

UOASL 2008 MEETING SCHEDULE

LIVE AND LEARN Summer 2008

July 7th 2:00PM St. Luke's Hospital Inst. of Health Ed
Summer Fun and what comes with it.

July 12-17 th Youth Rally – San Diego, CA
July 24-27 th PTN Conference

Aug 4th 7:00PM St. Luke's Hospital - Inst. of Health Ed
Sept 8th 2:00PM St. Luke's Hospital - Inst. of Health Ed
Oct 6th 7:00PM Christian N.E. Hospital
Update: Inflammatory Disease

October 9 th Visitor Training Contact Betsy Naeger 314-725-1888 to apply.

Nov 3rd 2:00PM St. Luke's Hospital - Inst. of Health Ed
Dec 4th 6:30PM Holiday Meeting – See Note

**Any articles welcome for consideration:
personal experiences, health, obituaries, find a pen pal, etc.**

Publication Deadline: August 25, 2008

Send articles to: Mary Beth Akers
949 Chestnut Oak Dr
St. Charles, MO 63303
636/916-3201
marybethakers@excite.com

VISITING SERVICES

Upon request from you, a Doctor, a Nurse, or an Enterostomal Therapist (Wound Ostomy Continence Nurse): A **VISITOR**, who has been specially trained will be sent to visit an Ostomy patient, either Pre-Op or Post-Op. The visitor will be chosen according to the patient's age, sex and type of Ostomy. There is **NO CHARGE** for this service and **WE DO NOT GIVE ANY TYPE OF MEDICAL ADVICE**. We only show the patient that his/her operation is not the end of the world, but a **NEW** pain free beginning to life again. Call Betsy at 314/725-1888.

President's Message

Hello Members and Friends of UOAA St. Louis,

The Product Fair was a great event. I would like to thank all the manufacturers who came to show us the products they offer and the great things to come. I would like to take a moment to thank all the members who came out to join us for this event. Our speaker, Jack Jackson, was wonderful. What an amazing life he has led. Thank you to all who helped to make the Product Fair a success. The raffles were quite successful in helping with funds for the Youth Rally and the C.A.R.E.S Program.

As was announced at the Product Fair, Susan Burns has stepped down as President of the group. It was a sad announcement. The group was blessed to have her. She asked that I fill the position, and I only hope I can do so as well as she and others have done. I have big shoes to fill, and could not dream of doing it without the support and help from this wonderful group. You have all given so much to me, words cannot describe. I am in hopes to give some of that back and continue to support and help the group to grow.

The Relay for Life walk is coming upon us quickly. The preparations for that are underway. There is still time for anyone who wishes to make donations or join the team if they would like. Please see Bill Lawson, myself or Herb Boerner for more information on this event. Also, the CCFA is hosting a Take Steps Walk, June the 28th. I am heading a team, representing the UOAA group. We are called the "Gutless Wonders". Please see me or Lisa Adams if you are interested in joining this group or donating. Both these walks are great ways to support the research for cures of the diseases that affect so many of our members and family members. Every dollar helps to get the research closer to that goal of a cure, a better treatment or a less painful procedure.

The UOAA continues to work on projects to better help the membership and ostomy community. Information on the developments of these projects will follow as they progress. The National Conference

is approaching next summer and planning is under way. Suggestions are welcomed and can be submitted to myself or Susan Burns. Youth Rally is just around the corner and we are proud to announce that we have a firm 3 campers to sponsor this year. Please see Mary Beth Akers for any questions you have about Youth Rally.

Again, I want to take this opportunity to thank this wonderful group for all the support and kindness it has extended to me. We have a wonderful group that I am proud to call 'family'.

