



# The Austi-Mate Journal

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

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

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

**Next Virtual Zoom Meeting ~ Thursday, February 3rd @ 7:00 pm.**

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This Bi-monthly newsletter is  
available online at

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

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.



## Happy New Year!

A few words of wisdom as we begin 2022:

**It is not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves.**

(William Shakespeare)

**The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot.**

(Michael Altshuler)



**If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.**

(Maya Angelou)

**Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year. The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.**

(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Have you paid your dues?

## Relationships, Sex, & Intimacy with an Ostomy or IBS

By Elaine O'Rourke, Ostomy & IBD Health Mentor



When you are able to talk honestly about sex and intimacy, it will help build a healthier relationship. A chronic illness or an ostomy can bring up different issues around relationships, whether you are single or in a partnership. You may wonder when to tell a potential partner about your medical history or how to rediscover passion within your current relationship. You may need to get creative with how you are having sex and pleasuring each other.

### How to communicate effectively

This is the key to everything in life! So needless to say, it is the key when you are in a relationship. Yet, it can be so difficult to communicate effectively. Personally, I try to express, with compassion, what I am experiencing and being open to hearing their perspective. This will help open the dialogue about sex and intimacy. It is so important to get comfortable talking about your ostomy, IBD or any chronic illness with your partner. If you're not feeling sexy, desirable or if it's painful to have sex then your partner needs to know. Likewise, your partner may be having difficulty accepting your new body and feel guilty about that. Seek help if you need it. As an Ostomy/IBD Health Mentor I help people with many of the emotional issues that arise. Check out this [video clip](#) from my talk on "Intimacy" at the Girls with Guts retreat last year.

### Your partner's perspective

It can also be really difficult for your partner to witness you go through so much pain. It's important to nurture your partner too. Ask them if they have questions about your ostomy or how things work. They might be feeling nervous and afraid. By opening the conversation, you are helping them to voice how they are feeling and how they are dealing.

### Sex

The act of sex includes sexual intercourse. But this may not be possible for everybody. Or you might discover that it feels very different depending on what surgery you have. It might be painful or you may not be able to have an erection or ejaculate. (See videos on Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy and Men's Health with IBD or Ostomy). If you are in your head and worried about what your partner thinks, or if you are embarrassed or self-conscious about how you look, then it will be really hard to let go and enjoy sex. Feelings of being inhibited need to be addressed. This is an area included in my ostomy and IBD programs.

### Rekindling your relationship

Practicing patience and knowing you have to give your body time to heal. Your partner needs to know how you are feeling. If you are dating someone you need to explain to them what's going on. It'll either make or break a relationship. If sexual intercourse isn't possible then get creative with other ways of pleasuring each other through oral sex, touching, kissing, cuddling, sex toys.

### Logistics

Before sex, I always empty the pouch. I'm not taking any chances! You will feel much better about things and your partner will be grateful too. If a position doesn't work for you then you have to let your partner know. Know your boundaries. Take your time to get to know each other again, to become familiar with how your bodies work together now. Be patient with each other. And make it fun. Remember the more comfortable you are about your body, the more comfortable your partner will be. If you are having a flare up, or going through cancer treatments then chances are you are not feeling sexy at all and a cuddle is all you can handle.

### Intimacy

Intimacy requires really opening up more and letting someone see you for who you are. Being able to share your fears and worries, being vulnerable, honest and authentic.

Intimacy is different to the act of sex but when combined then it makes a really healthy relationship. Intimacy creates sensitivity. When you are intimate you become sensitive to yourself and to others.

(Continued on next page)

## When to tell someone about your ostomy or illness

Each relationship is going to be different. It may also depend on how long you've had your ostomy or illness. Personally, I wouldn't intend to tell someone on a first date that I have an ostomy but if the timing is right then I might. Most importantly, is to honor how you are feeling. It's all about what you are comfortable with. You want someone to form an opinion on your personality and not based around your ostomy or diagnosis. Sometimes, just having an ostomy has been a great way to NOT have a one-night stand! If you are having a one-night stand then tell the person beforehand. But try not to go into a feeling of rejection if they don't want to proceed. They are probably doing you a favor in that case! (See video below on Overcoming rejection with Chronic Illness or Ostomy). I've found that when I explain the events leading to my ostomy how ill I was and then there is more empathy and understanding of why I've an ostomy and all that I've endured.

## Zoom - Zoom - Zoom

By Karen Hollis & Amy Nichols



The Ostomy Association of Austin held two virtual Zoom Meetings in November & December, 2021. It was such a delight to see and connect with members we haven't seen in a long time. Several folks were able to attend who typically are not able to attend our meeting in person and this was an added benefit of virtual meetings.

