



The Austi-Mate Journal

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

www.austinostomy.org

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

Upcoming 7-8 pm In-Person & Virtual Meetings:
February 6th - March 6th - April 3rd

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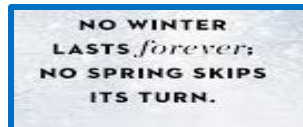
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This Quarterly newsletter is available
online at www.austinostomy.org

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!

We want to recognize the 50+ years since the Ostomy Association of Austin has been established and continues today to support Ostomates and their families. We honor Carol Laubach, the founder of this non-profit group, for her dedication and commitment to the Ostomy community. To celebrate, we are sharing Carol's Phoenix Magazine article [Ostomy in the Silent Dark](#), published in 1978 about one of her patients who was both deaf and blind. It's a remarkable story! Thank you for all you do Carol - we love you!



At our upcoming February meeting, Karen Hollis will talk about Dehydration and its impact on the body.

In March, we welcome **Emily Brooke**, Licensed Clinical Social Worker at Digestive Health/UT Health Austin, Ascension Seton. She will talk about Ostomates and the Mind- Body Connection.

Help us carry out Carol's legacy and consider becoming a Board for our volunteer non-profit support group. Currently only Carol, Karen Hollis, and Amy Nichols, oversee everything and we would love some support. Newsletter ideas/articles, help in securing guest presenters, community outreach, etc. Contact any one of us if you are interested.

Have you paid your dues?



Is Your Stoma Protected?

Halo Stoma Guard edited



The 4 most common ways to hurt your stoma and how to avoid them.

Children and pets jumping on you

You walk through the door and when your grandchildren or dog comes charging at you to give you love and you don't reciprocate with open arms because you're afraid of hurting your stoma. Instead you take a defensive stance and hold out your arms to keep a safe distance between you and your most beloved OR have one arm open and the other protecting your stoma.

Seat Belts

How many times have you got into a car and carefully positioned the seatbelt away from your stoma, just to have it spring back to rub and chafe your ostomy with every little movement, making every car ride uncomfortable at best and a down right hazard at worst? There are small "pillows" that attach onto the seatbelt for the car ride. There are also ostomy products available to guard and protect the stoma.

Accidental Bumps

So your doctor advises you to go out and do fun things, to enjoy life as you normally would. Whether it's camping in the great outdoors or taking ballroom dance lessons, physical activity is encouraged. But just thinking of all the extra ways you can accidentally bump into things and hurt your stoma is enough to keep you confined to the home.

Belts Worn Around the Waist

You put on armor for your stoma, by wearing a stoma guard. But not just any will do. You want to avoid clunky stoma guards that show through clothing and attract unwanted attention. You should also stay away from systems that use awkward elastic belts that are prone to slipping and can never keep the guard in place over your stoma.

There are a variety of stoma guards available that provide additional protection, for both body and mind. Some of these include Halo Stoma Guard, StomaGear, Hollister Stoma Guard, Coloplast Stoma Guard, Stoma Protector, and Ostomy Armor.



Sleeping with an Ostomy: When Your Ostomy is the Enemy of a Good Night's Sleep

Anita Prinz, RN, MSN, CWOCN

Most people think of sleep as a restful uninterrupted period of "zzzzs" where the body rests and the mind dreams. You lay your head on the pillow and within a few minutes, you fall off into never-never land. The next morning, you wake up after about eight hours feeling refreshed for a new day. It is common knowledge that sleep is important to a person's overall health and quality of life. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that sleep is the new "vital sign" of good health. Subjective evidence suggests that individuals with a stoma suffer from sleep problems, sleep disruption and poor sleep quality.

Lack of sleep can cause fatigue, decreased concentration, moodiness and even industrial and automobile accidents. Sleep deprivation can also cause depression and impacts respiratory and hormonal functioning. The CDC reports that sleep loss and sleep disorders are an under-recognized public health problem.¹ Unfortunately, there is a scarcity of research on the impact of having an intestinal stoma on sleep. Some individuals report dreaming of emptying their ostomy bag or urinating, then wake up during the NREM phase to find that they need to void or empty their pouch. It's not known what role dreams play, but we do know that we need REM sleep for emotional well-being.

Having an ostomy can cause disrupted sleep patterns from difficulty falling asleep to challenges staying asleep. Learning how to sleep with an ostomy pouching system and avoiding rolling on it during the night is noted as one of the greatest challenges experienced by new ostomates.² Anecdotal evidence

from research suggests that persons with a stoma experience more sleep disruption problems than those without a stoma. Needing to empty an ostomy pouch appears to be the most common reason for awakening from sleep for ostomates. Many individuals with ileostomies will empty their ostomy bag five to 15 times per day which invariably includes instances during night-time sleeping. Emptying frequency can be decreased by either increasing the size of the pouch/container or decreasing the amount of stoma output.