LeeAnn Barcus, President UOASL

AN OSTOMATE LOOKS AT SPORTS: PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR ALL

(By Barbara Hurewitz; via UOA Northern Virginia Chapter, Green Bay, WI, & Evansville Ostomy Reroute)

Sporting activities are some of the most exciting things for any ostomate to participate in. Good muscle tone and increased strength are important for anyone who has suffered a prolonged illness, but for ostomates, there is the added pleasure of doing something which, because it is a challenge, adds to our emotional strength. When I was ill, I had no desire to do any kind of vigorous physical activity. After my operation, although I felt better, I was still worried about taking part in any activities, especially athletic ones. I was afraid that my appliance would fall off, that I would strain my abdomen, and that I would feel inhibited from really throwing myself into a sport. But, by starting to do various exercises, and by taking a certain number of precautions, I not only have enjoyed vigorous activity, but have also found myself doing many sports I had never done even before my illness. This successful activity has in turn increased my courage and made it easier for me to accept my ileostomy.

It has certainly brightened my outlook many times over. Swimming is one of the first sports an ileostomate should try. It is a gentle form of exercise which uses all your muscles and should get your body into good enough shape to start any other sport. I would suggest that ostomates wear waterproof tape around the edges of the appliance. No water will seep under it to loosen the appliance. I also suggest wearing some sort of reinforcer (a stretch panty, the panty part of pantyhose, or a gentle support belt) under your bathing suit. This will keep your appliance from moving around, loosening, or causing discomfort.

Contact information... looking for information on ostomy products or ostomy –related organizations?

Manufacturers - most have an ostomy nurse on staff to answer your questions about products. They'll even send you free samples to try!

Coloplast 888-726-7872 www.us.coloplast.com

ConvaTec 800-422-8811 www.convatec.com

CyMed 800-582-0707 www.cymed-ostomy.com

Hollister 800-323-4060 www.hollister.com

Marlen 800-321-0591 www.marlenmfg.com

Nu Hope 800-899-5017 www.nu-hope.com

Mail Order Suppliers - will send a free catalog featuring many brands of ostomy supplies. A great way to compare products!

A-1 Home Health Care 800-259-0652 3223 1st Ave SE, C.R.

AOS Medical Supply 800-858-5858 www.mmsmedical.com/aos

Byram Healthcare 877-902-9726 www.byramhealthcare.com

Duke Medical Supply 888-678-6692 www.dukemedicalsupply.com

Edgepark Medical 800-321-0591 www.edgepark.com

Liberty Medical 888-844-2651 www.libertymedical.com

SGV Medical 800-395-6099 www.sgvmedical.com

Organizations

American Cancer Society 800-227-2345 www.cancer.org

Crohn's & Colitis Foundation 800-343-3637 www.ccf.org

Friends of Ostomates Worldwide www.fowusa.org

United Ostomy Associations of America 800-826-0826 www.uoaa.org

Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society 800-224-9626

www.wocn.org



Notice the change of date for the Holiday Party

The location has changed as well. The party will be held at Two Hearts Banquet Center (Gravois at Lindbergh). The true cost for the meal is approximately the same as it was at St. Luke's. We will charge only \$12 as was the previous cost. The difference for the cost of the meal will be paid from the general fund as it has been in the past. To increase the holiday atmosphere we have chosen to move it from the hospital setting for this celebration. Look for a registration form in the next newsletter.

Youth Rally! July 12-17, 2008 at the University of San Diego

The local area will be well represented at this year's rally. Mary Beth Akers, LeeAnn Barcus, Kate Lobstein, and Shaun Rohdebeck will be attending as counselors again this year.

The chapter is sponsoring three new campers this year.

Look forward to an article from their perspective in our next issue of the Live and Learn.

It's never too early to start looking for next year.

Please share this information about this unique opportunity with any youth who has had bowel or bladder surgery or who have a condition which could lead to an ostomy.

St. Louis Chapter UOAA pays first year scholarships (Tuition and Air fare minus \$75 Registration Deposit).

If you know of an interested youth, have them contact Mary Beth at 636-916-3201 or marybethakers@excite.com for more info.

They can also log on to www.rally4youth.org to find out more.

DON'T SUFFER IN SILENCE (via South Maryland Counties)

A whole new world will open to you by discussing your problems with others who have experienced these same doubts and reactions. We have all gone through this period of learning to live again and in many ways, even better than before. Bring your fears and concerns out into the open and take advantage of the friendships and knowledge of others at the ostomy support group meetings.

THAT'S WHAT WE ARE HERE FOR!!!!!!

