

BERRIEN COUNTY CANCER SERVICE

7301 RED ARROW HWY.

STEVENSVILLE, MI 49127



OSTOMY
NEWSLETTER

May - June 2008



what matters.™

Body Image and Ostomy Surgery

Via The Re-Route, Evansville, IN

Author, James P. McHugh, Ph.D.

Ostomy surgery, including newer alternate procedures, can have profound effects on the self-esteem of patients. The aspect of self-esteem most likely to be affected by such surgery is body image—the expectations we have of how our bodies will look and function, our feelings about our bodies, and our perceptions of the reactions of others to our bodies.

The emotions people with ostomy surgeries must cope with are probably extremely varied. Nevertheless, the fact is that such surgeries require changes in how fecal elimination is managed, and that something that was previously natural and automatic suddenly requires training, deliberating, planning, and, at times, explanation. As a result, elimination may come to seem unnatural and perhaps “gross”. Many people may become more self-conscious about their bodies, particularly relating to sexual partners. As a result, ostomy patients may be faced with the psychological task of changing those feelings.

It is important to emphasize that it is possible to adapt. Feelings are very susceptible to internal attitudes, moods, interpretations and values. Changing “gut reactions” is difficult work, which requires commitment, time and patience, but it can be done.

Often people try to deal with uncomfortable or irrational feelings by trying not to have them—perhaps by distracting themselves from their feelings with something else, or trying to ignore them. By itself, this doesn't work. What often works better is to practice alternative, incompatible feelings—to be proactive! For example, suppose you are feeling embarrassed about the time it takes you in the bathroom when you are out socially. Perhaps you could practice believing that you have a right to take as much time as you need! You may even want to consider the possibility that the whole ostomy experience is something your friends should know about. After all, some of them may have serious health problems some day. Your struggles, although not necessarily pleasant, involve real human issues of coping with serious illness. If that makes other people uncomfortable, remember that discomfort is often the first sign that growth is about to happen!

Each of us has our own level of tolerance for confronting our hang-ups. Challenge yourself to be more open with your insecurities, but balance that against your need to progress at your own individual rate.

Most of all be gentle with yourself!

Rumbles and Grumbles

Beaver County Cancer & Heart Assoc. Inc.

Rumbles and grumbles, growls and howls....such noises that come from the abdomen. Everyone seems to get messages from inside that are told to anyone within hearing distance.

Since it happens to everyone, you'd think we could just laugh them off or ignore them, but instead, we're embarrassed and, as ostomates, wonder if something is wrong since it seems to happen more often since our surgeries. At least, we notice it more.

These abdominal growls are officially called borborygmi (bore-bore-rig-my). If pain accompanies the noises, it could be a sign of bowel obstruction, an ulcer, or gallbladder problems. See your doctor. Usually, however, it is all sound and no fury, signifying nothing important.

Any of the following may be the cause:

You are hungry! Peristalsis goes on whether there's anything to move on or not!

You are nervous, so peristalsis is increased.

You have been drinking coffee, tea, cola or beer, which stimulate peristalsis. Since these are consumed on empty stomachs, they produce gurgles as peristalsis redoubles its movement.

You have been reading about lowering cholesterol by eating a high fiber diet, so you have added high fiber foods. Digesting fiber foods produces gas, so rumbles increase. If you wear an appliance, you will notice it quickly fills with gas and you are wearing a balloon.

You may be eating too many carbohydrates. The intestines don't digest starches and sugars as easily as proteins and fats. Culprits are often lactose (a sugar in milk), sorbitol (a sugar-free sweetener in snacks) and raffinose and stachyose (sugar in dried beans). The result is more gas gurgling about.

You have been eating too fast with your mouth open or trying to talk while you eat. Your mother always told you it was rude, but she didn't mention that you would swallow air, which causes grumbles and growls as it moves along the digestive tract. You shouldn't drink with a straw either.

Best Readers Tips

Via: ConvaTec

Sometimes the best ideas come from those who share our challenges. Here are tips from people living with an ostomy.

“I suggested to my husband that he wear women’s tube tops around his middle to cover his colostomy instead of wearing T-shirts when we are intimate. He loved the idea and wears them all the time now. It keeps his bag in place.” C.B., Gladewater, TX

For disposal, I went to the baby department of Wal-Mart and Kmart and bought a Diaper Genie and the plastic film to put in it. I also purchased scented paper sacks and dispose my ostomy pouch in the diaper sack and then into the Diaper Genie. J.L., Blue Springs, MO

I found that Saran makes a product called Quick Covers, which come in a variety of sizes. The medium size covers are excellent for covering my pouch during a bath or shower. They are elasticized and gathered, which allows them to fit tightly around my pouch.” B.G., Robinson, IL

“The briefs that I wore before my ileostomy were very impractical. Fortunately, I discovered a ‘straight leg’ cotton panty 3 years ago, and have worn them ever since. They fit close to the thigh, and cover both the pouch and the clip. I buy them one size larger to allow for shrinkage. I can’t begin to tell you how very helpful this has been.” B.H., Los Angeles, CA

To avoid a mess when draining your pouch “slightly raise the end of the pouch and use the clip to twist the end of the bag before the clip several times. Doing this basically seals the end of the pouch before the clip. Once the clip is removed, you can release the twist at the end of the pouch and proceed to empty it.” D.B., Monticello, IN

In the Test Kitchen of Life

A young woman was complaining to her father about how difficult her life had become. He said nothing, but took her to the kitchen and set three pans of water to boiling. To the first pan, he added carrots; to the second, eggs; and to the third, ground coffee. After all three had cooked, he put their contents into separate bowls and asked his daughter to cut into the eggs and carrots and smell the coffee. “What does this all mean?” she asked impatiently.

