



AFFILIATED SUPPORT GROUP

Affiliate Group #004

Clearwater Ostomy Support Group

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



MAY 2026

Next Meeting

Saturday, May 16, 2026

Support Meeting 10:30 am

Largo Public Library
120 Central Park Drive
Largo FL 33771

UPCOMING EVENTS

2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

Subject to changel

June 20, 2026

September 19, 2026

(no meetings for July or August)

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

the President's Message

Hi Everyone!

Well....Spring is coming to an end and Summer is starting to kick into gear! Summer brings out the heat and lots of outdoorsy things to do! Just remember that it is important to **HYDRATE, HYDRATE, and HYDRATE** some more!!!!

It was great seeing the few of you that were able to make the April meeting. We are sorry about the date change, but it was unavoidable.

Quick Reminder—there are no meetings in July or August because so many of us travel during these summer months to see friends and family. We will pick up our regular meeting schedule with the September meeting on the 19th.

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 & Hints for Ostomy Odor Management

by Laura Cox, LPC

Odor management with an ostomy pouch seems to be a concern in the forefront of many people's minds. My first year at university was when I became aware of just how potent the odor was when emptying my ostomy pouch. I was living with three roommates at the time, and realized about a week after I moved into the dorm that the bathroom mysteriously became filled with candles and a scented plug in.

I was embarrassed and decided I needed to figure out a way to manage odor when emptying my ostomy pouch. After a lot of research and trial and error I found solutions that worked for me to mask or eliminate the smell.

Diet

I found that certain foods caused worse smelling stool and gas than others. The foods that are known to cause odor are:

- ◆ Fish
- ◆ Eggs
- ◆ Cheese
- ◆ Cabbage
- ◆ Brussels sprouts
- ◆ Onions
- ◆ Asparagus
- ◆ Broccoli
- ◆ Baked beans

This does not mean that you should avoid these foods altogether if you enjoy them. If you do decide to eat odor-causing foods, you can take precautionary measures such as using odor eliminating products.

Available Products

- ◆ **Odor Eliminating (Deodorizer) Drops** – These scentless drops are put right into your drainable ostomy bag after you empty. It is also useful to put the drops in when you are applying a new pouching system. I usually put in 5-8 drops each time I empty my ostomy pouch. This is a quick and easy way to eliminate odor!
- ◆ **Odor Eliminator Spray** – This deodorizing spray is similar to the deodorizer drops, except you spray it in the air. A few pumps after a bowel movement will successfully eliminate smelly odors.
- ◆ **Air Freshener** – Unlike the eliminating products, air fresheners bought at local stores mask the odor instead of eliminating it, but mini air fresheners are great to carry around just in case you don't have your drops or spray with you.
- ◆ **Tic Tacs** – Like air freshener, Tic Tacs mask odor. Some people with ostomies put one or two Tic Tacs in the bottom of their drainable bags. The mint covers a bit of the smell.
- ◆ **Poo-Pourri** – Poo-Pourri is newer on the market and is an interesting concept. You spray the product into the toilet before you go to the bathroom. An oily film forms on the top of the water and traps odor-causing particles under the water, which leaves the bathroom smelling clean.

Odor can seem like a big, embarrassing problem with an ostomy, but by limiting odor-producing foods and using products to eliminate or mask smell, odor can be more manageable!



How Ostomy Influencers are Changing the Conversation

In a world where image often dominates first impressions, living with an ostomy can feel like a deeply personal, and at times isolating, experience. But a growing number of ostomates are stepping into the spotlight, not to hide their scars, but to celebrate their strength.

From everyday advocates to bold fashion-forward influencers, ostomy awareness is gaining momentum through the power of social media. These individuals are using their platforms not only to normalize the presence of an ostomy bag, but to redefine beauty, confidence, and identity on their own terms.

By posting photos, videos, and candid reflections, influencers are showing that life after surgery isn't about hiding, it's about owning it. They highlight everything from daily routines and style tips to moments of vulnerability and triumph. And in doing so, they've created an empowering ripple effect, reminding others that having an ostomy doesn't make you less, it simply makes you continue to be real.

