proactive with your peristomal skin health is so important.

- ⇒ **Gentle Removal:** Never rip off an old barrier. Press the skin down and gently push it away from the sticky wafer to avoid skin stripping.
- ⇒ **Prep the Area:** Clean the skin around your stoma with warm water only; avoid soaps with oils or lotions, as they can interfere with adhesive. Dry the area completely before applying the new pouch.
- ⇒ **No Skin Showing:** Ensure the barrier opening is cut to fit snugly around the stoma. No raw skin should be exposed between the stoma and the barrier to prevent irritation.

Diet, Odor & Output Control

- ⇒ **Hydration First:** Drink plenty of fluids daily (especially water and oral rehydration solutions) to prevent dehydration, which is a common risk for ostomy patients.
- ⇒ **Combat Gas & Odor:** Avoid or monitor gas-causing foods like asparagus, broccoli, fish, and carbonated beverages. Use specialized deodorizing drops or gels in your pouch to neutralize smells, not perfumes.
- ⇒ **Manage "Pancaking":** If output gets stuck at the top of the pouch (pancaking), try placing a drop of ostomy lubricant or baby oil inside the pouch to help content slide to the bottom.

Lifestyle & Clothing

- ⇒ **Secure Your Pouch:** Wear high-waisted underwear, support garments, or an ostomy wrap to keep the pouch flat against your body, especially during physical activities.
- ⇒ **Angled Application:** If the bottom of your pouch rubs against your leg or groin, try applying the baseplate at a slight, comfortable diagonal instead of straight down.



The Proper Use of Medication

by Jennifer Buckley

From avoiding the risk of interactions, to understanding and following instructions for storage and dosing the following suggestions may help to ensure safe and effective use of medications

Be familiar with the dosage instructions - including whether a drug should be taken with food, with milk or other fluids or on an empty stomach. Not following the dosage instructions can result in a medication being less effective or causing complications. It is also important to note that in most medicines recommended dosages are determined using trials with a younger population. In many instances, seniors may require a different dosage.

Familiarize yourself with circumstances under which the medicine should not be taken - including a history of allergic reactions, existing conditions, etc.

This is particularly true for the elderly who generally have a number of medical conditions which younger adults do not have.

Understand the storage instructions and follow them. Because of moisture and heat, it is sometimes best not to store medicines in the bathroom.



Be aware that there may be warnings to avoid heat, cold or sun when taking a medication. Some medications may cause great sensitivity to sunlight resulting in severe sunburn or skin eruptions which can be dangerous.

In addition, it may be necessary to avoid excessive heat or cold when taking certain prescription medications. In such cases, saunas, whirlpools and even exercise in the heat of the day should be greatly limited or avoided completely. It should be noted that seniors are particularly vulnerable to extremes of heat and cold.

Be aware of instructions about avoiding particular foods and/or alcohol. Particular foods and beverages may be off-limits when taking certain medications. Grapefruit juice, a favorite among seniors, for instance, can interact with a number of medications and render them ineffective. It is



equally important to find out if dietary supplements may be required when taking a particular drug. Some medications may deplete the body of nutrients. Consequently, a patient's diet may need to be adjusted accordingly.

Understand what possible side effects may occur and watch for them. Be particularly mindful of reactions or symptoms that should be reported to a doctor immediately. **It is important to note that medicines often affect senior citizens differently than younger adults.** What may be an innocuous reaction in a younger person may in fact be much more serious for a senior. Be vigilant about educating yourself on possible drug-related reactions and be especially vigilant about knowing which may require immediate medical attention.

Be certain to learn whether there are specific over-the-counter medications that should be used with caution or avoided altogether when taken along with prescription drugs. Too often, many may assume that over-the-counter medications are "safe" simply because they are widely available and accessible. It is not always recognized that some over-the-counter drugs may actually weaken and impede a particular prescription drug's effectiveness. Common antacids, for example, have the potential to minimize the effectiveness of a number of important drugs - in particular certain antibiotics - and the combination should be either avoided or taken only after consultation with the treating physician or a pharmacist.