The logo for 'The Phoenix' features the word 'The' in a small font above 'Phoenix'. The 'P' is large and stylized, with a phoenix rising from its base. The 'o' contains a small bird icon. The 'e' is also stylized. The 'n' and 'i' are simple, and the 'x' is large and bold.

The official publication of UOAA

Don't forget to renew your subscription to **The Phoenix**.

Remember that ½ of your subscription cost helps to fund the activities of the UOAA and it's tax deductible.

To subscribe, simply send a note with your name, address and a check for \$25 to **The Phoenix P.O. Box 3605, Mission Viejo, CA 92690** or go online to www.uoaa.org and click on the link.

Wrinkle on Stomas

from the article by Bruce K. Dixon in The American College of Surgeons, Surgery News 4:3; 14, March 2008. Submitted by: J Radhakrishnan; via The New Outlook and Ostomy Support Group of DuPage County

A six-year old girl had to change her colostomy pouching system often during the day because she could not maintain an effective seal for any length of time. Her mother noted that the skin barrier came loose when sweat collected under it. Dr. Saadia Lakhany Raza, a dermatologist at Washington University in St. Louis, treated the child by injecting Botulinum toxin A around the stoma. The patient noted marked improvement within 10 days. In the past, she had to change her pouching system up to three times a day, now she only has to change it every three days. Botulinum toxin A has been approved for treatment of hyperhidrosis (excessive sweating) since 1989; however, this is the first instance of its use to control normal perspiration. For hyperhidrosis, injections have to be repeated every six months and that will probably be the case for this child too.

Human Being

A human being is a part of the whole, called by us "the universe." Our task must be to widen our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.
Albert Einstein

URINARY DISCHARGE CAN AFFECT SKIN & KIDNEYS

via The Rambling Rosebud & GB News Review

Urostomates have to be especially careful about cleanliness. Bacteria from stale urine can cause white, gritty deposits on the skin and stoma, which can be irritating, abrading the skin like sand paper. Fresh urine doesn't usually hurt the skin unless it is trapped in contact with it. If urine collects under the pouch, the bacteria multiply rapidly. This skin should be completely cleansed and dried before applying tapes, barriers, faceplates etc. Empty the pouch frequently. Keep the urine acid to prevent gritty deposits. A quarter cup of half water and half white vinegar sloshed around the stoma will dissolve any deposits. Solutions for cleaning and disinfecting urinary equipment can be obtained from

your supplier.

Traveling with an Ostomy

via The New Outlook and Ostomy Support Group of DuPage County

Having a stoma should not prevent you from traveling. However, pay attention to the following points to avoid any problems

- Take enough supplies with you! You might even spread it into two pieces of luggage. The most required material for the first few days should always be in your hand baggage.
- Notice that warm temperature and sports reduce the wearing time of your pouching system. So take more equipment with you as it may be necessary. This means double, triple or more the supplies you ordinarily use.
- Write down the precise product codes with their associated product number of the ostomy supplies you use. It may be necessary for you to make a purchase while away from home. Be prepared just in case you do not have access to resources where you will be traveling. Sometimes other markings are used in other countries for your habitual material.
- Obtain the address and phone number where your supplies are may be purchased if traveling in a foreign country.
- Be careful with unusual food; try small pieces first to see how you react to it.

You must purchase Barbara Kupfer's book, *Yes We Can!* It is one of the best current resources available for advice on traveling with an ostomy and tips for everyday living. The intent of this book is to serve as a useful and practical guide for the person who has an ostomy and wishes to travel.

Whether you have recently had ostomy surgery, or are a veteran; whether a seasoned traveler, or a new adventurer, whether traveling across the state, or out of the country, the pages of *Yes We Can!* are filled with valuable tips for traveling. Barbara Kupfer is a world-traveled person who has never let her ostomy slow her down. Traveling has always been part of her life, and when surgery for colon cancer was performed, she was determined to continue to see the world. She had many questions about traveling with an ostomy, and although the ostomy associations and the medical community were helpful, she felt there was a need for a definitive resource. She realized that if she was asking questions, then other people were also looking for answers. Her book offers us the opportunity to read the stories of others who travel, as well as the best advice yet, when preparing for travel.

