

Stoma Care Resources

Immediately after surgery there seems to be plenty of resources to help with stoma care, including the nurses at the hospital and those that visit the home, but once that period of time is over where can you get help?

In that initial post op period you have your surgeon, and both WOCN (wound ostomy care nurse) and home care nurses to help you learn basic skills about placing the appliance, emptying it out and trouble shooting other issues related to ostomy care. Then time passes, and new questions come up. How do you learn about new pouches? How do you know where to look for bathing suits, ostomy covers, or underwear? What if you have developed a hernia or prolapse of your stoma? What if you just want to talk with others in similar situations to get more information or support?

There are a number of resources available to you. Obviously, you can check the CCFA website www.ccfa.org for information and links to other websites. You can also go to the United Ostomy Association of America website: www.uoaa.org. This is a wonderful resource, offering publications, support groups and links to other resources for ostomates. I've visited a number of UOAA websites and have learned a lot from their articles, questions and answers. Recently I found the www.ostomyok.org/newsletter/ (The Oklahoma group) news letters and have enjoyed the humor of ostomates there. If you are computer-savy, you can google "ostomy" and find all sorts of resources. Another website I've visited is www.meetanostomate.com, and they offer peer to peer support with chat room, from people all over the world. If you are not a computer geek, you can phone the United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc. at 1-800-826-0826 and they can help you.

The manufacturers of ostomy supplies are a great resource. Once again, if you have access to the internet I recommend www.convatec.com, www.hollister.com, www.cymed-ostomy.com and www.coloplast.com for the education they provide on line. If you run into concerns or wish to try a product you can call the manufacturer and usually speak with a knowledgeable representative, sometimes the enterostomal therapist, and that person can help you select a product to try, and they send samples!!! Phone number are as follows:

Convatec	1-800-422-8811
Coloplast	1-800-533-0464
Cymed	1-800-582-0707
Hollister	1-800-323-4060

What if you develop a stoma hernia or prolapse? The site I would visit is www.nu-hope.com to see support belts. You still need to be measured and a prescription to obtain the product, but educating yourself can help you get the product best suited to your needs.

Now what about the romantic underwear? Well, the best site I know is in the United Kingdom, and I am just waiting to hear from them where to find these great products in

the USA!!! Check this out: www.cuiwear.com. Another site for underwear is www.options-ostomy.com or call 1-800-736-6555. In addition the following sites have intimate underwear as well as bathing suits: <http://www.weircomfees.com/> or call toll free 1-866-856-5088; <http://www.intimatemomentsapparel.com/> or call 201-825-9931; and <http://www.myheartties.com/> or call 1-888-338-8437.

As you can see, there is a wealth of help out there, if you just know who to call and where to look. Take advantage of the many resources available to you including the doctors and nurses who have helped you at the time of your surgery, organizations that support ostomates and especially peer to peer resources which can often provide a wealth of information not found elsewhere.