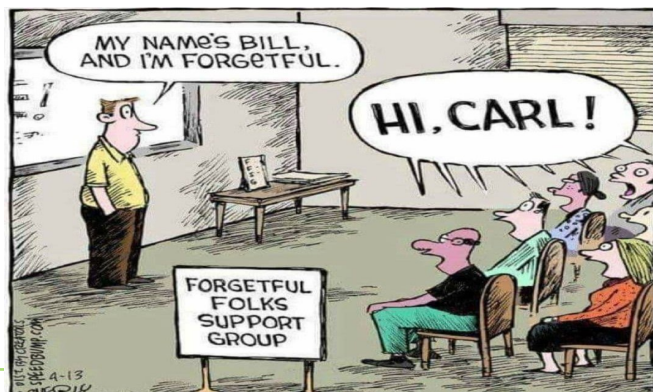
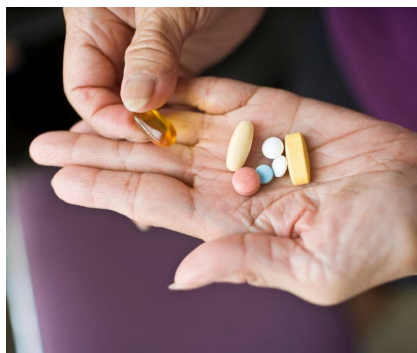
Understand the risk associated with taking any herbal supplements in conjunction with medications. Similar to over-the-counter medications, many assume that herbals are completely "safe". Using herbs to treat specific medical conditions has become increasingly widespread in the not-so-distant past. Unfortunately, many physicians and pharmacists are unaware of interac-

tions or complications that herbals can cause. **Interactions with herbals can reduce effectiveness of medications in a number of cases, but in some instances herbals can actually increase the toxicity of a medication.** Consequently, it is imperative to proceed with extreme caution and be educated about the potential for problems.

Familiarize yourself with what to do in the event of a missed dose. There are instances where simply taking the medication at the next opportunity is not recommended. Doubling of the dose to make up for a missed dose could be very dangerous. Such problems are compounded

for seniors who are taking several different drugs during the day at different dosing schedules. To avoid these problems: keep a diary.

Learn how to discontinue the use of a drug. In some instances, stopping the dosage abruptly can have severe consequences, particularly when they are used daily over a long period of time.





Less is more—Are You Using Too Many Products?

By Lauren Wolfe RN, CWOCN

Pouches, barrier rings, adhesive removers, adhesive sprays, ostomy powder, skin prep....I could keep listing products that could be used to manage your stoma. The big question is; do you need to be using all these products?

When it comes to your skin and stoma you will find that most CWOCN nurses (stoma nurses) have the philosophy that less is more. What this means is that you only need to use products that ensure you don't experience a leak and your skin remains healthy. Using many different accessories can cause confusion when you experience a problem and sometimes may even cause problems.

Problems can be skin reactions, your pouching system not adhering causing leaks or decreased wear-time. Even the simple fact that you may be complicating your change using too many added products. An appliance change that could be 5-10 minutes long is taking more than half an hour.

On another note, accessory products can be expensive and if they are not helpful to you then best not to use them. So when do we use accessory products?



Adhesive removers are designed to help remove the pouching system without causing trauma or skin tears to your skin. They also help to remove any

sticky residue that may be left on your skin after removal of your pouching system. I find that the spray works well to remove the pouching system and the wipes help to remove any leftover barrier from the skin.

Skin Preps: In the past everyone was advised to use skin preps to help keep your skin healthy and ensure the ostomy wafer/backplate/flange adheres to your skin. In recent years with the advancement of technology the barrier composition allows for the barrier to adhere directly to your skin without using Skin Prep. In fact using Skin Prep can and does decrease how well the barrier adheres to your



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skin. Skin Prep should be used when treating denuded or raw skin when using the crusting method to heal the skin.

Ostomy Powder: Similar to skin prep, ostomy powder was used for many years as part of the application process for ostomy barriers. In fact the ingredients in Ostomy powder are similar to those of the wafer/ flange, the goal being to absorb moisture. Unless your extremely sweaty I would suggest forgoing the powder and seeing how your ostomy flange adheres to your skin, you may be pleasantly surprised.



Barrier rings: These serve a very important function, they can help to fill in creases or dips and valleys in your abdominal contours or for some they can add to the wear-time allowing for less frequent changes. However sometimes as your stoma settles down post surgery it may be worth discussing with your CWOCN whether you need to use a barrier ring or not. In my experience I often use them if you have an ileostomy but for colostomy and urostomy I may try to see if we can remove them.



Ostomy Belts: ostomy belts provide added support for the pouching system at 3 and 9 o'clock i.e. on the sides. It is not uncommon for people who have a challenging stoma to need to use an ostomy belt to add more support to prevent a leak. For some it is also peace of mind



that the appliance will stay on or perhaps it helps with the weight of the pouch if it's a little too full when a bathroom is not nearby.