The Best Ostomy Hints

The Green Bay News Review;
via The New Outlook and Ostomy Support Group of DuPage County

- Do not behave as if having an ostomy makes you less of a person or some freak of nature. There are many of us and most of us are glad to the surgery kept us alive.
- Build a support system of people to answer questions when you have a problem. Consider your WOC nurse, or the ones' that support our ostomy association as well as our other members as people who will be there for you.
- Do not play the dangerous game of making your pouching system last as long as possible by over taping or putting off a change. There are not any prizes given for the longest wear time . . . except accidentally.
- Zip-lock sandwich bags are useful and odor proof for disposal of used ostomy pouches.
- Do not get hung up on odors. There are some great sprays and some internal deodorants. Remember, everybody creates some odors in the bathroom. Do not feel you are an exception.
- Hydration and electrolyte balance is of vital importance. Be sure to drink enough fluids to maintain good hydration.
- Read and learn all you can about ostomies. You never know when you may find an opportunity to educate someone about the life saving surgery that has extended so many lives. Learn to be matter of fact about this and never embarrassed. Few folks get out of this life without some medical problem.
- After surgery, almost everyone experiences some depression. You are certainly not alone. However, it need not be a lasting condition. Seek help from other people. There is support out there for you.
- The bottom line is that we are alive and have been given a new life. Not long ago, this would not have been the case — successful ostomy surgery techniques were only perfected after WWII. Before this, people died. Ostomy surgery in the 1930's was generally a horrible experience with few survivors.
- Medicine and surgical techniques have given us an opportunity to experience this "second chance". It is certainly an opportunity worth accepting and exploring. The most important part of you as a human being has not changed. You are still the same you.

Never forget to actively celebrate life and all it has to offer.

Measuring Your Stoma

By Alice Bowman and Bob Baumel;
via The New Outlook and Ostomy Support Group of DuPage County

We recently visited a patient with a two-year old colostomy, suffering from severe skin irritation caused by using a pouching system with a pre-cut stoma opening the same size as originally measured in the hospital after surgery. Immediately after surgery, the stoma is quite swollen; it then shrinks for about the next six months—sometimes a year or longer.

During the initial period, while the stoma is shrinking, it is best to use a cut to-fit skin barrier and measure your stoma every time you change the pouching system. Once your stoma has stabilized, you may wish to switch to a pre-cut skin barrier. However, you should continue to measure your stoma occasionally to see if you should switch to a different size and type of pouching system.

If you fail to adjust your skin barrier opening as your stoma shrinks, you will eventually be using a skin barrier with an opening much bigger than your stoma. This leaves a large area of unprotected skin around your stoma, making you a prime candidate for skin irritation.

How big should the skin barrier opening be? For most types of skin barriers (formerly called faceplates or flanges), the opening should provide clearance of a millimeter or two all around the stoma (about 1/16th of an inch). On one hand, one should minimize the area of unprotected skin around the stoma; on the other hand, some clearance is usually necessary because many barriers contain hard materials—including plastic films—that can damage the stoma if they come in contact with it. Paste or a one of the new barrier strips may be used to fill in the gap between the flange and stoma.

The new extended wear barriers, such as, ConvaTec's Durahesive or Hollister's FlexTend barriers are engineered to be sized so that they actually touch the edge of the stoma.

Congratulations to J. Briggs who won the Grand Raffle at the Product Fair. Enjoy the Cardinals game. The Quilt Raffles were won by Hank Thill and LeeAnn Barcus.

Young as Your Confidence

via The New Outlook and Ostomy Support Group of DuPage County

Youth is not a period of life, it is a state of mind, it is the vigor of the will, the agility of the imagination, the strength of feeling, the victory of courage over cowardice, the triumph of the spirit of adventure over inertia. Nobody becomes old because he has a number of years behind him. One becomes old when one says good-bye to one's ideals.

With the years, the skin becomes wrinkled, but the renunciation of enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Sorrow, doubt, lack of self-confidence, anxiety and hopelessness are like long years that drag the head down to earth and bend the upright spirit into the dust.

