

The New Outlook

October/November/December 2017



UPCOMING TUESDAY MEETINGS

October 17, 7:30 pm

November – No Meeting

December 19, 6:30 pm

GLENBROOK HOSPITAL

2100 Pfingsten Rd, Glenview, IL

Conference Rooms C & D, 1st Floor

July's Meeting (our 469th)

We enjoyed an Evening with Hollister. Anna Markiewicz presented very helpful information on reimbursement and Hedy Holleran talked about Hollister products containing ceramide.

September's Meeting (our 470th)

Shelly Miller, Vice President of Friends of Ostomates Worldwide, gave a very enlightening presentation on the scope of FOW-USA's efforts to provide supplies to some of the world's most disadvantaged ostomates.

Thanks to all for bringing treats!

We hope to see you October 17 for a Show and Tell meeting! Have you discovered a useful new product? A helpful tip? Join us to share and learn.

December 19 is our annual Holiday Party. A special time when we come together to celebrate the friendship and support given and received throughout the year. Bring a dish to share. We will again have Portillos beef, so appetizers, salads, side dishes, chips, soft drinks, desserts...all good ideas.

Attending your first meeting? There are always supportive ostomy veterans to chat with you.

Remember, newsletters are now quarterly. Make sure we have your current email address to receive monthly meeting reminders.

Each year 34 million tons of paper are thrown away. Save paper AND save us money by choosing the electronic version of the newsletter. As a bonus, the e-version will include additional article(s) in place of the address page.



Ostomy Association of Greater Chicago (OAGC)

Established 1975

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Resurrection Hospital

Ana M. Boden 773-296-7095

Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center

Nancy Chaiken 773-878-8200

Swedish Covenant Hospital

Teri Coho 773-880-8198

Lurie Children's Hospital

Jan Colwell, Maria De Ocampo, 773-702-9371 & 2851

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Robert Maurer, Laura Crawford 312-942-5031

Rush University Medical Center

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Glenbrook Hospital

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Karen Blum 312-695-6868

Northwestern Memorial Hospital

Kathy Krenz 815-338-2500

Centegra-Northern Illinois Medical

Marina Makovetskaia 847-723-8815

Lutheran General Hospital

Carol Stanley 847-618-3125

Northwest Community Hospital

Nancy Olsen, Mary Rohan 708-229-6060

Little Company of Mary Hospital

Kathy Garcia, Jola Papiez 708-684-3294

Advocate Christ Medical Center

Sandy Fahmy 847-316-6106

Saint Francis Hospital

Nancy Spillo 847-493-4922

Presence Home Care

Colleen Drolshagen, Jean Heer, Barb Stadler 630-933-6562

Central DuPage Hospital

Kathy Thiesse, Nanci Stark 708-216-8554

(Ginger Lewis-Urology only 708-216-5112)

Loyola University Medical Center

Alyce Barnicle (available on as needed basis only) 708-245-2920

LaGrange Hospital

Sarah Grcich 219-309-5939 or 219-983-8780

Porter Regional Hospital & Ostomy Clinic Valparaiso, Indiana

National UOAA Virtual Groups

Continent Diversion Network: Lynne Kramer 215-637-2409

Familial Adenomatous Polyposis (FAP) Foundation: Travis Bray 334-740-8657

Friends of Ostomates Worldwide - USA: Jan Colwell 773-702-9371

GLO Network: Fred Shulak 773-286-4005

Ostomy 2-1-1: Debi K Fox 405-243-8001

Pull-thru Network: Lori Parker 309-262-0786

Quality Life Association: Judy Schmidt 352-394-4912

Thirty Plus: Kelli Strittman 410-622-8563

Upcoming Meetings at Glenbrook Hospital

TUESDAY, October 17 – Show & Tell

November – NO MEETING

TUESDAY, December 19 – Holiday Party

Additional area support groups:

Northwest Community Hospital, Arlington Heights

2nd Thurs at 1:00 pm every other month. Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec in The Learning Center, Level B1 of the Busse Center
Contact Carol Stanley 847-618-3215, cstanley@nch.org

Southwest Suburban Chicago, Evergreen Park

The third Monday at 6:30pm, Little Company of Mary Hospital, 2800 W. 95th St., Evergreen Park - Rm 1702.

