

*Portland Maine Ostomy
Support Group
Newsletter*

The Visitor

January-February 2007

**Next Portland Meeting:
Sunday, January 21, 2:00 p.m.
Mercy Hospital Auditorium**

**Benefits of Massage Therapy
With Chris Chapman**

(Please note that for security reasons the hospital asks that we enter the building at the Emergency room entrance now.)

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The Next Seacoast Ostomy Meeting:

**Contact Jerra Sullivan Concerning
the January Meeting
207-351-3456**

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Our Chapter Website: www.uoaportland.com

From the Editor – Peter McGinn

For our November meeting we watched the independent film Farang Ba, telling the story of an American living in Thailand who in his mid-forties has an ostomy but takes part in amateur boxing. His story is also featured in the current issue of Phoenix magazine.

Our January meeting will feature a short presentation by our own Chris Chapman on massage therapy, followed by our usual helpful discussion.

Mangled Metaphors

Every year, English teachers from across the country can submit their collections of actual analogies and metaphors found in high school essays. These excerpts are published each year to the amusement of teachers across the country. Here are a few.

- Her face was a perfect oval, like a circle that had its two sides gently compressed by a Thigh Master.
- She grew on him like she was a colony of E. Coli and he was room temperature Canadian beef.
- He fell for her like his heart was a mob informant and she was the East River.
- The ballerina rose gracefully en Pointe and extended one slender leg behind her like a dog at a fire hydrant.
- He was deeply in love. When she spoke, he thought he heard bells, as if she were a garbage truck backing up.
- Her vocabulary was as bad as, like, whatever.

(From UOAA)

Exercising Your Mind

According to a recent study, mental challenges as basic as puzzles can help some older people sharpen their wits, improve their memories, and regain lost mental abilities. Just as physical skills can get rusty without exercise, so can mental skills, say the researchers.

The study report identifies several factors that seem to be useful in maintaining mental sharpness. They include living an active lifestyle, being flexible in your attitudes and having a good support system of family and friends.

To exercise your mental skills, the researchers suggest that you regularly play board games, do crossword puzzles, take continuing education courses, and engage in other mentally stimulating activities that you enjoy. (From UOAA)

❖ **Phoenix Magazine Renewals** (from UOAA)

The current issue of *The Phoenix* magazine should have arrived by now. For many of us it is time to renew. Remember that subscriptions to the Phoenix also supports the UOAA organization

Also, as a bonus for renewing for another year, there are boxes on the renewal form that can be checked off if you want to receive a "gift" from Coloplast, Convatec, Cymed or Hollister.

❖ **2007 National Conference** (from UOAA)

Here is some information about the upcoming initial UOAA conference in suburban Chicago next summer. Plan to be part of it all:

- The Registration Fee will be \$ 75 per attendee ... \$ 25 for companion ... Children under 10 free
- Hotel room rate is \$ 109/night/SD + \$ 11.99 tax
- Events will start Wednesday, August 15th with a Golf Outing on the hotel's Crane's Landing Course at noon
- Wednesday evening, Hollister will provide transportation to their Corporate Offices at nearby Libertyville for a cookout, country music and tour of their facilities
- The opening session will start at 9:00 am Thursday
- The Exhibition Hall will be open from 2:15 to 6:00 pm

- The Convatec Evening Social will begin at 6:30 pm
- The Exhibition Hall will reopen Friday at 8:30 am
- Educational workshops will start at 2:00 and continue until 5:30 pm
- Friday evening no activities are scheduled
- Educational workshops Saturday start at 8:30 am
- Closing Session will be 3:30 to 5:00 pm
- Informal Reception, Banquet and Entertainment start at 6:30 pm

KIDNEY STONES AND THE ILEOSTOMATE

By: Jill Conwell, RNET, Corpus Christi, TX, Via: Orange (Via Evansville Ostomy Chapter)

Kidney stones are fairly common medical problems. They occur in about 5 percent of the population. They are more common in men with a sedentary life-style and in families with a history of kidney stones. The average age of first occurrence is about 40, but they can occur at any age. For ulcerative colitis patients, the incidence of developing kidney stones is about double that of the rest of the population. For ileostomates, the incidence is 20 times greater.