This movement is especially meaningful for younger ostomates, who are navigating self-image in an already complex digital world. Seeing others confidently embrace their bodies, scars and all, helps challenge the outdated stereotypes that can cling to medical devices and conditions.

What once felt like a private burden is now a public celebration of resilience. These influencers are more than content creators — they're connectors, educators, and sources of daily inspiration. Their voices help others find their own, and in the process, they are reshaping what it means to live boldly with an ostomy.

Celebrities with a stoma:

- ◆ Matthew Perry
- ◆ Fred Astaire (rumored)
- ◆ President Dwight Eisenhower
- ◆ Napoleon Bonaparte (rumored)
- ◆ Frank Sinatra
- ◆ Dick Dale
- ◆ Pope John Paul II
- ◆ Ric Flair
- ◆ Adele Roberts
- ◆ Louise Thompson
- ◆ Mollie Pearce
- ◆ Al Geiberger
- ◆ Beth Dunlavey
- ◆ Brittani Nicholl
- ◆ Fran Brown
- ◆ Blake Beckford
- ◆ Hanna Witton



This Should Perk You Up: The Surprising Health Benefits of Coffee

By Cleveland Clinic Health Essentials

A coffee can feel like the glue that's holding it all together. It turns you from zombie to human in the morning. It gives you a nice afternoon pick-me-up. And keeps you moving all those hours in between. But...deep breath - is coffee good for you?

You can exhale. Coffee, it turns out, packs some surprising health benefits.

"There aren't a lot of downsides to drinking moderate amounts of coffee and in fact, it can have positive effects on your health," says registered dietitian Devon Peart, MHSc, BASc, RD.

Is coffee good for you? Peart says that altogether, the various ingredients in coffee add up to a drink that's greater than the sum of its parts. And while how much coffee you drink and how you take it will make a difference in its health benefits, there are several ways your cup of joe can do your body good.

Caffeine's Positive Side

Coffee gets its kick from caffeine, a natural stimulant that makes you feel more energetic. Caffeine can get a bad rap, but it turns out the caffeine in coffee does more than just wake you up. It acts on your brain to improve memory, mood, reaction times and mental function. One study even says caffeine can improve endurance and performance during exercise.

Nutrients: "Coffee contains about a thousand different botanical compounds," Peart says. Scientists haven't studied all of them well, but the news so far gets two thumbs up. Coffee comes

from beans, after all. And as Peart points out, "dietitians love beans." Coffee is a source of nutrients, including B vitamins, potassium and riboflavin. Coffee beans are also rich in antioxidants, which are compounds that protect cells against damage.

But there's more to it than that, Peart says, "The latest research is showing that it's not the antioxidants per se that make coffee, in moderation, beneficial. It's actually the phenolic compounds." Phenolic compounds, or phenols, are substances found in plant foods that play a key role in your body's defense systems, protecting it from oxidative stress, as well as inflammation. "Coffee is made from beans, a plant food. Research is showing that the phenolic components in coffee provide health-promoting effects similar to those in vegetables or fruits" Peart adds.

Lowered Risk for Diabetes: Multiple studies have shown that regular coffee consumption lowers the odds of developing Type 2 diabetes. That's true for decaf, as well as the high-octane variety.

Prevent Neurologic Disease: Regular daily caffeine intake — like the kind you get from your daily cuppa — is linked to a lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, as well as Parkinson's disease.

Liver Benefits: Coffee has been shown to be a positive for your liver health. It can help protect against liver cirrhosis in people at risk of the disease, such as those with alcohol use disorder or fatty liver disease.

Lower Cancer Risk: Researchers have found that coffee drinkers have a lower risk of liver cancer and colorectal cancer — two of the leading causes of cancer deaths in the world.

Ward off Depression: That pick-me-up you get from a foamy cappuccino may not be a figment of your imagination. Several studies have found that the more coffee a person drinks, the lower their risk of depression.