Several manufacturers make high-output pouches (see photos) which are usually 14" pouches with a spout instead of a clamp. Many ileostomates can switch from their regular, daytime pouch to a high-output pouch to get longer periods of uninterrupted sleep. High-output and urostomy pouches can be connected to a one-gallon night-time drainage bottle or bag. With this setup, there should be no need to get up to empty during the night. Many people think of the night-time drainage bottles only for urine, but they are indicated for liquid stool as well. While the "yuck" factor can be high, it can really help a person get a good night's sleep and sometimes that is worth a lot more than a dirty jug. Decreasing Output

Decreasing fecal output volume is another way to stay in bed during the night. One might think, how in the world can I decrease my output? The first rule is to stop eating about two hours before bedtime. Absorbent gel packets can be used to turn a high volume of liquid stool into a smaller volume of thicker stool. You may need to experiment with the number of packets to get it right. Some people take Imodium® or eat marshmallows at bedtime to slow their gut down. LeeAnn Barcus says sipping water during the night rather than drinking large amounts keeps her hydrated and her gut quiet.³ "If you can't sleep, then get up and do something instead of lying there worrying. It's the worry that gets you, not the lack of sleep." ~ Carnegie

Falling asleep may be impaired when there are worries of pouch leakage, disturbing a partner getting in and out of bed, having to use the bathroom in the middle of the night, or waking up other household members. For leaks, try putting a crib pad or other waterproof cover on the bed to protect the mattress and linens. A common question is about the possibility of hurting the stoma from lying on it. Sleeping on your stomach should not hurt your stoma, but may lead to leaks if you are not cautious and the output or gas during the night cannot escape the stoma. Stoma protectors/guards might be of help for those who sleep on their stomachs or "u-shaped" pillows/neck supports.

Interesting studies have been done on colonic activity and awakening from sleep. One study of 14 healthy men showed a marked increase in colonic motor activity with awakening. Another study of individuals with gastrointestinal (GI) disorders showed awakening from sleep causes increased peristalsis resulting in dysfunctional motility and increased emptying of GI contents.⁴ Considering many individuals with a stoma have GI problems, it seems like this can make for a vicious cycle. Your body may form habits due to your perceived need to get up, so if you get up at 2:00 am every night, you will wake up at 2:00 am even if you don't need to. Breaking this cycle is very challenging, but can be done with perseverance – don't get out of bed! Sleep hygiene refers to the environment and rituals you have when preparing for sleep. One of the most important recommendations from the Sleep Foundation is to go to bed and wake up around the same time every day, including weekends! All this sounds very practical, but what about the ostomy bag? You say, I'm different! But - you are not alone! Here are some sleep hygiene tips I developed for Ostomates.

General Sleeping Tips

1. Make sure your pouch is on securely with no creases or wrinkles
2. Empty pouch before going to bed, even if there is just a little stool or urine
3. Avoid eating/drinking for two hours before bedtime
4. Consider changing your larger meal to lunch time and having a smaller meal at dinner
5. Avoid eating gassy foods before bedtime
6. To burp your bag without getting out of bed, try the Osto-EZ Vent
7. Consider using a pouch venting mechanism
8. Wear an ostomy wrap or underwear with a pocket
9. Wear a spandex tank top or camisole to secure your ostomy pouch
10. Place a pillow or rolled towel under the pouch to support it when side lying



11. Try a body pillow for support
12. Place a U-shaped neck pillow around your pouch when lying on your stomach
13. Try protective mattress padding if you are worried about soiling the bed and linens
14. Consider irrigation if you have a colostomy

Tips for Ileostomates

15. Use a high-output pouch to decrease emptying frequency a high-output pouch to a night-time drainage bottle to collect up to a gallon of output
17. Use absorbent gel packets to thicken stool and decrease emptying frequency
18. Take 2-4 mg loperamide (Imodium®) to slow the gut down at bedtime - with your doctor's permission
19. Eat a few marshmallows or jellybeans before bedtime to slow and thicken stool

Tips for Urostomates

20. Connect the pouching system to a 32 oz. leg bag for night-time drainage collection
21. Connect the pouching system to a night-time drainage bottle to collect up to a gallon of urine with five feet of connector tubing
22. Secure tubing to leg with drainage tube attachment devices to prevent pulling on bag
23. Try the Night Pouch System™ to securely hold a drainage bag to the mattress to allow freedom of movement while asleep