Our topics included questions and answer sessions along with members' personal updates. We will continue to host Zoom virtual meetings during this Covid pandemic. Once the Covid threat is gone, we will return to in-person meetings coupled with the Zoom virtual component (hybrid) in hopes to meet everyone's needs, especially those who live far from Austin. **Our next virtual Zoom meeting is Thursday, February 3rd @ 7:00 pm. See page 6 for the Zoom link.** We hope to see you!!

You can connect to the Zoom meeting by cell phone or computer. If you have a camera and speaker attachment on your computer, we will be able to see/hear you. If you do not have a camera, but you have speakers on your computer you will still be able to listen and ask questions. If you are using your cell phone, then you will be visible on the screen for all to see your presence. Landlines will **not** connect to Zoom meetings.

In the meantime, the Problem-Solving Clinic remains virtual. Feel free to contact Karen Hollis, RN, CWON by texting your name and information to 512-785-7448. She will return your text and schedule a phone call.

To add another note: Karen has accepted donations of new/unused ostomy supplies and has LOTS of accessory products as well as a variety of Coloplast, Hollister and Convatec appliances. Carol Laubach also has donations. If you are running out of supplies, please contact us. We will be able to assist with products. Since we are not a supplier, we may not have exactly what you use, but we probably have something that will work until your shipment comes in.



◆◆◆◆◆  
In memory...we lost a very dear friend.

**James Carey Chandler Sr.**  
**March 10, 1925 - November 22, 2021**  
Read Jim's obituary [here](#)



**For all of my friends, old and new, I want you to remember that  
"I ain't never had a bad day".**

**"As I leave, I want to remind you that: Youth is not a time of life - it is a state of mind. You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; As young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; As young as your hope, as old as your despair."**



## Nurse Shares 4 Common Convex Ostomy Skin Barrier Myths

By Terri Conn, RN, CWOCN



A convex ostomy skin barrier can help prevent output leakage and skin issues. Unfortunately, some misconceptions about convexity may keep people with ostomies from using it.

A convex pouching system refers to the shape of the back of the ostomy skin barrier – the side that goes against your skin. A convex skin barrier is not flat, rather it is curved or dome shaped. Using an integrated convex skin barrier is often referred to as “adding convexity” to a pouching system. This convexity provides a gentle push on the belly, allowing the stoma to protrude up and outward. This can help output go directly into the pouch and not under the skin barrier (which can cause a leak).

Common reasons for using convexity are to prevent leakage and related skin issues, and to avoid having to change the pouching system more frequently. If your pouching routine or body weight has changed, chances are it's time to consider using a convex skin barrier.

**Below are a few myths or misconceptions about using convexity:**

### **All convexity is the same.**

Convexity should be chosen and customized based on your specific stoma and body shape. There are two main types of convexity: soft and firm. Soft convexity is flexible and conforms to your body as you move. Firm convexity is rigid and provides firm support around your stoma to help it stick out. In most cases, soft convex skin barriers are used on firmer abdomens, and firm convex skin barriers work best on softer abdomens. Someone may have a bad experience with convexity, only to learn that it was the wrong type for their stoma, body shape, or output. It's important to know that the convex skin barrier opening needs to be close to the stoma in order to help the stoma protrude. This will also help reduce the possibility of leakage.

### **A convex skin barrier is uncomfortable or even painful.**

If your convex skin barrier is causing pain or discomfort, you are not wearing the right type of convexity. Based on your needs, and with guidance from a healthcare professional, consider trying some of the many convex barrier options available and see if they make a difference. The importance of addressing leakage should outweigh the fear of trying something different. Use the health of the skin around your stoma as a barometer. If your skin looks good, and you are not leaking, you'll know you're using the right type of ostomy skin barrier for a good fit.

### **I have to wait to use convexity.**

You don't need to wait a certain amount of time before using a convex skin barrier. Each person is different. Some may need to add convexity immediately after surgery, while others may not need to add it at all. There is no concrete rule, and it depends on the type of stoma you have and how well it protrudes. If your belly is soft enough, you can start right away. Again, it's important to prevent leakage while keeping the skin around your stoma healthy, and trying convexity could help accomplish both goals.

### **If my stoma is level with my skin, I need a convex skin barrier.**

In most cases this is true, but choosing a type of convexity can depend on your stoma output. There are always exceptions and everyone has different experiences. For example, someone who has a colostomy with formed stool and regular bowel habits may not need to use convexity, even if their stoma is flush to the skin. That's because formed stool is unlikely to leak underneath the skin barrier. On the other hand, more liquid output can increase the chances of leakage.

Consider trying a convex ostomy skin barrier to see if it will help prevent leakage and skin issues, and increase your pouching system wear time (i.e., how long you can wear your skin barrier before it fails). Convex skin barriers come in both pre-cut and cut-to-fit options and are covered by most insurance plans. An ostomy nurse can help determine which type of convexity is right for you and when you should use it. For more information on skin barrier convexity and other resources, visit the [Hollister Ostomy Learning Center](#).