Are There Risks Associated with Coffee? Coffee may be a healthy little bean, but it isn't an all-out magical one. To get more pros and fewer cons, Peart suggests following some guidelines.

Don't Go Overboard: Excessive caffeine can cause dehydration. But it's worth noting that a moderate amount of coffee isn't dehydrating, contrary to popular opinion. "At modest levels of intake, coffee is a net positive in terms of hydration, meaning it still contributes to your fluid needs," Peart states. Some people may find caffeine makes them jittery or anxious. And too much caffeine can also interfere with a good night's sleep, especially if you drink it late in the day.

Coffee can also impact blood pressure. Whether it will depend on the amount you drink and on your genetic makeup. Peart says people are genetically predisposed to be slow or fast metabolizers of caffeine, and slow metabolizers may experience negative effects, such as elevated blood pressure, even at low levels of intake. For the general population, experts recommend sticking to less than 400 milligrams of caffeine per day. An 8-ounce cup of coffee typically has 80 to 100 mg of caffeine. So, aim for about three to four cups a day, max.

Cut Back if You're Expecting: According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, it's safe for pregnant people to take in up to 200 mg of caffeine per day, or about two small cups. The jury is still out on whether higher caffeine intake poses a risk.

Skip Coffee Late in the Day: Caffeine in coffee can stay in your system for several hours after your last sip. So a late-afternoon latte or post-dinner café au lait may leave you tossing and turning at night. And sleep deprivation is nothing to mess with. To play it safe, stick to decaf in the evening.

Choose Wisely: Coffee, particularly the concoctions you get at a coffee shop, can go hand-in-hand with additions that aren't so nutritious. (Think sweet flavored syrups, sugar, whipped cream and the like). Some coffee drinks are often notorious for empty calories. And some of them are really less like coffee and more akin to coffee-flavored milkshakes. If you enjoy coffee drinks, the safest way to go is to ask for sugar-free syrups and no whip with nonfat milk. "Coffee may be healthy, but what you add to it often isn't," Peart cautions. Keep an eye on the sugar and saturated fat, especially if you're drinking multiple mugs a day.

Peart offers these suggestions to get the most health benefits from your coffee, without the additions: Aim for natural sweeteners; There are big differences in the health implications for various sweeteners. If you prefer artificial sweeteners, like sucralose (Splenda®) saccharin (Sweet'N Low®) and aspartame (Equal®, NutraSweet®), Peart suggests slowly weaning yourself from them and opting for more natural sugars.

"Over time, research shows that artificial sweeteners can train your brain to want very sweet things," she continues. "So, it can be a tough transition to make, but it can be a major win for your health to let go of artificial sweeteners." If you take your coffee with regular sugar but want to avoid unnecessary calories, try switching to a small amount of honey, agave or even Stevia™. Stevia comes from a leaf and is a slightly more natural source than a typical artificial sweetener.

Spice It Up: Spices aren't just a great way to add flavor to coffee, but they can also provide surprising health benefits. Cinnamon stabilizes blood sugar, helps improve LDL (bad) cholesterol and is a good source of vitamin K and iron. Nutmeg is a very good source of manganese. Cardamom is a good source of vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, potassium and zinc. It's also a good source of dietary fiber, iron and manganese. Cocoa powder is a good source of protein, potassium and zinc, as well as a good source of dietary fiber, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, copper and manganese. But it's also high in saturated fat, so use it sparingly. And go for the unsweetened kind.

Be Careful with Milk: You might wonder if it's really a big deal to use whole milk in your coffee if it's only a few tablespoons? Yes, it undoubtedly-

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ly matters, says Peart. "Those are empty, unnecessary calories that add up."

Let's do some math. If you used two tablespoons of whole milk in four cups of coffee per day, that's the equivalent of a half a cup of whole milk, which is 75 calories. Over a year, that would mean you're taking in an extra 27,000 calories. (For perspective, that's about how many calories most people should consume over the course of two weeks.)

If you want a healthier alternative for whitening up your coffee, try 1% or nonfat cow's milk. You can also go with low-fat soy, almond or rice milk, which are all good alternatives, but are lower in protein than cow's milk.