Whether seventy or seventeen, within the heart of every person lives the longing for the wonderful, the uplifting amazement at the sight of the eternal stars.

Within every heart lives a fearless venture, the insatiable child-like tension of what the next day will bring. Within lives the frolicsome joy and gaiety, the joy of life. You are as young as your confidence, as old as your doubt, as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear, as young as your hopes, as old as your despondency. As long as the messages of beauty, joy, boldness, the greatness of men and of infinity reach your heart, you are young. Only when the wings hang down and the snow of pessimism and the ice of cynicism cover the inside of the heart have you become truly old.

THANK YOU TO:

*AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS FOR PROVIDING PRINTING, POSTAGE AND MAILING OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

*BILL LAWSON/MELISSA ADAMS FOR SENDING OUT MONTHLY MEETING NOTICES.

*ST. LUKE'S, ST. JOHN'S, ST. ANTHONY'S, AND CHRISTIAN NORTHEAST FOR OUR MEETING ROOMS.

*ALL WHO BRING REFRESHMENTS AND HELP WITH STRAIGHTENING UP AFTER THE MEETINGS.

*ALL THOSE WHO DO SO MUCH BEHIND THE SCENES.

PULL-THRU NETWORK NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The PTN is having their conference here at the DoubleTree Hotel & Conference Center in Chesterfield, July 24-27, 2008. The PTN is an organization for families with children having bowel and/or bladder disorders, many from birth.

As the local chapter, we have all been invited to their Opening Session and Ice Cream Social on Thursday, July 24th, at 7:00pm. We have also offered to help man the playroom they provide so parents can go to the sessions and hear the doctors and other speakers. Several members volunteered to help with the playroom already by giving their names to Mary Beth at the Product Fair. More are needed. The dates and times include:

*Thursday, 6:30 pm- playroom orientation before the opening and Ice Cream Social

*Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm /Saturday, 8:30 am to 5:30 pm.

The more people we have volunteer, the shorter the time commitment. Lunch is provided Friday and Saturday. Dinner is provided on Friday.

To **RSVP** for the Ice Cream Social or to Sign up to help with the Playroom, contact Mary Beth Akers by June 27th at 636-916-3201 or marybethakers@excite.com.

A Few Truths

- *No one can ruin your day without YOUR permission.
- *Most people will be about as happy as they decide to be.
- *Others can stop you temporarily, but only you can do it permanently.
- *Whatever you are willing to put up with, is exactly what you will have.
- *Success stops when you do.
- *A person who asks a question might be a fool for five minutes, but a person who doesn't ask, is a fool forever.
- *A best friend is like a four leaf clover...hard to find, and lucky to have.
- *A friend is someone who reaches for your hand but touches your heart.
- *A coincidence is when God performs a miracle, and decides to remain anonymous.

IS YOUR POUCH SHOWING?

From Newsleak, DuPage County Ostomy Assn.

Are you worried about your appliance showing under your clothes? On the other hand, is your stoma protruding so much that it shows through your clothes?

Most Americans today lead pretty busy lives at a relatively fast pace. Everyone seems to be concerned with their own individual happenings. Aren't you? By the way, what color was the bus driver's hair? Did the store sales clerk wear brown or black shoes? What color was the bank teller's tie? Does your brother's wife have blue or brown eyes?

Give up? Forget about the uncalled worries and enjoy the day. Remember that your attitude about your image will affect the attitude of your family and friends. Most of us are more conscious of our ostomy than anyone else around us is. Virtually no one in the world even knows what an ostomy is much less to look at one of us and see where it is, and if it is showing. Even your fellow ostomates may casually look at each other, checking to see if an ostomy shows. If we can't see it, and we know exactly where to look, how is anyone else ever going to know. Be happy, you have been given a new lease on life!

"Never look at what you have lost •••• look at what you have left."