There are two basic types of kidney stones: uric acid and calcium. Both may occur in ileostomates since the underlying cause is dehydration. Uric acid stones are more frequent. One reason for this is the chronic loss of electrolytes, producing acid urine. The stones may vary in size and shape, some being as small as grains of sand, while others entirely fill the renal pelvi renal pelvis. They also vary in color, texture and composition. Symptoms during the passage of a kidney stone include bleeding due to irritation, cramping, abdominal pain, vomiting and frequent cessation of ileostomy flow. When ileostomy flow stops, distinguishing between an obstruction versus a kidney stone may be difficult since the symptoms are similar.

Treatment of most kidney stones is symptomatic and in most cases the stone passes spontaneously through the urinary tract. Medication for the spasms is usually administered. The urine should be strained in order to collect the stone for analysis. Once the composition of the stone is determined, steps should be taken to prevent recurrence of an attack. The physician will prescribe medication or dietary modifications depending on the type of stone.

The best preventative measure is to drink plenty of fluids (8 glasses) every day. If the urine appears to be concentrated, increase fluids and use a sport drink that is rich in electrolytes to replace losses.

Trust Yourself *By: Robert Eisman, RN, ET
(Via Evansville Ostomy Chapter)*

Regardless of the type of ostomy you have, your prime concern must be placed on getting to know yourself. Any advice you are given should coincide with you as an individual. Lifestyle, activities, weight, all play an important part in determining which product will work best for you. Jumping from product to product without being aware of the differences, the advantages, or the disadvantages of each can be costly and troublesome practice.

Assuming that you have been taught how to care for your ostomy, how to use your appliance, and where to purchase your supplies, you should become thoroughly familiar with the recommended procedure and equipment before experimenting with a new product. After you've gained the confidence that comes with experience, you can think about exploring other products and procedures. Learning new and better ways to care for yourself can be fun and very rewarding but guidelines should be set and observed with safety being the paramount concern.

Remember, the ostomy has not changed you individually. You still have the same strengths and weaknesses, the same needs and desires as before. So, walk slowly at first, but increase the steps and strides as you gain more confidence in your own ability and get back into the mainstream of life as quickly as possible.

For All Pouch Wearers (From Evansville)

Avoid letting your appliance get too full, either of waste or gas. Although one of our members says he likes his pouch to "balloon up" because it makes him lighter on his feet, it's not a good practice. Normally, you should empty your pouch when it becomes 1/3 to 1/2 full, and before trapped gas makes it feel firm. As the pouch becomes fuller, it places a greater strain on the snap fastener holding the pouch onto the flange, for two-piece wearers, and increases the tendency for the adhesive part of the appliance to pull away from the skin around a stoma for even a one-piece pouching system.

If it is not convenient to empty a "filling" pouch, get somewhere you can discreetly "pop" the seal, releasing the gas pressure. This trick can buy you

a little more time before emptying is absolutely necessary.

Also, for ileostomates, if you know that you are going to be traveling or in a situation where easy access to a rest room is not available, adjust what you eat to avoid high residue food. Instead of eating two bran muffins and a bowl of Raisin Bran for breakfast, consider pancakes, which have much less residue. Be aware of how fast your body responds to eating. If you know that you can expect lots of stoma activity about two hours after eating, time your meal so that you won't have to deal with a pouch approaching its capacity at an inopportune time.

Similarly, urostomates may want to consider temporarily adjusting their rate of fluid intake for a short time. The caution here is that urostomates should consume plenty of fluids during the day. This technique is not advisable for periods of more than a couple of hours. Ostomates shouldn't skip meals before going out socially. In general, the less an ostomate eats, the more gas, he or she will produce, with its attendant problems. Actually, a quick arm across the stoma will usually silence if it is operating at the wrong time.

