



December 2011

# Ostomy Association of the Houston Area

"We help ourselves by helping others to help themselves."

We are a volunteer-based organization dedicated to providing education, information, support and advocacy for people who have had or will have intestinal or urinary diversions.

P.O. Box 25164  
Houston, TX 77265-5164  
[www.ostomyhouston.org](http://www.ostomyhouston.org)

## How to Tell Someone You Have an Ostomy

*The "Ralph Kaye" San Antonio, TX Chapter via the Evansville, Indiana Chapter Newsletter*

In this world of technological advances, there are all kinds of people clamoring for information about you. Here are some questions you should ask yourself when giving out personal information. "How will I benefit from certain persons having certain information? How will the person asking the questions benefit from my answers?" Thinking back to those critical days of adjustment just after your ostomy surgery, you may only have wanted people around you that you trusted and loved. At that time, you may have needed the support of a spouse, friend or children. In order for those people to support you, they needed to know about your ostomy surgery. By sharing this information you were helped through what for some was a very difficult time.

Once you were home, friends and neighbors started to call and then to visit when you felt up to it. The question arose as to "What do I tell them about my surgery?" Probably, you thought about each person and his or her relationship with you—the closeness you felt for that person and maybe, the sincerity of that person's concern for you. After considering these factors, you may have made a decision to tell the person about your ostomy. Based upon the reaction to your story, you made another decision—whether to tell about your ostomy to those who inquired about your health.

As your health progressed and you began to return to work, the question arose again. "Should I tell my employer about my ostomy?" Here again a couple of questions need to be asked. "Do I need support from my employer because of my ostomy? How does my employer knowing about my situation help me?" This becomes



situational. For example, if I work on an assembly line and must take prescheduled breaks, and I'm still adjusting to emptying my pouch, I may or may not need a different schedule for breaks than those enforced. My employer needs to know that I'm not just breaking the rules, but have a real need.

Whether to tell someone you have an ostomy becomes a matter of who has a right to know, and how you will benefit from their knowing. The decision to tell someone you have an ostomy becomes clearer when the benefits are weighed. Simply explain that you had some surgery for whatever reason you had your surgery, and it necessitated having an alternate route made for emptying either your bowels or bladder. By having had this surgery you were given the chance to increase the length and quality of your life. Share with the person whom you have decided has a right to know about your surgery, using pamphlets and brochures available from the United Ostomy Associations of America and other sources. Educate those persons you believe have a vested interest in your well being.

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

### Patient Visiting and Support Services

*Doctors and ET Nurses, please note:*

Upon request from a doctor or nurse, a specially trained visitor will be sent to visit an ostomy patient before and/or after surgery. The visitor will be matched as nearly as possible according to sex, age, and type of ostomy. There is no charge for this service. The visitor does not give medical advice. Please contact our Visitor Coordinator, Dorothy Andrews at 713-789-4049.

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## Central Group News

We had a small, but lively, group for our November roundtable discussion. Several members brought concerns that we discussed. Diet seems to come up frequently, especially as it affects gas and odor. There were numerous suggestions for lessening gas, from Gas-X to avoiding particular vegetables. Many of us have found that avoiding carbonated drinks or milk products is a big help. Others find that skipping meals increases gas while some find that not eating after 7 p.m. helps reduce night gas. The consensus is that everyone is different. If you are having a problem with gas or odor, try keeping a diary of what you eat and the results. For example, if you have a day where gas just keeps coming, look at the day before and see if you ate or drank something that you have not consumed recently. That may be the culprit. If your surgery is recent, adding new foods one at a time is recommended so that you can determine how you react to them. On the UOAA web site, you can find the *Ostomy Nutrition Guide*, which covers urostomies, ileostomies, and colostomies. We have some copies, but if anyone would like a copy who does not have web access, let us know. We can print it and mail it to you. [http://www.ostomy.org/ostomy\\_info/pubs/OstomyNutritionGuide.pdf](http://www.ostomy.org/ostomy_info/pubs/OstomyNutritionGuide.pdf). The guide has a wide range of information about diet and nutrition, including a table with many of the gas or odor-producing foods along with some suggestions for foods that reduce odor or gas. The UOAA web site has many other documents which can be helpful. If you have a chance, please take a look.

From David Rudzin, the President of the UOAA, "After 6 years of providing the premier magazine of ostomy information without a price change, rising production costs of *The Phoenix* necessitate an increase. We hope that you can understand that this increase is necessary and you will continue your obligation to the UOAA to promote *The Phoenix* magazine to your members. Remember that part of the subscription cost goes to the UOAA and helps us continue to educate and support the ostomy community and advocate for you and your members to local, state and the federal government." A one year subscription will be \$29.95 at your next renewal. *The Phoenix* is a great magazine. We have copies if anyone would like to check it out before subscribing.