Contact Nancy Olesky 708-499-4043, nanook60@sbcglobal.net or swscost@gmail.com

Sherman Hospital, Elgin

The second Wednesday of each month at 2 pm. Lower level Conference B. Contact Heather LaCoco 224-783-2458, Heather.Lacoco@Advocatehealth.com or Tom Wright, tomwright122@att.net

DuPage County, Downers Grove

The fourth Wednesday at 7:00pm, Good Samaritan Hospital, in the Red and Black Oak Rooms by the cafeteria. Contact Bret Cromer 630-479-3101, bret.cromer@sbcglobal.net

Aurora

The second Tuesday at 7:00pm, Provena Mercy Center. Contact John Balint 630-898-4049, balint.john@yahoo.com

Will County, Kankakee IL

2:00 p.m. the last Saturday of Feb, Apr, Aug and Oct in the Riverside Medical Center Board Room, next to the cafeteria. Also a June picnic and December holiday party. Charlie Grotevant 815-252-1551, charliegrtvnt@gmail.com

Grundy County, Morris IL

Monthly Meetings at 11:00 AM, the 3rd Saturday at Grundy Administration Bldg., 1320 Union St., Morris, IL. Contact Judy Morey at 815-592-5717 or Kelly Hitt at 815-941-6818.

Lake County Illinois

Hollister in Libertyville, 10:00am the 3rd Saturday, every other month. Jan, March, May, July, Sept, Nov. Contact Barb Canter 847-394-1586, barb1234@sbcglobal.net

Loyola University Health System, Maywood

The 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:15 in the Cardinal Bernadine Cancer Center 2nd floor Auditorium A. Contact Robin Handibode 708-205-6664 or Nanci Stark, WOCN 708-216-8554, nhstark@lumc.edu

Valparaiso, Indiana

Porter Regional Hospital, 1st floor Community Room. 6:30 pm the 4th Thurs., Jan – Oct. Contact Sarah Grcich 219-309-5939, Sarah.Grcich@porterhealth.com

New group for cancer survivors with ostomies. Wellness House in Hinsdale. See page 5 for details.

Here and Now

with Patricia Johnson

If you are planning a move to the moon or Mars take your supplies with you... because FOW cannot ship there. However, FOW does ship supplies all over planet earth.

FOW, Friends of Ostomates Worldwide, collects unused, donated supplies, sorts them and ships them to 3rd world countries. They are sent to ostomates who do not have access to ostomy supplies. It is a huge operation staffed only by volunteers. These volunteers give of their time and talents so someone somewhere does not have to use a coffee can or duct tape and a plastic bag.

The recipients of these supplies are so grateful. Having clean, modern wafers, pouches and other items to care for their ostomy allows them to once again lead normal lives. They are no longer embarrassed and hiding because they have a stoma.

FOW-USA is based in Louisville, Kentucky. They accept new supplies for people with ileostomies, colostomies and urostomies. They are always in dire need of pediatric supplies.

Anyone with unused or extra supplies can send them to FOW-USA, the address is shown at the end of this column. Once received and sorted the supplies are matched to needs, packed and shipped. FOW-USA pays for the shipping which is very expensive. The cost of shipping supplies was one \$50,000 last year. FOW is dependent on monetary donations to pay for shipping.

Life is good



4018 Bishop Lane
Louisville, KY 40218-4539

www.fowusa.org



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## Urine pH Balance

Urostomates should check the pH of the urine about once a week to be sure the urine is acidic, with a pH of less than 6.0.

Foods that effect pH balance:

**Acid** Most Meats/Fish/Poultry, Breads, Cereals, Cheese, Crackers, Eggs, Pasta, Rice, Plums, Prunes, Cranberries

**Alkaline** Milk, Bananas, Beans, Beets, Green, Spinach, Most Fruits (incl. Citrus) Most Veg.

**Neutral** Butter, Coffee, Tea, Cream, Honey, Salad Oils, Syrups, Tapioca

## **Does Anyone Else Know How to Care for Your Ostomy?**

Vancouver Ostomy HighLife Jan/Feb. 2017

Many of us have been looking after our ostomies for years and have the routine down pat. Even if your ostomy requires some extra effort (seals, patching, powder, skin prep and so on) after enough practice you'll perform even a complicated change without difficulty. But what if you suddenly could not do this for yourself? There are myriad of injuries or conditions that could suddenly prevent us from performing our usual ostomy routines. What if you suddenly did not have the use of your arms or hands? What if you were unable to speak? In most cases, our families and friends have little or no idea what we are doing in the bathroom. It would be a wise precaution to have a detailed list prepared in case of sudden emergencies. Some points to include:

- \* Brand name and product number of preferred barrier and pouch
- \* Specific instructions on how to remove and apply the barrier
- \* Whether one or two piece
- \* Step by step instructions how to prepare the skin for application of the barrier
- \* Proper closure of a drainable bag
- \* How often pouch should be emptied
- \* How to hook up a night drainage system
- \* How to tell if the system is leaking
- \* Where are these supplies kept?
- \* Where do you order these supplies if they run out?
- \* What is your insurance information?
- \* Can you be placed on your abdomen if necessary for an extended period of time?
- \* Do you usually irrigate?
- \* What medications do you usually take?
- \* What is the name of your WOC nurse and how can that person be reached?
- \* What specific issues need to be monitored?
- \* How do you clean any of the equipment used?
- \* Proper storage of equipment
- \* How long is the pouching system usually left on?
- \* Specific allergies to any other brands

It would also be wise to prepare a 'go kit' in case of sudden hospitalizations. Such a kit should include enough barriers, pouches and related products to last

at least a week. (Having a 'go kit' is a good idea in general in case of fire or similar emergencies). Make sure your family or caregiver knows where this kit is kept. And include 'your how to care for my ostomy' list in this kit.

## **Stoma Bumps—What are they? What to Do?**

Liz O'Connor, CWOCN

ET nurses are often asked about small bumps or ulcers which appear on a formerly smooth stoma. They may be on the surface or around the edge where the stoma meets the skin. They may occur in a single area or around the whole circumference.

Most of the time, these are granulomas, which are of a benign nature. Granulation tissue is a normal defense reaction of the body to injury. Those at the edge may be due to a reaction to the suture being sewn through the stoma to the skin. It may also be caused by a too rigid or too tight a skin barrier rubbing against the stoma. A hard skin barrier must never touch the stoma.

Those on the top or side of the stoma may be caused by an allergic reaction to the plastic or other material which makes up the barrier. This may be true even after using the same equipment for a long time. They may also be caused from stomal drainage constantly pointing to one area of the stoma. This may occur when the stoma opening points down.

What should you do? Most of the time, these things are nothing to worry about. Do not second-guess or self-diagnose yourself. See your ostomy nurse, and if necessary, your doctor. Occasionally, these bumps may be a manifestation of another condition, like the recurrence of Crohn's disease. Often, they can be treated with silver nitrate sticks, which are available by prescription. Occasionally, the bumps need to be biopsied, to eliminate the possibility of other conditions. Quite often, a change in the manner of applying the skin barrier will resolve the issue.

Source: *Inside Out*, Winnipeg Ostomy Association, *The Ostomy Rumble*, Ostomy Support Group of Middle Georgia

## **Ostomy ~ The New Normal**



## OSTOMY WORLD REPORT

from R. S. Elvey, OAGC

*Interesting, relevant, and darn right strange tidbits from the ostomy world....*

How do you empty your pouch when traditional toilet facilities are not available? You use the Biffy Bag; fits in the palm of your hand see it at [www.biffybag.com](http://www.biffybag.com) ....Barrier cream with sunflower oil and raspberry seed now available in the U. K. from [www.ostomart.co.uk](http://www.ostomart.co.uk).... Custom made ostomy belts in colors and patterns for sale at [www.funostomybelts.com](http://www.funostomybelts.com)... Need ostomy supplies but you don't have insurance, have high deductibles or your insurance doesn't cover ostomy supplies contact Osto Group 877.678.6690 or [www.ostogroup.org](http://www.ostogroup.org).... make appliance disposal quick and discreet with the Ostaway x-Bag with ez-zip seal at less than 27 cents a bag, from [bagitaway.com](http://bagitaway.com) or 800.774.6097....In the wake of all the hurricane news UOAA has on their website a natural disaster preparedness checklist for ostomates, go to [uoaa.org](http://uoaa.org)....The Colostomy Association of England is holding training sessions for airport workers so they can better engage and communicate with ostomates....

### Amazing Things People Tell Pharmacists

*Hope Healthletter*

- \* What do you mean no refill? This is a forever prescription.
- \* I know I just got this prescription the other day, but \* I need more because my cousin has the same problem.
- \* I can't take generic drugs. I tried generic potato chips once and they were just awful.
- \* My doctor switched medications on me. Can I return these leftover pills for credit?
- \* I got these pills back in 1985. What are they for—in case I need to take the rest of them?
- \* I know I'm late getting this refilled, but I figured if I took my pills every other day, they'd last longer.
- \* Did you have to go to school to get this job?
- \* I was seen at the Mayo Clinic for 2 years and they couldn't find out what was wrong with me. What do you think it is?