So, yes, go on and enjoy that morning coffee with the confidence that you're doing a good thing for your body.

Just don't go overboard!

Fun Stuff ONLY the English Language Could Have Invented!

We'll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes, but the plural of ox becomes oxen, not oxes. One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese, yet the plural of moose should never be meese. You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice, yet the plural of house is houses, not hices.

If the plural of man is always called men, then shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen? If I speak of my foot and show you my feet, and I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet? If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth, why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?

Then one may be that, and three would be those, yet hat in the plural would never be hose, and the plural of cat is cats, not cose.

Speak of a brother and also of brethren, but though we say mother, we never say methren. Then the masculine pronouns are he, his and him, but imagine the feminine: she, shis and shim!

Let's face it - English is a crazy language. there is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple.

English muffins weren't invented in England.

We take English for granted, but if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square, and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers

don't ham? Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend. If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? Sometimes I think all the folks who grew up speaking English should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane.

In what other language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? We ship by truck but send cargo by ship. We have noses that run and feet that smell. We park in a driveway and drive in a parkway.

And how can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out, and in which an alarm goes off by going on.

And, in closing, if Father is Pop, how come Mother's not Mop?





Physical Activity with an Ostomy

By Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Exercise with an ostomy can accelerate recovery, enhance balance and flexibility, boost self-confidence, increase energy, and decrease stress.

Your path to working out

Navigating an exercise plan after ostomy surgery can be a journey filled with questions and concerns. It's crucial to balance activity with safety to support your healing process.

IMPORTANT: Before beginning any exercise program, consult with your doctor. Be aware of the weakened muscles around the stoma and minimize your hernia risk.

Limitations and support

Avoid lifting over eight pounds, especially in the first six weeks after surgery.

To provide extra support, use ostomy support belts when engaging abdominal muscles.

Some physical activities you can do

Take it easy

Exercise cautiously and allow ample healing time, especially for perineal wounds.

Take a walk

Walking is a safe and effective exercise for healing and overall health. Start your on your fitness path with walking. You can do this almost immediately after surgery. Slowly increase the distance and pace over time.



Ride a bike

Biking -- a low-impact activity -- is beneficial post-surgery. If the anus is removed, expect a longer healing period before starting.



Take a swim

Water supports your weight, reducing injury risk and improving flexibility. Ensure your ostomy de-

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vice is waterproof or use products like Sure Seal. Be sure to check for any leaks damage after swimming and carry backup supplies in your gym bag.



Have a stretch and do yoga

Yoga reduces stress and improves balance, breathing, and muscle strength. Check with your doctor before beginning, as incision sites should be fully healed before starting your plan. When starting, go at your own pace.



Do team sports

Empty your pouch before playing and consider wearing tight waistbands or stoma guards for protection. Always check your stoma afterward and report damage or injuries to your doctor right away.



Stay hydrated

Stay adequately hydrated before, during, and after workouts

- * Stop exercising if you become dizzy, nauseated, or lightheaded
- * Always empty the ostomy bag pre-workout

Focus on your core first

By prioritizing abdominal exercise, you can enhance support of your stoma, reduce the risk of hernias, improve your posture and balance, and accelerate healing and recovery.

Tummy tightening breathing

Lie down, knees bent, head on a pillow. Inhale, then exhale, tightening lower abdomen for 3-5 seconds. Relax. Repeat 3-5 times, increasing tightening time as comfortable.

Pelvic tilt

Lie on your back with knees bent. Gently rock pelvis up, flattening your back. Stay in a pain-free range of motion. Your abdomen and glutes should tighten. Begin with five repetitions. Perform two to three times daily.

Hip lift or bridge

Lie on your back, knees bent. Tilt pelvis and tighten pelvic muscles. Slowly lift and lower your bottom, one vertebra at a time, like a chain necklace lifts off a table. Start with three to five times daily, aiming for 10-15 reps, gradually lifting higher.