Barrier extenders/Adhesive tape barriers: This accessory product is new to the market and has a place for some individuals. I tend to recommend it for people who are using a smaller flange and need to increase the surface area if they are perhaps a larger person. Other uses are that it aids peace of mind when showering or swimming as it adds an area of water resistance to the edge of the flange.



For some people it's just a comfort helping to prevent a leak. However from a CWOCN's perspective, these DO NOT prevent a leak but merely camouflage a leak as leaks starts immediately around the stoma. By the time it reaches these barrier extenders your pouch has been leaking for awhile causing potential skin damage.

Showering/Bathing Tips with an Ostomy

- ✓ Bag on or bag off—your choice
- ✓ Barrier extenders for edge lift
- ✓ Avoid long hot-water streams
- ✓ Bags can get wet—made to keep water out & output in.
- ✓ Bags can get wet

No support belt shown.

Wet can be totally *normal*! Go bag on or bag off—it's just about your comfort. If you do keep it on, remember bags are *meant* to keep water out & output in.





Summertime With an Ostomy

By Amy Landrum, CWOCN

Summer is on the way. As someone who uses ostomy supplies, you may be curious about how warmer temperatures may impact your ostomy care routine. You may be wondering if you can pursue outdoor activities such as camping or swimming with a stoma. The good news is that with the right products, summer is no cause for worry and you can actively participate in outdoor activities. In this article, we will discuss some tips to make the most out of your summer as an ostomate.

Products

Make sure you've got a good ostomy appliance that gives you at least 3 days of reliable wear time. If your pouch is unreliable and leaks often, you may need a different style of product to better fit your body. An ostomy nurse can help you determine what product is best for you. Once you are in the ideal product, your pouch should hold up to most activities, including swimming and sports.

Product Storage

All ostomy products and ostomy bags should be stored in cool areas to prevent damage to the product. On hot days, the temperature inside of your car can get very high, so this is not a great place to keep extra supplies. You may also find that wipes will dry out if stored too long in the heat. Use special care and keep your ostomy supplies in a tem-

perature-controlled area to ensure longevity.

Swimming

Most ostomy skin barriers are made with a water-resistant adhesive that should hold securely to your body even if submerged in water. If your pouch fits you well and gives you 3-5 days of reliable wear time, a dip in the pool should not cause any issues. Extended wear products contain a stronger adhesive, which may be a good option for a frequent swimmer.



Hot tubs can sometimes cause issues with pouch adhesion. Prolonged immersion in hot water may cause the adhesive to loosen, resulting in a less secure seal. If you chose to get in the hot tub, you may find that changing the pouch immediately after is the best choice to avoid an unexpected leak.

Whether or not you conceal your ostomy pouch at the beach or pool is up to you. There are no rules

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against having an ostomy and swimming in a public pool. To prevent an ostomate from swimming due to their stoma is considered discrimination and illegal. If you feel more comfortable covering your pouch, there are ostomy swimsuit options available. Companies, such as Ostomy Secrets, make swimsuits, underwear, and lingerie with built-in pockets to conceal the pouch.



Using barrier extenders can be a good option if you are engaging in physical activities such as climbing, hiking, yoga, or sports. Barrier extenders are flat, flexible strips that can be used like tape along the edges of the skin barrier to help it stay in place and keep them from rolling up as you move and sweat.

Outdoor Activities

Some physically active people enjoy using a special wrap-style belt to provide additional security to the ostomy appliance. This belt contains a pocket for the ostomy bag to rest in, keeping it stable and close to the body. Companies, such as Stealth Belt, make this type of belt in both vertical and horizontal versions, so you have options on how to wear your pouch.



Sweating

Some people find they sweat more heavily in the summer, especially when engaging in outdoor activities. If you feel that sweating is causing issues with pouch wear time, consider using a product with an extended wear barrier. This has a stronger level of adhesive, which may provide a better seal in sweaty conditions.

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You may also find barrier extenders helpful, as they can be applied like tape along the edges of the barrier to prevent roll-up. If you sweat profusely, you may find that changing your ostomy bags or ostomy appliance a bit more frequently can help prevent leaks from a compromised skin barrier.



Final Words

Summertime is often the time of year when we plan activities with our friends and families and spend time outside. It is good to keep in mind that there are very few activities that are "off-limits" to people with stomas. In my practice I have known ostomates who actively hunt, fish, dive, play sports, hike, camp, mountain climb and may other activities without issue. A good rule of thumb is to be prepared – bring extra clothing and everything you need for several pouch changes. That way, if the unexpected does happen and you get a leak, you're prepared and can easily put on a new pouch and get back to living a full, active life.