If you are having frequent leakage issues that are causing you to lose sleep and worry about leaks, you need to see an ostomy nurse to figure out a better pouching system. You can find one in your area at www.wocn.org or by calling 800-826-0826. If all else fails, seeking the help of a sleep specialist or your physician is in order. Sleeping medications should be a last resort and used short-term as they are highly addictive and actually disrupt your sleep cycles.⁶ If your ostomy is keeping you up at night, it is surely dragging you down during the day. Try some of these strategies to help you get settled in for a good night's sleep. **Sweet dreams!**



How Exercise Can Lead to a Healthy Gut

Cleveland Clinic Online; January 26, 2024/[Health Conditions/Digestive](#)



You don't need a strenuous or expensive fitness routine to keep your digestive tract in shape.

The [gut microbiome](#) gets a lot of attention for its role in overall health. A healthy gut means you have better digestion and improved immunity. It could also play a role in preventing health conditions like heart disease and autoimmune conditions. Perhaps you're already taking [probiotics](#) and eating more plant foods to keep your gut happy. But there's a lesser-known - and equally important - step you should take to optimize that microbiome: **Exercise**. Gastroenterologist [Christine Lee, MD](#), explains the role exercise plays in [gut health](#) and the best workouts for a happy belly.

How exercise helps gut health: "Exercise is one of the most powerful ways you can boost your gut microbiome," says Dr. Lee. "It's probably the best 'medicine' we have for your gut." Exercise improves your gut health because it:

Improves gut motility (movement): Your digestive tract has its own rhythm that keeps things moving. When it's too fast, you might be running to the bathroom. Too slow, and you've got [bloating](#), gas, pain and nausea. Neither option is going to help you have your best day. Regular exercise allows your gut to find its perfect pace. "Your [digestive tract](#) is a muscle, and moving your body is good for all your muscles, your gut included," explains Dr. Lee. "When we're physically inactive, the muscles in our gut also become less active, too. Over time, they lose their natural coordination and strength."

Boosts circulation

During exercise, your heart pumps harder and faster to deliver extra blood and oxygen to your muscles. Some of that extra goodness also goes directly to your gut. "Exercise improves circulation throughout your body, including to your gut and other organs," says Dr. Lee. "When your digestive tract is better

perfused (or has a good flow), it becomes stronger, healthier and better able to maintain the right balance of healthy bacteria.”

Tones your digestive muscles

Physical activity gives you great muscle tone, and we’re not just talking about biceps and abs. When you’re in shape, your gut muscles become stronger and more efficient, too. It uses its fit muscles to expel unwanted waste more completely. “Many people think they’re not [constipated](#) because they have regular or frequent bowel movements,” notes Dr. Lee. “But you might be going frequently because your colon isn’t emptying completely. You could be going several times to get one bowel movement out.” Exercise makes your gut’s contractions - known as [peristalsis](#) — more powerful and more effective. “Higher quality peristalsis means your gut can empty more effectively,” she continues. “It’s a key part of your digestive health because it moves the waste out of your body before it can disrupt your microbiome.”

Keeps your metabolism healthy

Your [metabolism](#) is your body’s process of turning calories into energy. Physical activity helps you maintain or speed up this process, which helps with digestion and better balance in your gut. “If your metabolism slows down, your body has to select which functions are more important,” explains Dr. Lee. “Your body sees digestion as a lower priority than vital organs like your heart, lungs and brain. It takes some energy away from your gut and can lead to an overgrowth of bad bacteria, bacterial translocation (passage of bacteria from the GI tract to other tissues or organs) and complications from slower motility (such as [megacolon](#), [hemorrhoids](#) and [diverticulitis](#)).”

Sets you up for sleep

Getting enough quality sleep is great for your gut. But it’s often not as simple as lying down and waiting to drift off to dreamland. If you find it hard to fall asleep or stay asleep, getting some exercise could be the natural remedy you need. “Regular exercise can lead to better sleep overall and can improve some [sleep disorders](#),” says Dr. Lee. “When you sleep, your body, including the gut, repairs itself, breaks down waste and builds up your immune system.”

How to exercise for a healthier gut

The benefits of exercise for gut health are impressive. And there’s great news: You don’t always have to join a gym or follow a strenuous program to get results. “The key to exercise is to start at your own level,” advises Dr. Lee. “If you haven’t exercised in a while, then a brisk [walk](#) may work for you. If you already work out regularly, you need to make sure you are doing something vigorous enough that gets your heart pumping.”