## Ostomy Suppliers

For those of you who have been using US Ostomy Supplies, it is now closed due to circumstances beyond their control. We have gathered a list of alternate resources. The first three have been recommended by OAA members. The next 3 are direct contacts for the manufacturers

**Byram Healthcare** <https://www.byramhealthcare.com/>  
<https://www.byramhealthcare.com/product-and-services/catalog/63103-ostomy>  
1-877-904-9726; 1-800-308-9445; accepts Medicare

**Shield Healthcare**  
<https://www.shieldhealthcare.com/>  
<https://www.shieldhealthcare.com/products/ostomy/>  
1-800-765-8775; accepts Medicare, Medicaid

**180 Medical**  
<https://www.180medical.com/>  
<https://www.180medical.com/ostomy/>  
1-877-688-2729; 281-362-5035 \*\*Sells only Convatec

While the manufacturers listed below do not sell their products directly, their websites contain a lot of useful information and may offer free samples.

**Coloplast**  
<https://www.coloplast.us/>  
<https://www.coloplast.us/products/>  
[https://www.coloplast.us/about-us/coloplast\\_samples/buy\\_coloplast\\_products/](https://www.coloplast.us/about-us/coloplast_samples/buy_coloplast_products/)  
1-888-726-7872; give your insurance information and a vendor will be identified to align with your insurance coverage.

**Convatec**  
<https://www.convatec.com/>  
<https://www.convatec.com/ostomy/>  
<https://www.convatec.com/contact-us/>  
Email: [cic@convatec.com](mailto:cic@convatec.com)  
1-800-422-8811; give your insurance information and a vendor will be identified to align with your insurance coverage.

**Hollister**  
<https://www.hollister.com/en?hl=en&geolocated=1>  
<https://www.hollister.com/en/products>  
1-888-808-7456; give your insurance information and a vendor will be identified to align with your insurance coverage.

Let us know if you have any additional suppliers to add to our list.

### Problem-Solving Clinic **CLOSED**

The Ostomy Problem Solving Clinic remains closed for in person visits during this pandemic period.

- Many folks have reached out to Karen Hollis, RN, CWON via text and have been assisted during this time.
- Text Karen at **512-785-7448** for assistance. Send a text first and include your name. Send photos if you can as that will help in identifying the problem. Phone calls and facetime visits can be set up as needed.
- Don't suffer alone if you are having issues with your ostomy.



*Yearly Anniversaries:  
January & February 2022*

Sammie Buchanan, John Duncanson,  
Lou O'Hanlon, Bob Guidry, Vernon Emken,

Who *always* has a date on Valentine's Day?

A calendar

Why are artichokes so beloved?

They're known for their hearts.

How did the two prunes confirm dinner plans?

They said it was a date.

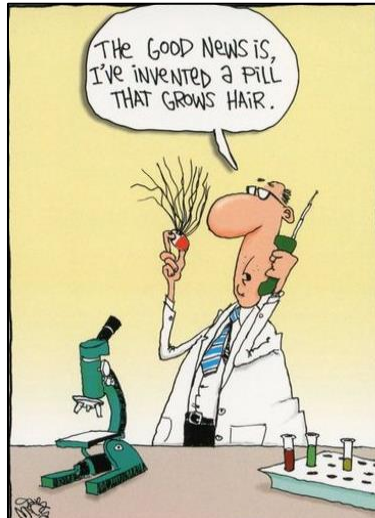


**Virtual Zoom Meetings: 7- 8 pm**  
**First Thursday of the month**

**Thursday, February 3**  
**Thursday, March 3**

**Join Zoom Meeting (click on live link)**  
 Meeting ID: 886 3266 6521  
 Passcode: Welcome!

\*Must download the [Zoom App](#) prior to joining the link



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

\_\_\_\_\_ Email notification/download to your computer via website [www.austinstomy.org](http://www.austinstomy.org)

Membership benefits include:

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



The Phoenix magazine is the official publication of the United Ostomy Associations of America. The Phoenix magazine is published quarterly - Annual subscriptions are \$19.95. <https://phoenixuoaa.org/>

Toll-free 800-750-0044

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Rachel<sup>\*</sup>, 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.

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Osomy Care / Lymenox Care / Wound & Skin Care / Incontinentology



Coloplast Corp. Minneapolis, MN 55413 / 1-800-433-0868 [www.coloplast.us](http://www.coloplast.us) The Coloplast logo is a registered trademark of Coloplast A/S. © 2019 Coloplast Corp. All rights reserved. \*Rachel is a SenSura Mio convex flip user who has received compensation from Coloplast to provide this information.

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# Hollister

people

program

products

services



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