



# The Austi-Mate Journal

Ostomy Association of Austin Monthly Publication  
P. O. Box 143383 Austin, Texas 78714

[www.austinstomy.org](http://www.austinstomy.org)

Gethsemane Lutheran Church  
200 West Anderson Lane, Austin, Texas 78752

Monthly meetings cancelled through January 2021  
Stay safe & stay healthy

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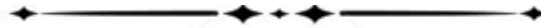
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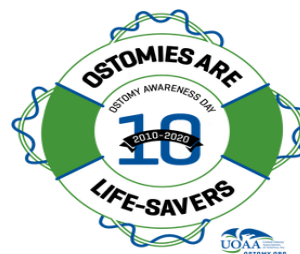
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The Ostomy Association of Austin is a volunteer based Non-Profit Health Support group dedicated to providing mutual aid and education, information and advocacy for persons and their families who have had or will have ostomy surgery. It is our vision to educate, empower and inspire through information and mutual support in all phases of life.



**We miss you!!** It's been a long time since we've been together in our monthly meeting and with the many health risks of the Covid pandemic and Governor Abbott's restrictions, our Board made the decision to cancel all gatherings until 2021. We will continue to keep you updated as we assess the health and safety of our members, ourselves, and the community.

## National Ostomy Awareness Day & World Ostomy Day Saturday, October 3, 2020



This year we are celebrating the 10th Anniversary of National Ostomy Awareness Day that began in 2010. It is held annually on the first Saturday of October. This day coincides with World Ostomy Day, a health observance where the world unites every three years to raise ostomy awareness. World Ostomy Day is sponsored by International Ostomy Association. UOAA continues to sponsor and celebrate this day in the United States annually by spreading awareness and increasing national visibility of those living with ostomies. We will carry on breaking the silence and shining a positive light on what has saved so many lives.

Join with UOAA and the entire ostomy community on Saturday, October 3, 2020 to spread the facts about life-saving ostomy surgery and stop stigmas once and for all.

Have you paid your dues?

## Ostomy Myths vs Reality: Let's Debunk These Common Ostomy Myths (edited)

Convatec Ostomy Care; Carole Marshall-Hanson, CWON, Dell Children's



After ostomy surgery, you may find helpful tips from other people living with an ostomy in online communities, support groups, forums and more. Weeding through the fact and fiction can be difficult. We asked certified ostomy nurses to outline some of the most common myths they hear to provide you with the truth about living with an ostomy. If you still have questions after reading this article, reach out to our ostomy nurses: Karen Hollis & Carol Marshall-Hanson.

**Myth:** Only use the ostomy pouching system that you were fitted with in the hospital or doctor's office.

**Fact:** In the weeks and months following ostomy surgery, you may find your stoma and body changing. You may need a different type of pouch in the same brand, a pouching system from a different brand, or just the same pouch with added ostomy accessories. You can reach out directly to your Durable Medical Equipment (DME) providing your supplies, and/or to the various ostomy brand customer service divisions (ex: Hollister, Coloplast, and Convatec are common brands).

**Myth:** All ostomy products are the same. It doesn't matter what type of pouching system you wear.

**Fact:** There are a large variety of ostomy products available to fit the needs of each person living with an ostomy.

**Myth:** Your stoma should not change size a few months after surgery.

**Fact:** In the weeks and months following ostomy surgery, your stoma may change in size and appearance. Weight gain or loss and disease processes are just some of the causes for changes in stoma characteristics. Contact your healthcare provider if you are concerned about your stoma.

**Myth:** Having skin irritation is a normal way of life with an ostomy.

**Fact:** If the skin around your stoma becomes damaged, it could be painful and lead to infection. Prevention is the key to maintaining both healthy peristomal skin and your comfort. Use of creams or ointments are almost always to be avoided as they may prevent your pouching system from properly adhering to your skin. Common solutions for peristomal skin erosion may include wafers or barrier rings containing Ceramide, use of stoma or antifungal powder sealed to the peristomal skin with non-alcohol containing skin wipes, or addition of other accessories to reduce leakage. Don't just live with skin damage around your stoma: reach out to your DME, the ostomy manufacturing companies, or your WOC Nurse for guidance on trouble-shooting your pouching or skin issues.