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### Wellness House

Kay & Mike Birck  
Home of Hope

131 North County Line Road, Hinsdale, Illinois  
60521 630.323.5150

### Ostomy Networking Group for Cancer Survivors

4th Mondays, except Dec. Drop-ins Welcome

October 23, November 27, December 18\*

7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Living with an ostomy can be life-changing but does not have to be debilitating. In this new networking group, we invite participants with all cancer-related ostomy types to share support and information so that you can continue to live life to its fullest. Once per quarter, an ostomy-trained healthcare professional will co-facilitate the group to provide topic-specific information about living with an ostomy. Wellness House acknowledges and appreciates the assistance of DuPage Medical Group and the Ostomy Association of Greater Chicago in starting this group. Contact Karie Milewski-Carlson, Oncology Support Counselor, at 630.654.5114 or [kmcarlson@wellnesshouse.org](mailto:kmcarlson@wellnesshouse.org)



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month  
Early Detection Saves Lives!

## Can Grapefruit Juice Interfere With Some Prescription Medications?

Katherine Zeratsky, R.D., L.D. Mayo Clinic

Yes. Grapefruit and certain other citrus fruits, such as Seville oranges, can interfere with several kinds of prescription medications.

Don't take these interactions lightly. Some can cause potentially dangerous health problems. If you take prescription medication, ask with your doctor or pharmacist whether your medication interacts with grapefruit or other citrus products.

You may need to eliminate grapefruit products from your diet. Simply taking your medication and grapefruit product at different times doesn't stop the interaction. Alternately, you can ask your doctor if there's a comparable medication you can take that doesn't interact with grapefruit.

Problems arise because chemicals in the fruit can interfere with the enzymes that break down (metabolize) the medication in your digestive system. As a result, the medication may stay in your body for too short or too long a time. A medication that's broken down too quickly won't have time to work. On the other hand, a medication that stays in the body too long may build up to potentially dangerous levels.

The list of medications that can interact with grapefruit includes commonly prescribed medicines that:

- Fight infection
- Reduce cholesterol
- Treat high blood pressure
- Treat heart problems
- Prevent organ rejection in transplant recipients

Another potential problem is that some products may contain grapefruit but don't say so in the name or on the ingredients list. For example, numerous citrus-flavored soft drinks have been identified as possibly containing grapefruit juice or grapefruit extract.

Play it safe with prescription drugs. Always ask your doctor or pharmacist when you get a new prescription if it interacts with any foods or other medicines. If the answer is yes, ask whether you need to eliminate that food from your diet.

## Stoma Shape and Leakage

by New Beginnings, via Hernando Co. FL; and Contra Costa (CA) Contra Ostomy News via OSTOMY OUTLOOK Ostomy Association of North Central Oklahoma

Are you aware that stomas sometimes change shape? This can happen when you change from a standing to a sitting position. Mirrors are handy gadgets – take a look! The stoma that is round when you are lying down or standing may be oval when you sit down. This may be a source of a leaking problem and merits thought. Remember, the stoma is a portion of the intestines brought to the surface of the abdomen. The healthy red color of the stoma means there is a good blood supply. The natural lubricant of the intestines is mucus. No adhesive will stick to the stoma because of the mucosal lining.

Therefore, any part of the wafer that comes in contact with the mucus on the stoma will automatically refuse to stick. Thus, the seal around the stoma does not change even though the stoma shape changes. This means that if the stoma is oval in a sitting position, perhaps the opening on the wafer should be oval. This particularly applies to people who are sedentary most of the day. This is not an absolute rule, but a consideration if you find leakage a problem.

## What Really Happens if You Swallow Your Chewing Gum?

by The Daily Meal

So you've decided to swallow some chewing gum. Maybe it was unintentional — whatever. Maybe you just didn't feel like spitting it out. Maybe you were really hungry. We've all been told at one point or another — usually when we were kids, by other kids — that if we swallow chewing gum, it will stay in our stomach for a certain number of years, usually around seven. But is that really the case?

If you swallow gum, it'll do what everything else that goes into your stomach does: It'll pass through your digestive system and leave your body. It's won't necessarily be digested, because the gum base that chewing gum is made from can't be broken down by the body, but that just means that the digestive system will just keep it moving along undisturbed.

Now, there are some rare instances where chewing gum can cause a blockage in the digestive system, but this is only when huge amounts of chewing gum are swallowed in a very short period of time, or when a wad of 20 pieces is swallowed in one go. This is primarily an issue for very small children, however, because their digestive tracts are smaller in diameter than those of adults.