We will not have a meeting in December. Instead, we will celebrate with a Holiday Party at Pine Forest Country Club. I hope to see many of you there.

Programs for the coming year are being planned. If there is a subject or a particular speaker that you would like to hear, please let us know. If you know of a speaker who would be of interest to the groups, we would love to have the recommendation.

I hope that everyone has a safe and enjoyable Holiday Season.

Best regards,

**Denise Parsons**, President, OAHA  
713-824-8841

## Northwest Group News

Thirteen people including our presenter were in attendance for the northwest meeting. Lorette Bauarschi, a lawyer who specializes in estate planning and probate, provided us with an information rich and wonderful program. She used a combination of humor and experience to challenge the audience as they considered issues associated with the biggest financial decisions a person will ever make.

Wills, trusts, probate, estates, taxes and many scary issues were addressed in an easy to comprehend manner. She took the time to answer everyone's questions as she highlighted issues specific to living in Texas. Thank you Lorette!

Refreshments were provided by Ed and Gay Nell. No December meeting will be held. All northwest group attendees are urged to join everyone at our Holiday Party on December 13, 2011. It is not too late to get your tickets. See you there!

**Gay Nell Faltysek**  
281-446-0444

**Tony Romeo**  
281-537-0681

## Baytown Group News

The November meeting of the Baytown Ostomy Support Group was a much anticipated presentation by Ostomy Care Specialist, Polly Burleson of ConvaTec. Polly's presentation encouraged one of the highest attendance rates we have had all year with 12 persons in attendance. We had two ostomates who were attending for the first time.

Polly shared the highlights of the ConvaTec products. She passed around the one and two piece options. Polly also updated the group on Ostomy Secrets®. A couple of members were familiar with the product and were able to give favorable endorsements as well. There is more information about this on the ConvaTec website. As a final exciting note, Polly shared that an upgrade to the one piece product will be available in January.

Anyone interested in receiving an ostomy product sample was given a request card to complete and will have the desired product mailed to them.

The group watched a couple of inspirational videos that included the 2010 Great Comeback Award Recipients (which is also available on you tube ([www.youtube.com/greatcomebacks](http://www.youtube.com/greatcomebacks))).

Baytown Support Group will meet for the final time in 2011 on the 1st Monday of December (5th). The meeting will be held in the Community Room. Come join us for a Roundtable discussion with plans for the coming year.

**Cindy Barefield, RN, WOCN**  
281-428-3033

## Emptying the Pouch....

*Edited by B. Brewer, UOAA UPDATE 10/2011*

- Check the toilet paper supply before emptying your pouch.
- Put toilet paper in the bowl when emptying your pouch to prevent splashing.
- Before emptying, make a cuff at the end of tail of the pouch. This keeps that section free from stool while you empty.
- Insert folded toilet paper into the tail of the pouch and rub the two sides of the tail together over the paper to clean the tail before applying the closure/clamp.
- If you must rinse, be careful not to rinse water to the level of the stoma as it may cause the adhesive to become loose from the inside. Place your hand gently over the stoma to "block" the rinse water. It is not necessary to rinse out the pouch!
- Cold water should be used if you "rinse" out the pouch after emptying. Cold water will decrease absorption of odor and discoloration into the plastic of pouches.
- Leave a little air in your pouch after emptying it. You may have a tendency to flatten the pouch as much as possible so it won't show under clothing, but there is always moisture in the pouch. Flattening it too much makes the walls of the pouch stick, leaving no room for discharge to slip down. If discharge collects around the wafer, the pressure of the clothing will eventually cause it to break the seal and leak out. Allow a little air to enter by pulling the pouch apart before attaching the closure. (just a little air—enough to keep the two sides of the plastic pouch from sticking together)

## You Have Adjusted to Your Ostomy When...

*via Hemet-San Jacinto (CA) Stoma-Life*

- ✓ You stop spending all of your spare time in the bathroom waiting for your stoma to work so you can empty the pouch right away.
- ✓ You can move about freely, without holding your appliance as though it might fall off any minute.
- ✓ You make that first trip to the mailbox without taking along your ostomy supplies.
- ✓ You stop grabbing your abdomen when the grocery clerk asks if you need help to the car with your bag.
- ✓ You go out for the evening and realize too late that you left your emergency kit at home.
- ✓ You begin to think how lucky you are to be alive instead of how unlucky you are to have an ostomy.
- ✓ You attend the monthly support group meetings with an expectation of learning more about your ostomy rather than staying at home worrying about it all.