Irrigating: Patch vs. Pouch vs. Plug

(from Evansville Chapter)

There has been much discussion over whether colostomates should wear a patch over their stomas, a pouch or the plug (a pouchless product). The point is whether or not the person with a colostomy should irrigate. No two ostomies are alike and irrigating is not for everyone. The colostomy has to be in the descending or sigmoid colon to irrigate. A colostomy in the ascending or transverse colon will produce stool too watery for regulation. People who had a very unpredictable bowel schedule before surgery may continue to do so despite efforts to achieve regulation with irrigations. Some people have work schedules or lifestyles that don't permit them to irrigate at a consistent time each day and this, too, can cause irrigations to be unsuccessful. Other people simply don't like to irrigate. The thing you need to know is this: **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO IRRIGATE YOUR COLOSTOMY FOR IT TO WORK.** Your bowels will work anyway, irrigation or not. The purpose of irrigating is to achieve regulation of the bowel. The reason for regulating the bowel is for the individual's comfort and convenience. If irrigating is not accomplishing regulation and if it is making you more uncomfortable trying to fit in your personal schedule, you should not be doing it. **FIND OUT WHAT WORKS FOR YOU AND STICK TO IT!**

The Back Page- Fiction by Peter McGinn

(The first seven chapters of this great American novel can be found on our website at www.uoaportland.com.)

Chapter 8 - The Question of Money

It all struck me as rather ironic and more than a little unfair. I had enticed Katt to come over and play tennis, and through some combination of dumb luck and animal magnetism - perhaps heavily weighted toward the former rather than the latter - I got her to admit to being my girlfriend. After accomplishing all this, it was ironic that only now did I have to send her away. But there it was. I could see she was enjoying my discomfort way too much, and even adding to it.

Besides, she smiled whenever she saw Jake, thinking about how I was pretending to be his estranged wife's fiancé, and Jake was misreading the smiles as stemming from interest in him. And Dad, who really was engaged to Michelle, was still interested in pretending to be Katt's guy. I felt like I was playing a role in a bad sitcom pilot, the kind that never make it onto the network schedule. I wanted Katt to spend her time laughing with me, not at me, so she had to go. She reluctantly did so at sundown. She kissed my cheek before she left, and only hugged my father and waved to Jake, so as far as I could tell I was still number one in her book despite what Kake of Dad might have thought.

I developed my strategy for getting through the weekend. I kept it simple, and decided I would spend as much time in empty rooms as possible. With a house as large as my father's, there were a lot of empty rooms. The hardest part was explaining to people when they walked in why I was there. Empty, seldom used and barely furnished rooms historically are not much of a draw, so I had to use my imagination.

It turned out that Michelle had a strategy for the weekend too, and so did Jake. The only one who didn't have a strategy was my father. All he had was money, and that subject came up during breakfast the next morning. Jake was sleeping in, something they don't greatly

encourage in prison, apparently.

"What if we gave him some money?" Michelle asked as we sat at the table eating instant oatmeal and toast.

"Who?" Dad asked, proving he had no hint of a strategy for the weekend.

Michelle rolled her eyes. "Who do you think? Jake. He will be released very soon. He wants to move out west. If we give him some seed money, it will ensure that we'll never see him again."

"I'm not paying him for the divorce," Dad asserted. The only time his backbone was visible to the naked eye is when someone was angling for some of his money.

Michelle played it smart, shrugging as if it hardly mattered. "Fine. Our baby will be born with Jake's last name. I can live with that if you can."

Dad thought about it. He glanced at me. I may have been smiling at his discomfort, thinking of him wanting to play the role of Katt's boyfriend.

"What do you think?" he asked me, "you're her fiancé."

"That's not even funny, Dad," I replied. "But I think you should do it. You'd be doing the state a public service encouraging him to move away. They might put a statue of you in the state capital."

Dad chewed on his toast and my sarcasm. "How much?" he said finally.

"I don't know," Michelle replied. "How much do you think?"

"Ten thousand?"

"Ten thousand is good," Michelle said carefully. "But I was thinking more. It might not be easy for him to land a good job with his prison record."

"Twenty-five?"

Michelle smiled. "Better. Let me feel him out."

I suppose I'm not the most charitable person, because suddenly I wondered if Michelle really wanted to marry Dad, if she wanted a divorce, or for that matter, if she was even pregnant. What if she was in cahoots with Jake, both aiming for seed money? I sighed, realizing I would have to take an interest in all of this for Dad's sake.

Next Issue: Who's Zoomin' Who?