COLOSTOMY AND CONSTIPATION:

VIA Twin Tier Assn. & GB News Review

Way back before surgery, did you go to the bathroom after a hot cup of coffee, milk, cold juice, whiskey or beer? Well, whatever made you feel that need then can make you feel the need now. Check it out. See if your irrigation can be helped by some of the things you used to do. Of course, if you have had your colostomy for a number of years, your previous habits may not be the same now. Your body can, however, be trained as it was before, and you can adapt yourself to certain habits which can help you to be in control. A glass of hot water or juice, or a cup of coffee before a morning irrigation may initiate gut reaction. Also, a glass or two of water, after the water return starts, is usually helpful. If you irrigate before going to bed, a glass of ice water or a cup of hot coffee should get you started. If you have not drunk much water during the day, it would be wise to drink an extra glass or two to make sure

your tissues will not absorb too much, or you may be left with little or no return. But what if you don't irrigate? Part of the difficulty in elimination of waste matter experienced by colostomates is due to lack of bulk in the diet. Consumption of white bread, pastry and highly refined foods does not provide the roughage and bulk necessary for proper evacuation of the colon. The deficiency can be overcome in part by the simple addition of bran to the diet. Bran can be made into muffins adding raisins and molasses to taste. Diet — there is no such thing as a colostomy diet. A colostomy is not an illness, so try to eat the same foods you have eaten and enjoyed in the past. 'If you are on a diet for a condition such as diabetes or high blood pressure, of course you should stay on that diet'. Foods can be acidic or alkaline, bland or spicy, laxative-like or constipating. Individuals react differently to food. Try to return to your former, normal diet. Those foods which disagreed with you in the past may still do so. Chew well and see the effect of each food on your colostomy output.

To maintain good health, the body requires a well balanced diet. Water is not nutritious but is absolutely necessary. Talk to your physician or ET nurse if you have problems.

RELAY FOR LIFE UPDATE

TO: All Gutsy Folks (This means you) and their caregivers

Registered team members include: Lisa Adams, Mary Beth Akers, LeeAnn Barcus, Herb Boerner, Susan Burns, Marty Henricks, Betty Kuhn (and friends), Bill Lawson, Al Lincoln, and Hank Thill.

DATE: June 27th and 28th

TIME: 6:00PM – 6:00AM (Stay as long as you're comfortable.)

PLACE: Moss Field, Hixson Middle School in Webster Groves

THEME: HOLLYWOOD, Movies, etc.

RSVP: Herb Boerner, 314-781-6207, stlscrdswschamps@aim.com

TO DONATE or JOIN THE TEAM: contact Herb or go on-line
www.events.cancer.org/rflsouthwestcomo

SURVIVORS and CAREGIVERS: If you are a cancer survivor/caregiver and wish to participate in the Survivor's First Lap around the track followed by a meal, contact Herb to register. You are welcome to stay for the whole night or leave after the ceremony.

PILLOW TALK

by E. McConnel, RNET, Snohomish Co. WA, The Greater Cincinnati
Ostomy Association, and Evansville Re-Route

Ever try to get into a comfortable position in bed only to find that your tummy flab or appliance seems to pull when you are on your side? Don't let it cramp your style. Happiness could just turn out to be a pillow. Try tucking one across your front and lean into it for firm support. If the pillow is too soft, first roll it like a bolster. A flat pillow placed between the legs in such a way that one end is brought up high enough to support the lower abdomen also helps to relieve or prevent any strain. If on your back, try a pillow under the knees for added comfort. If your feet get cold during the night, remember that pillows are not just for heads anymore. A soft pillow on the foot of the bed is perfect for tootsies to snuggle under. Try placing a pillow on top of you, under the sheet if you get stuck in a motel where bed clothing is inadequate for lowered temperatures—it will warm you up in a hurry. Even placing a pillow alongside your body helps. You know there are soft pillows, firm pillows, goose downs, satin jobs, king size, crib size, wedges, rings, triangles—anything your little heart desires. Movie queens surround themselves with heaps of pillows. Turks perch atop them with their legs crossed, tough guys slam their fists into them, kids have pillow fights and dogs and cats curl up and sleep on them. As ostomates, we started out as pillow people, one pressed firmly into our back to keep us on our sides, one under the arm with the IV in it, one clenched tightly in our arms across the incision when we were made to cough, and even one under our bottoms when we painfully tried to sit up. If you have forgotten about pillows, just remember—they are a natural for ostomates. Try them, you might like them.