## WOCN and ET Directory

Cindy Barefield, RN, CWOCN San Jacinto Methodist Hospital cbarefield@tmhs.org	(281) 428-3033
Clarice E. Kennedy, CET claricekennedy1@comcast.net	(713) 647-8029
Charlene Randall, RN, CWOCN Specialty Wound & Ostomy Nursing, Inc. charlene@swoni.com	(713) 465-8497
Pat Thompson RN, BSN, CWON Pat.thompson@tenethealth.com	(281) 397-2799
Catherine Walsh RN, BSN, CWON UTMB @ Galveston cmwalsh@utmb.edu	(409) 747-3070 Fax: (409) 747-3038

*Happy Holidays to our Members  
and their Families!*

## Get Ostomy Answers!

*The Phoenix* is the leading national magazine for ostomates, their families and caregivers. Each issue contains 72 pages of inspiration, education and information including new products, medical advice, management techniques, personal stories and more.



Subscriptions directly fund the nonprofit United Ostomy Associations of America – the only national organization providing vital information, resources, support and advocacy for ostomates.

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## Depression and the New Ostomate

by Mark Shaffer, from Northern Virginia *The Pouch*; via Chippewa Valley (WI) *Rosebud Review*, Courtesy of the North Central Oklahoma Ostomy Outlook

At a recent support group meeting, a subject came up that I found intriguing. One of the participants in the rap session stated that he found himself depressed and withdrawn even though it had been a year since his surgery. He wondered how long he could expect that feeling to last and, I think, whether it would go on for the rest of his life.

Some ostomates adjust almost immediately. These folks see an ostomy as a cure for an illness that threatened their lives or restricted their activities. Others take a few months, generally feeling better about the situation as soon as they master the fine art of pouch changing and maintenance. For many, ostomy surgery begins a process that appears to be, and is, very close to the grieving process, and like any grieving process, the amount of time needed to feel emotionally whole again will vary.



It took me almost two years following my surgery before I felt like I had regained my former personality and was ready to move on with my life. So there is no magic amount of time needed to adjust to your new ostomy. Allow yourself the time you need and realize that the feelings of depression and isolation will eventually go away. If the depression is severe, don't be afraid to seek professional help.

If your isolation is caused by a lack of confidence in your appliance, seek help from an ostomy nurse. If your appliance is working fine but you still feel separated from others, seek help from other ostomates. Go to a meeting and meet others in the same situation. If you don't already have one, call your local support group and ask for an ostomy visitor who can talk to you about how he or she managed post-operative emotions. But above all, give yourself time to adjust.

The **United Ostomy Associations of America (UOAA)**  
can be contacted at:  
**www.uoaa.org** or **800-826-0826**

Disclaimer: The information contained within this newsletter is presented expressly for informational purposes only and may not be applicable to everyone. It should not be substituted for professional medical care or attention by a qualified practitioner. Always check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your condition.

We encourage you to bring your spouse or significant other and members of your immediate family to our meetings.

### Central Group

**Monthly:** Third Monday  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Place:** American Cancer Society Building  
6301 Richmond Avenue, Houston  
**Contact:** Denise Parsons 713-824-8841  
rockynme2@aol.com  
**Meeting:** **No December meeting. Please join us at the Annual Holiday Dinner Party on December 13.**

### Baytown Group

**Monthly:** First Monday  
**Time:** 6:00 p.m.  
**Place:** Community Room in Lobby of San Jacinto Methodist Hospital  
4401 Garth Road, Baytown  
**Contact:** Cindy Barefield 281-428-3033  
**Meeting:** **December 5, 2011**  
**Program:** **Roundtable discussion and planning for 2012.**

### Northwest Group

**Monthly:** Third Tuesday of the month  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Place:** NW Medical Professional Bldg., (The Cali Bldg.)  
17117 Cali Drive, Houston (This location is just off of 1960 and west of I-45. Turn north on Cali Drive from 1960. At the stop sign turn left on Judiwood and left again to park behind the Cali Building.)  
**Contact:** Tony Romeo 281-537-0681  
sa1tmr@sbcglobal.net  
**Meeting:** **No December meeting. Please join us at the Annual Holiday Dinner Party on December 13.**

### J-Pouch Group

**Monthly:** Third Monday  
**Time:** 7:30 p.m.  
**Place:** American Cancer Society Building  
6301 Richmond Avenue, Houston  
**Contact:** Ron Meisinger 281-491-8220  
**Meeting:** **No December meeting. Please join us at the Annual Holiday Dinner Party on December 13.**

*Monthly support and information meetings are held in three locations for member convenience.*



## Opportunities and Announcements

### Anniversary Gift

As you celebrate the anniversary of your ostomy surgery each year, consider making a monetary gift to the Ostomy Association. Checks should be made payable to the ***Ostomy Association of the Houston Area*** and sent to the address shown at the right (in the box).