**Myth:** If you have an ostomy, your significant other will not love you the same way.

**Fact:** It is common to have anxiety about relationships following ostomy surgery. Be open and honest with your partner about any concerns you have. It is normal to have concerns about body image and how living with an ostomy will affect your most intimate relationships. Ostomy surgery is often a life-saving, and ultimately, a life-enhancing surgery. Resources on web sites such as [United Ostomy Association of America](#), the American Cancer Society [www.cancer.org/](http://www.cancer.org/), and the [Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America](#) can provide guidance on how to discuss your concerns with your partner.

**Myth:** Odor is a part of life when you have an ostomy.

**Fact:** All brands of pouching systems are made to contain odors; however, optional odor-reducing products are available if desired. For urinary diversions, odor may be a sign of infection. Check with your physician if you experience new or worsening odor that is unexplained.

**Myth:** Now that I have an ostomy, I am no longer able to enjoy the foods I love.

**Fact:** Right out of surgery, you may be more sensitive to foods than you will be in six months. Depending on the specifics of your surgery and the type of ostomy (not usually a concern with urinary diversions), long-term restrictions or limitations of some foods may be necessary to prevent complications. For example, persons with small bowel diversions (ileostomy, jejunostomy) are generally advised to limit or avoid foods high in non-soluble fiber as they may cause a bowel blockage. Ask your ostomy nurse and healthcare provider for guidance. If given foods are not prohibited, slowly add different foods to your diet, and pay attention to your body's response.

**Myth:** I have a colostomy or ileostomy so I shouldn't be passing anything from my rectum.

**Fact:** The colon or rectum may produce mucus even after ostomy surgery. If you have questions about your output, contact your healthcare professional.

**Myth:** I can't get my pouch or wafer wet, which means I can't enjoy water activities or bathe with my pouching system in place.

**Fact:** You can shower, go swimming, or even get in the hot tub with your pouching system in place. If using a pouch with a filter, cover the filter with the covers provided.

**Myth:** Don't shower with your ostomy system off.

**Fact:** You can shower with or without an ostomy system in place, however, warm water can make your ostomy more active. For those with bowel diversions, standing in fecal matter in the shower may have untoward effects. Before showering without your appliance, and especially in the initial post-op period, follow your healthcare provider's guidance.

**Myth:** An ostomy prevents you from wearing stylish, form-fitting clothing. People will be able to see that I have an ostomy.

**Fact:** Before you had ostomy surgery, did you notice an ostomy pouch on other people in public? Probably not. If you keep your appliance emptied when it is 1/3-1/2 full, it is unlikely to be noticed by others. You do not "have" to obtain anything special to conceal your appliance under your clothing. For a confidence boost, you can explore options on the internet such as try a wrap or special undergarment to help conceal your pouch and increase your confidence. Normal clothing, such as spandex underwear, can work just as well as "ostomy" clothing products.

## Economic Hardship and Getting Supplies Ask the Experts

Laura Cox, Ostomy Lifestyle Specialist for Shield Health



**Question:** I recently lost my job and filed for unemployment. I'm afraid that if I don't find work soon, I won't be able to afford my ostomy supplies as my copayments are very high and my ileostomy is very active and requires many pouch changes. What should I do? Are there emergency supply programs for people like me?

**Answer:** I am sorry to hear about your recent unemployment. These are certainly stressful times. I have a few thoughts about free or less expensive ostomy supplies. First, here are some free options.

### Ostomy Product Samples

Most large product manufacturing companies offer free samples of their products. You can visit websites of companies like Hollister, Coloplast, ConvaTec, Safen'Simple, and any other product manufacturer you are interested in sampling. This is not a long-time solution, but can help when you are in a pinch.

### Local UOAA Support Groups

Many local UOAA groups often have an extra supply of ostomy products for members in need. Although groups are not meeting in-person currently, you can find your local support group and the coordinator's contact information at [www.ostomy.org/support-group-finder](http://www.ostomy.org/support-group-finder). Our Group: [www.austinosstomy.org](http://www.austinosstomy.org) (page 6)

### Contact Your Care Team

Your Wound Ostomy Continence Nurse (WOCN), Colorectal Surgeon, or specialists may also have extra supplies. You can also contact your local hospital and ask to speak to a patient liaison to discuss your circumstances.

### Discounted Ostomy Supplies

United Ostomy Associations of America also put together a list of less expensive ostomy supply options. Ostogroup is an organization that provides ostomy supplies for just the price of shipping and handling. They have pouches, wafers, and accessories available. You can also find discounted ostomy supplies from companies like Parthenon Ostomy Supplies, Best Buy Medical Supplies, Vitality Medical and Stomabags.com. All of these suppliers offer an extensive variety of products, accessories and brands. Another option is to look for coupons and rebates on websites such as needymeds.org.