VISITOR TRAINING

A training session will be held on Thursday, October 9th, 6:00-9:30 pm at St. Luke's Institute of Health Education. Anyone who would like to be trained for the first time or be recertified should consider attending. Contact Betsy Naeger, 314-725-1888, for an application.

What's Normal...

Answers from Your Stoma to You

by Liz O'Connor, RN, CETN, Metro Maryland;
via Fairfield (CA) Solano Ostomy News and Newsleak, DuPage County
Ostomy Assn.

What is normal for my stoma? This is a frequently asked question. Here are some answers from your stoma to you.

My color should be a healthy red. I am the same color as the inside of your intestine. If my color darkens, the blood supply might be pinched off. First make sure your skin barrier/wafer is not too tight (this can vary according to the barrier type, as some require a small gap between your stoma and the barrier material, while others are intended for a snug fit where the wafer material actually touches your stoma). If I should turn black (very unlikely - but it happens occasionally), seek treatment AT ONCE. Go to an Emergency Room if you cannot readily locate your doctor. (Be sure to TAKE AN EXTRA POUCH ALONG so you can remove the pouch for doctors to examine the stoma.)

I might bleed a little when cleaned. This is to be expected. Do not be alarmed. Just be gentle please, when you handle me.

If I am an ileostomy, I will run intermittently and stool will be semi-solid. If you should notice that I am not functioning after several hours and if you develop pain, I might be slightly clogged. Try sipping warm tea and try getting in a knee-chest position on the bed or on the floor. (Have your shoulders on the floor and your hips in the air. Rock back and forth in an attempt to dislodge any food that might be caught.) If I do not begin to function after about an hour of this, call your physician. If you cannot locate him/her readily, go to an emergency room. In the meantime, I might have begun to swell. Remove any pouch with a tight wafer and replace it with a flexible one with slightly larger stoma opening.

If I am a colostomy located in the descending or sigmoid colon, I should function according to what your bowel habits were before surgery (daily, twice daily, three times weekly, etc.). I can be controlled in most cases with diet and/or irrigation. This is a personal choice. There is no right or wrong to it, as long as I am working well. My stool will be fairly solid.

If I am a colostomy in the transverse colon, I will have a more loose stool than a descending or sigmoid colostomy.

Because there is less remaining colon in this case to absorb water and solidify the stool, its consistency will be closer to that of an ileostomy.

If I am a urinary diversion, I should work almost constantly. My urine should be yellow, adequate in volume and will contain some mucus. If my urine becomes too concentrated or dark, try increasing your fluid intake. If my mucus becomes more excessive than usual, I might have an infection. I will probably also have an odor and you may have a fever. Consult your physician if this happens.

If at any time, you doubt that your stoma is functioning normally, please seek help. The cause needs to be evaluated. If your problem is a serious one, it needs to be corrected. If it isn't serious, you will be relieved to know that your stoma is alive and well.

DOCTOR'S DO THE PRESCRIBING,

BUT IT'S UP TO YOU TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE DETAILS

10-07 UOAA·UPDATE via GB News Review

BE CURIOUS- Know what your condition is and how the drug will help you.

DON'T PLAY DOCTOR- Never tinker with the dosage on your own.

SHARE YOUR LIFE STORY - The doctor needs a complete picture of your health and habits.

MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOUR PHARMACIST -You can never get

too much information.

PLAN A REVIEW SESSION EVERY 6 MONTHS - One in five Americans over 65 takes at least one inappropriate prescription drug.

ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL - The amount of medicine you may need may vary with age, weight, gender and ethnicity.

SEND OLD DRUGS PACKING - Review your medicines at least once a year and get rid of oldies that are no longer goodies.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING - Some side effects can be avoided by adjusting the timing - but ask your doctor before changing.

BE AWARE OF INTERACTIONS - Drug-herb, Drug-drug, Drug-condition, or Drug-food interactions are all potential problems.