### Use Those Shopping Cards

Kroger and Randalls return a percentage of your purchases to the Ostomy Association on a quarterly basis. For information about shopping cards, please visit the website:  
<http://www.ostomyhouston.org/>

### Memorial Fund

Donations can be made to our Memorial Fund to memorialize or honor individuals. Checks should be made payable to the ***Ostomy Association of the Houston Area*** and sent to the address at the top right (in the box). When sending a donation, be sure to include the name of the person being honored so that acknowledgement can be sent.

### Moving?

Our newsletter is sent by bulk mail, which the Post Office will not forward even if you fill out a forwarding request. To continue receiving the newsletter after a move, contact Lorette Bauarschi, Treasurer, at 713-582-0718 or [lbauarschi@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lbauarschi@sbcglobal.net) or send your request to the provided address at the top right of this page.

### Donation of Supplies

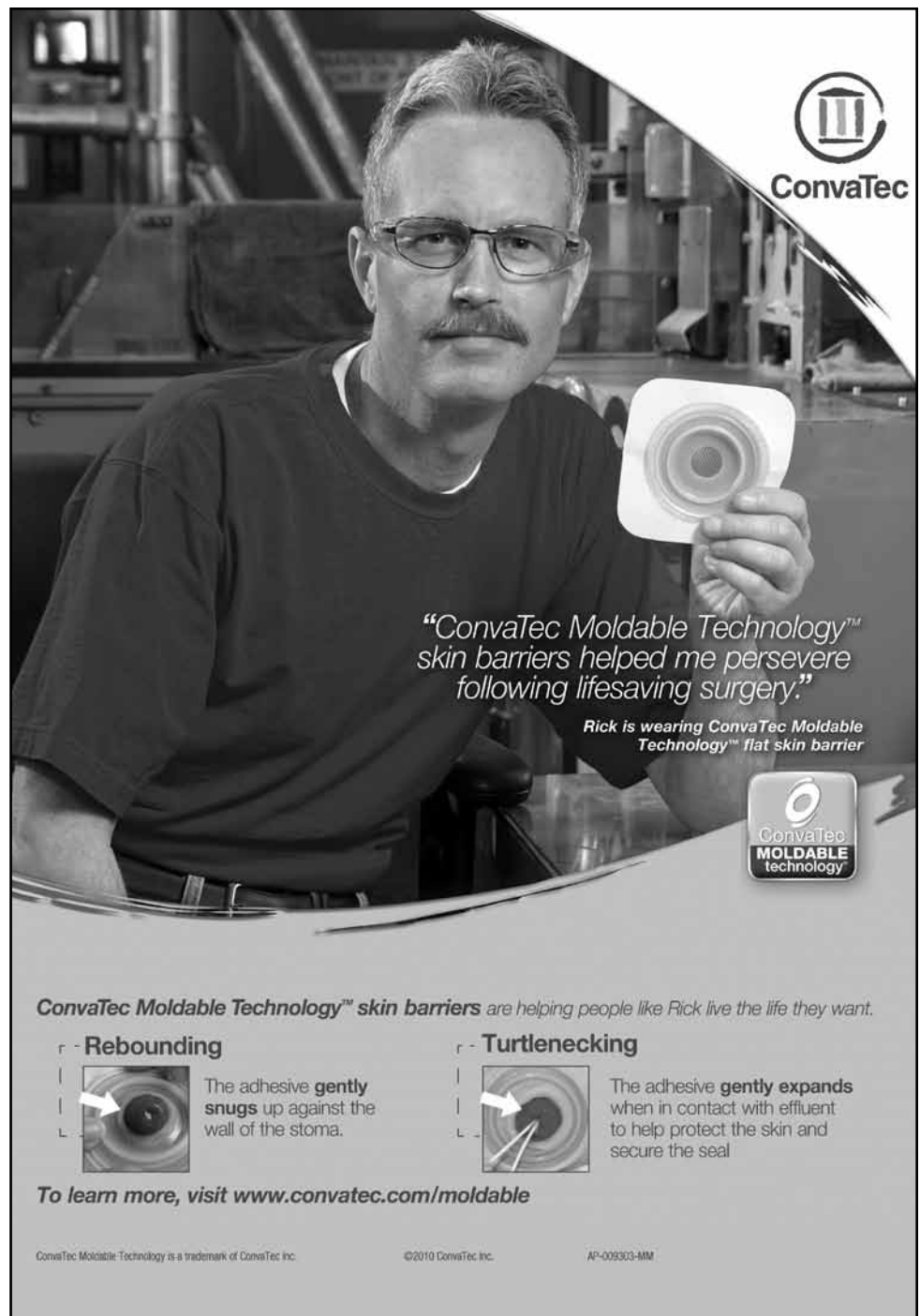
We are contacted on a regular basis by individuals who are in need of donated ostomy supplies. Consider donating ostomy supplies that you no longer use to assist your fellow ostomates in the Houston area. Please contact Mary Harle at 713-782-7864 with any questions.