Knee rolls

Lie on your back, knees bent, arms to the side. Slowly move knees from side to side, tightening the abdomen. Begin with five reps, two to three times daily, and gradually increase to 20. Stay within a pain-free range of motion.

Factors that Affect Pouch Wear Times

Some of the most common questions people have after ostomy surgery are about how often a pouching system should be changed. Let's look at some things that can affect the life of your pouching system, as well as some ways to increase wear time. Many variables can affect how long you can wear your skin barrier and pouch. A lot depends on the stoma type, location and type of output.

Here are few factors that will likely impact your wear time:

- * Type of stoma output – liquid, pasty or formed.



- * How much your stoma sticks out from your skin.
- * Climate, your activity level and how much you perspire — **WE HAVE VERY HUMID WEATHER.**
- * The condition of the skin around your stoma.
- * Creases, folds and wrinkles in areas around your stoma.



- * Type of skin barrier used.
- * Skin products used underneath the skin barrier.

Wear time tips

Proper fit, good skin hygiene and a regular schedule will help maximize wear time. With good ostomy care habits, you can wear your pouching system longer for greater convenience and fewer issues. Plus, you'll get the most from your ostomy supplies.

Here are a few things to consider:

- * A skin barrier is usually changed every three or four days (or about twice a week). Every person has their own routine, however, so find what works best for you.
- * Plan your pouch change for a time that works well for you. Don't wait until your pouch begins to leak or pull away from your skin.
- * If your wear time becomes unpredictable, we encourage you to contact our Angels of Hope Ostomy Clinic and Closet for help! Just contact Karen Burdewick (727-667-9678) or Lila Watkins (727-744-2660) to schedule a free appointment.
- * If you have trouble getting your skin barrier to stay in place on your skin, you may need to get some help with fitting and product selection. We encourage you to contact our Angels of Hope Ostomy Clinic and Closet for help! Just contact Karen Burdewick (727-667-9678) or Lila Watkins (727-744-2660) to schedule a free appointment.

When to Call Your Doctor

While day-to-day changes in output are common, some symptoms shouldn't be ignored.

Contact your doctor or ostomy nurse if you notice:

- * No output for six to 12 hours
- * Severe cramping or bloating
- * Nausea
- * Vomiting
- * Sudden, watery output that exceeds 2,000 mL per day
- * Signs of dehydration
- * Signs of infection
- * Signs of blood in your output
- * Black or tar-like stool
- * Changes in stoma coloring (deep red, purple, blue, or black)

In general, if something feels off, it's best to contact your doctor or our Angels of Hope Ostomy Clinic and Closet for help! Just contact Karen Burdewick (727-667-9678) or Lila Watkins (727-744-2660) to schedule a free appointment. Even if it doesn't turn out to be a cause for concern. For comfortable, confident ostomy care every day, stay aware of your body's patterns.



Does Skipping Breakfast Matter?

Answer: Meal timing is perhaps the simplest adjustment that you can make today to promote healthy weight. Many state that they just aren't hungry in the mornings or that they substitute breakfast with a light snack. Breakfast skippers may technically be consuming less calories, but the research investigating the results of this behavior is not promising:

- * Decades ago (1975), researchers showed that subjects who ate one large meal in the morning lost weight, while subjects who ate one large meal in the evening lost minimal weight (or even gained some weight)!
- * One study followed approximately 7000 individuals for about 7 years to evaluate the impact of breakfast on weight gain. While everyone universally gained weight, big breakfast eaters gained the least amount of weight.
- * Those who eat at least 1/3 of their caloric intake in the evening (the average American) are twice as likely to be obese than big breakfast eaters.
- * There is a diurnal "clock" in human adipose (fat) tissue. Simply put, fat storage is partly regulated by the day/night (light/dark) cycle!

Our brains use our environment to determine how to adjust our physiological processes. The simple version is that in the mornings, the body is preparing for a full day of work, while in the evenings the body is preparing for a fasted recovery period. Eating a full meal in the morning keeps our body's "clock" regulated to preferentially burn fat as fuel—instead of storing it.

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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)

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

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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**.



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