## Find Solutions to Problems That Can Occur with an Ostomy

Coloplast Article



Many people with an ostomy find that once their stoma has settled and they are in a normal routine, they are able to live their life with few ostomy related issues. However, as you are adjusting to life with a stoma, you may experience some problems that are quite common. We have put together a list of some common ostomy related problems and solutions so you can be well prepared if and when they occur.

**Many ostomates continue to live with stoma issues and problems unaware that there are solutions available to them.** Learning how to care for your stoma and understanding these common problems will help you to find normalcy and routine after your surgery. Access to this information will help you to take charge of your life and increase your confidence.

Before we get into the common problems and solutions, it might be helpful to mention proper cleaning and application. With proper care of your stoma and the skin around your stoma you may reduce the risk of the below problems. Proper care begins with proper application. Make sure your barrier hole fits tightly around your stoma, and that the skin is clean and dry for application. When removing your barrier, it is important to lift it gently off of your skin while using your other hand to press down on your skin. Ripping the adhesive off quickly can cause redness and irritation that can lead to other problems. To clean your stoma and the area around it, use a soft cloth or towel and warm water. Be gentle when cleaning, as aggressive rubbing or wiping can irritate the skin. It is not necessary to use soap, as soaps can leave residue and irritate the skin. When changing your pouching system, it can be helpful to use a small hand-held mirror to see all around it. If there is leakage, use the mirror to check all areas of your barrier and stoma for gaps and creases. Once you've identified the problem area, it will be easier to address.

**Leakage:** Two of the main factors of leakage problems are: how you prepare your skin before you apply your barrier, and your barrier size. You should make sure to clean and dry your skin completely before applying a new pouching system. If you are having trouble getting the area dry, an absorbing powder might be a good solution for you. If your pouch gets too heavy and tends to pull away from your skin, or if your barrier does not fit correctly, a protective seal between your stoma and the barrier can prevent leakage and seal the pouching system.

**Skin Problems:** The skin that surrounds your stoma is called peristomal skin—it should be smooth and healthy and look like the rest of your skin. If it is red or irritated, you should address the problem immediately. If you have problems with adhesive residue or are unable to get the area completely clean before application, you may want to try to use an adhesive remover.

**Odor:** New sound and smells coming from your pouching system can be embarrassing and induce anxiety. Many new pouching systems have filters to neutralize the odors caused by gasses in your pouch. What you eat can have an effect on gasses you produce. It is recommended to avoid carbonated beverages and limit high-fiber foods. If the filter in your pouch gets blocked, you may experience ballooning. Ballooning happens when air from your stoma cannot escape the bag and it fills up like a balloon. Depending on the type of system you are using, you may want to release air from it throughout the day. If the odor is strong when you are changing your pouch, you may want to try a lubricating deodorant which can help mask, the smells during a pouch change. Simply place 6-10 drops into the pouch when you change and empty it and spread it around inside the pouch by rubbing the inner sides together, avoiding the filter. This helps the output to make its way more easily to the bottom of the pouch. Should you need more assistance dealing with a problem you are having with your ostomy, consult your healthcare professional.





Many of us may be caring for our aging parents or are aging ourselves. We notice some mental & physical changes. This is a beautiful and very touching poem, in honor of the people who have touched our lives with Dementia and Alzheimer's.



## Cranky Old Man

By Dave Griffith

What do you see nurses? What do you see? What are you thinking when you're looking at me?  
A cranky old man not very wise; Uncertain of habit with faraway eyes?  
Who dribbles his food and makes no reply. When you say in a loud voice 'I do wish you'd try!'

Who seems not to notice the things that you do; and forever is losing a sock or shoe?  
Who, resisting or not, lets you do as you will, with bathing and feeding, the long day to fill?  
Is that what you're thinking? Is that what you see? Then open your eyes, nurse you're not  
looking at me!

I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still, as I do at your bidding, as I eat at your will.

I'm a small child of ten with a father and mother; Brothers and sisters who love one another.  
A young boy of Sixteen with wings on his feet, dreaming that soon now a lover he'll meet.  
A groom soon at Twenty, my heart gives a leap. Remembering the vows that I promised to keep.  
At Twenty-Five now, I have young of my own, who need me to guide and a secure happy home.  
A man of Thirty, my young now grown fast; Bound to each other with ties that should last.  
At Forty, my young sons have grown and are gone but my woman is beside me to see I don't  
mourn.  
At Fifty, once more, babies play 'round my knee; Again, we know children, my beloved and me.