### Sponsorship

You can sponsor a member of our ostomy support group with a tax-deductible donation to cover the cost of their membership. Please make the check in the amount of \$25.00 payable to ***Ostomy Association of the Houston Area*** and send to the address at the top right.

**For Anniversary Gifts, Memorial Donations, Mailing Changes, or Sponsorships, please send all correspondence to:**

Ostomy Association of the Houston Area  
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## Membership Application

Membership in the Ostomy Association of the Houston Area requires one easy payment. Please complete the following form and mail as directed with payment as shown. Dues of **\$25.00 per year** are payable to:

**Ostomy Association of the Houston Area, Attention: Treasurer**  
**P. O. Box 25164, Houston, TX 77265-5164**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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Surgery Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for surgery: ☐ Crohn's ☐ Ulcerative Colitis ☐ Cancer ☐ Birth Defects ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Do you speak a foreign language? ☐ Yes ☐ No Foreign language spoken: \_\_\_\_\_

### Procedure or Relationship:

To help us complete our records, please answer the following. **Check all that apply.**

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colostomy         | <input type="checkbox"/> Continent Ileostomy | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent of Child with procedure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ileostomy         | <input type="checkbox"/> Continent Urostomy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse/Family Member           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urinary Diversion | <input type="checkbox"/> Pull-Through        | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____      |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse                          |

☐ I would like to attend meetings with the **(please circle one)**:

Central Group      Baytown Group      Northwest Group      J-Pouch Group

☐ I would like to become a member but cannot pay dues at this time. *(This will be kept confidential.)*

I learned about the Ostomy Association from

☐ ET Nurse    ☐ Physician    ☐ Newsletter    ☐ Surgical Shop    ☐ Website    ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in volunteering. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have enclosed an additional \$\_\_\_\_\_ as a donation to support the association's mission of helping ostomates.

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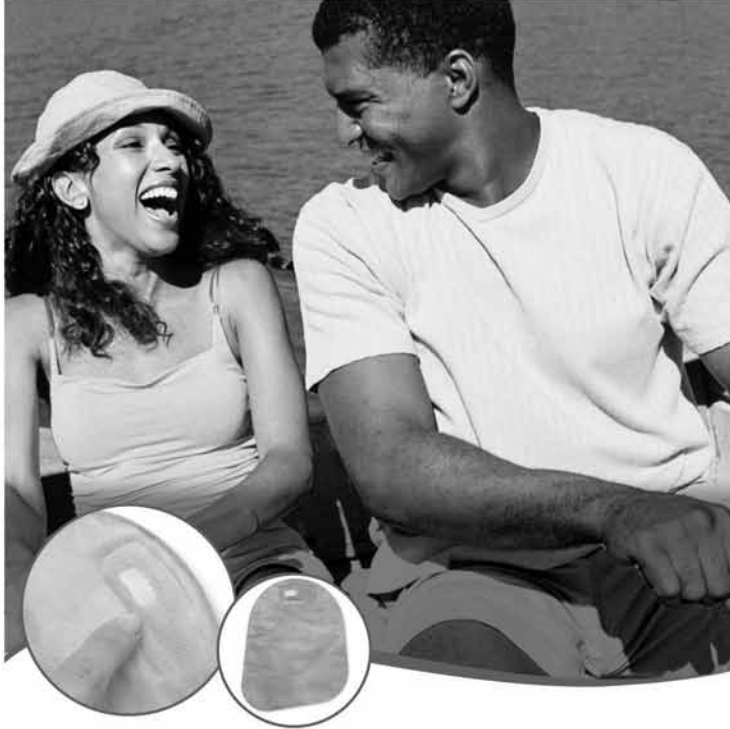
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