Factors that Affect Pouch Wear Times

I started selling bagpipes made from colostomy bags on Amazon...Needless to say, they sound like crap.



I used to have an ileostomy, but I tell people my ileum is on the ousteum!



What's the most difficult thing for a woman with a colostomy? Finding shoes to match her bag.

When the doctor told me having a colostomy would improve my grammar, I didn't believe him. But it was true; I now use a semi-colon on a regular basis.



My grandpa has it pretty rough; he has to

use a colostomy bag and his forgetfulness can be a burden on his daily life. Every now and then he just loses his shit.

Today I learned there are some things you shouldn't slap the crap out of...one of them being, a colostomy bag.



Whenever someone farts in a room and everyone starts accusing each other, I just say, 'Don't look at me, mine's in a bag!'

What did one colostomy bag say to the other colostomy bag? I can't take this shit anymore!





The Heat is on! Hydrate with an Ostomy

Summer is one of the most highly anticipated seasons of the year. With plenty of holidays to celebrate, warm weather, and opportunities for vacations, summer is a great time to take a break and spend quality time with your friends and family. While living with an ostomy can present you with a few extra challenges, it doesn't mean that you can't enjoy your summer and all of the activities that come with it.

The colon, or large bowel, is responsible for absorbing fluids and allowing them to be reabsorbed into the body. Since ileostomates either no longer have a colon or it is no longer being used, the precious fluids are flushed from the body through the stoma.

Naturally, drinking water is advised. UOAA's new ostomy nutrition guide recommends you "Make a habit of drinking water throughout the day. At the same time, limit or avoid beverages with added sugars and artificial colors and sweeteners."

Drinking water isn't the only way you can stay hydrated. You can also adapt your diet or take supplements. One recommendation is to add more fruits, salads, and water-based vegetables like cucumbers to your summer inspired diet.

Learning to live with the chronic dehydration possibility presented to ostomates is certainly attainable. For me, since I do not have a high blood pressure issue which might preclude adding salt, it means adding it frequently at meals. Additionally, I have a handful of a salty snack before bed, such as pretzels, since nighttime muscle cramps can be very painful and

cause sleep deprivation.

Many Ostomates swear by sports drinks like Gatorade, but truthfully, although I have a bottle in the refrigerator at all times in case of fever, I find it difficult to drink. However, if presented with the option of drinking it or winding up in the Emergency Room for fluids, I will imbibe gladly! It's recommended you dilute sports drinks to reduce the sugar content as well. At some of our Support Group meetings I have heard of many different electrolyte balancing drinks and powders, so you may find one that works for you.

UOAA recommends you drink 8–10, eight-ounce glasses of water/fluid daily. If you have a urostomy this also helps prevent UTIs and keeps urine diluted. Concentrated urine also can cause odor.

It has been recommended that Ostomates drink more than simply water, since it flushes through the system and little gets absorbed before it exits through our pouch. Drink with meals, since food slows down the transport of fluids. Bring fluids with you when you are out and about, since being busy may cause us to forget the responsibility we have to stay hydrated. Lastly, in addition to feeling awful when we are dehydrated, being in that state puts a great deal of pressure on our kidneys, and can lead to kidney failure and lightheadedness, which can lead to falling.

Although this sounds ominous for summer fun, being mindful and smart will help us to relax and enjoy ourselves...after all, we have learned to grab the good and be grateful we are as healthy as we are!

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*Lots of information can be found
at the United Ostomy Association
of America website.*



UOAA's Main Website -
www.ostomy.org

UOAA Discussion Board -
www.uoaa.org/forum

Facebook: [Facebook.com/UOAA](https://www.facebook.com/UOAA)

Twitter: [Twitter.com/UOAA](https://twitter.com/UOAA)

Phoenix Ostomy Magazine:
phoenixuoaa.org

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Angels of Hope Ostomy Clinic and Closet

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The Angels of Hope Ostomy Clinic and Closet
is located in the mobile unit behind the church:

Clearview United Methodist Church
4515 38th Avenue North
St. Petersburg FL 33713

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter
for lots of great information and some
humor.



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Need Emergency Ostomy Help?

The Angels of Hope Ostomy Clinic and Closet is located in the mobile unit at the Clearview United Methodist Church at 4515 38th Ave N, St. Pete FL 33713.

The clinic/closet will only be available by appointment.

You may schedule an appointment for a consult or for supplies, please contact **Lila Watkins** at **727-744-2660** or **Karen Burdewick** at **727-667-9678**.



COSG #004

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