Workouts that work for your gut

What type of exercise do you need to do for a healthier gut? Do any type of [aerobic exercise](#) you enjoy and that works with your schedule and fitness level. “People hear the word ‘aerobic’ and think they have to join a class, but that’s not the case,” clarifies Dr. Lee. “Raking leaves, vacuuming the living room, mowing the grass or dancing to your favorite music can be aerobic exercise.”

How do you know if your workout is the right intensity? Look for these signs:

- Your [heart rate](#) is faster than normal.
- You can talk, but not sing.
- You’re working up a sweat.

How often to exercise

Ideally, you should aim for 30 minutes of exercise, five days a week. But if you can’t hit that goal, don’t give up. Any amount of activity is better than none. “Many people get frustrated when they miss a few days of exercise,” says Dr. Lee. “But the key is to move as much as you can, no matter what that looks like.”

Start slowly

If you’re just starting out with exercise, watch out for injuries from overdoing it. “Don’t do too much, too soon — this can strain muscles or hurt yourself,” warns Dr. Lee. “As long as your heart rate is up, you’re at the right intensity. Don’t push beyond your limits, or you could set yourself back.”

Use care with cardiac conditions

If you have a heart or lung condition, talk with your healthcare provider before beginning any type of exercise. "Getting your heart rate up is usually a good thing, but it may not be safe with certain heart conditions," cautions Dr. Lee. "Your healthcare provider can help you determine which type of exercises to do."

Bottom line?

No matter how you choose to move, your body — including your gut — will thank you. "Exercise is one of the most powerful ways to improve your overall health, including your gut health," reinforces Dr. Lee. "It's something nearly everyone can do to feel better, and it doesn't have to cost a thing."



January - March 2025 Anniversaries

Sammie Buchanan, Lou O'Hanlon, Vernon Emken, Kellie Zullig, Carol Laubach,

**First Thursday
of the month
Meetings: 7- 8 pm
Combined
Virtual & In-Person**
No January Meeting
February 6
March 6
April 3
May 1
June 5
No July Meeting

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



What flower gives the most kisses on Valentine's Day?

T U L I P S

What did one plate say to the other on Valentine's Day?

"Tonight, dinner's on me."

Not all math jokes are bad. Just sum.

Why shouldn't you iron a four-leaf clover?

You might press your luck!



**Are you in need of donated supplies?
We have plenty available to get you through until your personal supplies arrive.**

Please contact Karen Hollis (512-785-7448) and indicate what type of ostomy you have, brand preference, size, and whether it is a one or two piece. This will help to get you the best fitting supplies possible. You can also email us at info@austinostomy.org.

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

Membership benefits include:

- Monthly support & informational meetings
- The Austi-Mate Quarterly Newsletter

Newsletter Preference: Check one

_____ Printed version via US mail

_____ Email notification/download to your computer via website www.austinstomy.org



The Phoenix magazine is the official publication of the United Ostomy Associations of America. The Phoenix magazine is published quarterly.

<https://phoenixuooa.org/>

Toll-free 800-750-9311.

Free Problem -Solving Clinic

This free clinic is open on the first Thursday of the month at the Gethsemane Lutheran Church from 1-4:00 pm

- Text or call Karen Hollis, Retired RN, CWON at 512-785-7448
- Text/leave your name, number, type of ostomy, and problem
- Karen will contact you

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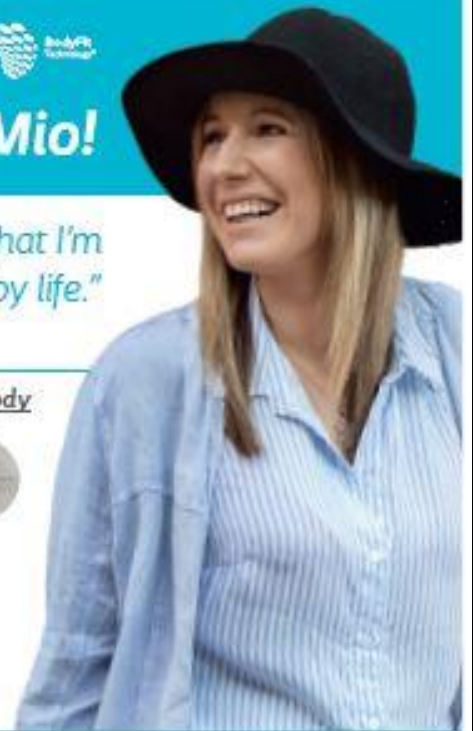
Rachel^{*}, SenSura[®] Mio Convex Flip user

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