Dark days are upon me, my wife is now dead. I look at the future and I shudder with dread.  
For my young are all rearing young of their own and I think of the years and the love that I've  
known.  
I'm now an old man and nature is cruel. It's jest to make old age look like a fool.  
The body, it crumbles, grace and vigor, depart. There is now a stone where I once had a heart.

But inside this old carcass, a young man still dwells and now and again my battered heart  
swells.  
I remember the joys; I remember the pain and I'm loving and living life over again.  
I think of the years, all too few gone too fast and accept the stark fact that nothing can last.

So, open your eyes, people ~ open and see. Not a cranky old man, look closer...see ME!!

### Borders:

All Ostomy types

Colostomy-related

Ileostomy-related

Urostomy related



## Yearly Anniversaries: September & October 2020

Dorothy Ruhl, 26  
Eddie Padilla, 7

Dwight Vance, 24  
Mary Meshbane, 12

### Problem-Solving Clinic CLOSED

The Ostomy Problem Solving Clinic is closed for face to face meetings until further notice.

In the meantime, if you have questions:

- Text Karen Hollis, RN, CWON, at **512-785-7448**
- Text your name, number, type of ostomy and problem.
- Karen will call you back as soon as possible.

Monthly meetings are cancelled through January 2021

**YOU** place a special mark in our world. What is your ostomy anniversary month and year? Please let us know!



Are you in need of donated supplies? We have **plenty** available! Please contact Carol Laubach, (512-339-6388) and indicate what type of ostomy you have, brand preference, size, and whether it's a one or two piece. This will help to get you the best fitting supplies possible.

We are a health support group, a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), organization of volunteers whose purpose is to provide mutual aid and education to persons who have ostomies and their families. Membership fees and donations are tax deductible.



The information contained within our newsletters is for informational purposes only and may not be applicable to everyone. **Please do not follow any medical advice in our Newsletter without first checking with your physician or Wound Ostomy Continence Nurse.**

## OAA Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Ostomy Type \_\_\_\_\_ Surgery Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Year of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Relative/Partner/Friend Name \_\_\_\_\_

I do \_\_\_\_ I do not \_\_\_\_ give permission for my name to be included in our newsletter or membership directory.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Annual Dues:

\$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Ostomate

\$15 \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse/Relative/Partner/Friend/Other

\$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Professional

Mail Application to:

Ostomy Association of Austin

P.O. Box 143383

Austin, TX 78714

**Newsletter Preference: Check one**

\_\_\_\_\_ Printed version via US mail

Membership benefits include:

- Monthly support & informational meetings
- Social events
- The Austi-Mate Bi-Monthly Newsletters



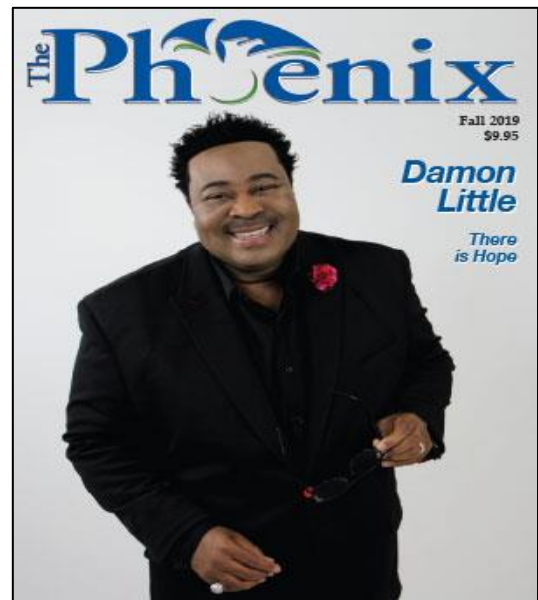
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# Find a better fit with SenSura<sup>®</sup> Mio!

*"It just fits around the stoma. I don't have to worry that I'm going to have an accident. I can be free and just enjoy life."*

Rachel\*, SenSura<sup>®</sup> Mio Convex Flip user

**Every body is different** – so your pouching system should be, too! From flat, to convex, to the **NEW** convex flip – there are options to fit every body.

There's a Mio for every body



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Heinrich Köberle, Germany



Jonathan Mendez, USA