“Each food,” he said, “teaches us something about facing adversity, as represented by the boiling water.” The carrot went in hard but came out soft and weak. The eggs went in fragile but came out hardened. The coffee, however, changed the water to something better.

“Which will you be like as you face life?” he asked. Will you give up, become hard-or transform adversity into triumph? As the “chef” of your own life, what will you bring to the table?

It's In the Bag

Convatec Health & Vitality

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Colostomates:

To make inexpensive stoma covers, use Job Squad Paper Towels, which are soft, thick and feel almost like velvet. Cutting the sheets in half and folding them will make 100 stoma covers for less than \$1.00. If you need them really moisture proof, put a piece of plastic wrap between the folds.

Ileostomates:

If you have irritated skin around your stoma, you may want to use a powder with a pectin base (Stomahesive) in Karaya Power. According to Karen Schankweiler, RN, WOCN, the correct way to apply the powder is first of all to clean the skin well with water, then dry thoroughly. Dust the skin with powder, rub in well with water and brush off excess. The wafer can be applied directly over the powder when a small amount is used or you can seal it by patting a sealant over the powder and allowing it to dry. The new wafer is then applied. Powder is not used routinely, as the new barriers are designed to adhere to the skin.

Urostomates:

If you lose the small rubber washer on the drainage plug, it can be replaced with a rubber hinge that is used to tighten eyeglasses. If the washer on the urinary valve stretches, let it dry thoroughly before using. For easier cleaning of the ileal bladder pouch, you may want to try using an infant's enema syringe. The syringe has a small plastic tip, which is the perfect size for insertion into the emptying spout of the pouch.

Stress and Intestinal Gas

Stress is the cause of one of the most common gastrointestinal complaints. Flatulence occurs in people during stressful situations. While under stress, breathing is deeper and one sighs more, encouraging a greater than normal intake of air. Dr. Richter, a gastroenterologist at Massachusetts General Hospital, states that the average person belches about 14 times a day. The person with flatulence problem does not belch more often. However, they may experience the sensation of needing to belch and get little relief from doing so. Here are some ways to relieve gas.

1. Avoid heavy fatty meals, especially during stressful situations.
2. Reduce the quantity of food consumed at one sitting. Eat small low-fat meals about every three hours.
3. Avoid drinking beverages out of cans or bottles. Avoid drinking through a straw.
4. Avoid foods and beverages you personally cannot tolerate.
5. Avoid any practice that causes intake of air, such as chewing gum, smoking, blended foods that contain a lot of air.
6. Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day.
7. With the advice of your doctor and ET, experiment with foods in your diet to achieve adequate bowel regularity.
8. Avoid eating too many fiber foods in one meal. Gradually add fiber food in your diet to prevent excessive intestinal gas.
9. Avoid skipping meals, an empty bowel encourages small and gassy stool. Poor digestion can often exaggerate the symptoms associated with flatulence. Digestion enzymes aid in food assimilation and chemical digestion. Food coats the stomach and helps prevent gastric juices and acids from destroying the enzyme action.

The Ostomy Support Group will meet with the Cancer Support Group at BCCS on May 20th and June 17th.

12 Rules of Life

Via: The New Outlook

1. Never give yourself a haircut.
2. You need only two tools; WD-40 and duct tape. If it doesn't move and it should, use WD-40. If it moves and shouldn't, use tape.
3. The five most essential words for a healthy, vital relationship are "I apologize" and "you are right".
4. Everyone seems normal until you get to know them.
5. Never pass up an opportunity to pee.
6. If someone says that you are too good for them...believe them.
7. Learn to pick your battles; ask yourself, "Will this matter one year from now? How about one month? One week? One day?"
8. When you make a mistake, make amends immediately. It's easier to eat crow while it's still warm.
9. If you woke up breathing, congratulations! You have another chance!
10. Living well really is the best revenge. Being miserable because of a bad or former relationship just might mean that the other person was right about you.
11. Work is good, but it's not that important. Money is nice, but you can't take it with you. Anything we have isn't really yours. We just borrow it while we're here...even our kids.
12. And finally..Be really good to your family and friends. You never know when you are going to need them to empty your bedpan.

Time is
Too slow for those who wait
Too swift for those who fear
Too long for those who grieve
Too short for those who rejoice
But for those who love
Time is eternity

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OUR MISSION: To provide free skilled home nursing services, equipment, information and supplies at cost for cancer patients and their families in Berrien County.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION: at BCCS, we accept donations of ostomy supplies. We would be happy to give these supplies to anyone who can use them. Please have your supply numbers ready and call our Stevensville office to see if we have what you use!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP . . .

Contributions to our non-profit 501(c) (3) corporation are tax deductible.

Donations to our General Fund help to balance our current budget.

Memorial contributions are made in memory of a friend or loved one who has passed away. For memorial contributions, we need to know the name of the person being memorialized as well as the name and address of their next-of-kin so that we may send them a tribute card.

Honorary contributions are made in honor of someone yet living. For honorary contributions, we need to know the name and address of the person being honored so that we may send them a letter of recognition.

Any contribution may be mailed or brought to our Stevensville or Niles offices.

ENDOWMENT FUND

The Berrien County Cancer Service has its own Endowment Fund to ensure that we will be available for as long as needed. Donations to this fund may be mailed or brought to our Stevensville or Niles offices. We have partnered with the Berrien Community Foundation and the Michigan Gateway Community Foundation to enable donors to take full tax credit advantage from the Michigan Community Foundation Tax Credit.

To make this type of donation, please send payment directly to:

Berrien Community Foundation
2900 South State Street, Suite 2 East
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Michigan Gateway Community Foundation
111 Days Avenue
Buchanan, MI 49107

A letter to be used as a receipt and for tax purposes will be sent for all donations.

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