## Fight the Flu — One Shot at a Time

One of the best things you can do for your health is also the easiest: Get your yearly flu shot. It protects you and others in your community.

A smile  
is the light  
in the window  
of your face  
that tells people  
that your heart  
is at home.



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- Mark Twain



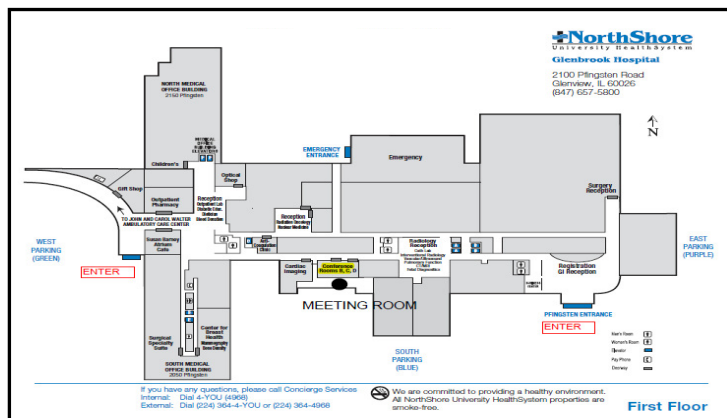
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## OAGC General Meetings

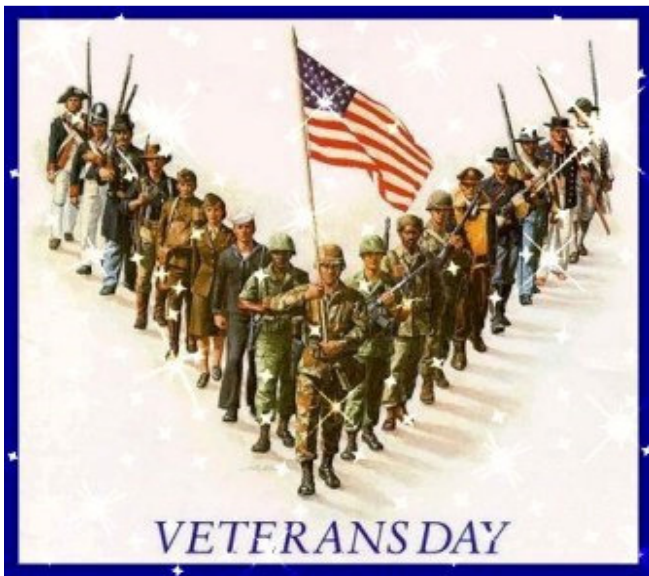
Glenbrook Hospital, 2100 Pfingsten Rd, Glenview, in the **first floor Conference Rooms C-D**.

There is **abundant free parking** including many handicapped spaces directly in front of the hospital. An information desk is just inside the Hospital's Pfingsten side Entrance. Upon entering, take the hallway to the left.



**Glenbrook Hospital** is bordered by Pfingsten Rd east, Hospital Dr. south and Landwehr Rd. west.

From I-294 take Willow Rd exit east to Landwehr Rd south. From I-94 take Willow Rd. exit west to Pfingsten Rd. south. From Waukegan (43) take Lake or Willow west to Pfingsten. The parking lot entrance is on Hospital Dr.



November 11

With respect, honor and gratitude,  
we remember all who have served.

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If you have a suggestion for a meeting or know someone you would like to invite to speak, contact Nancy Cassai, Vice President/Program Director at [cassainancy@gmail.com](mailto:cassainancy@gmail.com)

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## Ostomy Support Groups

By Fred Shulak

I was diagnosed with Ulcertive Colitis when I was four years old. After living with that dreaded disease for fifteen years I opted to have an ileostomy. I didn't know anything about having an ostomy except that it would allow me to lead a normal life. What I did know about an ileostomy is that if I wanted to go somewhere I wouldn't have to worry about whether or not there would be a conveniently located bathroom.

My ostomy surgery was in July of 1957 - 61 years ago. It posed some problems because there were no support organizations, no way to get information about what types of ostomy appliances were available and no way to get in touch with others who had ostomy surgery in order to learn from them. It became easier to connect with other ostomates and get information about ostomy surgery with the beginning of the internet.

However, the one thing that I feel made the most difference was the advent of ostomy support groups...such as the Ostomy Association of Greater Chicago (OAGC). I have treasured this group for the information which I have obtained from them and the information that I have learned from the other ostomates who attend the meetings.

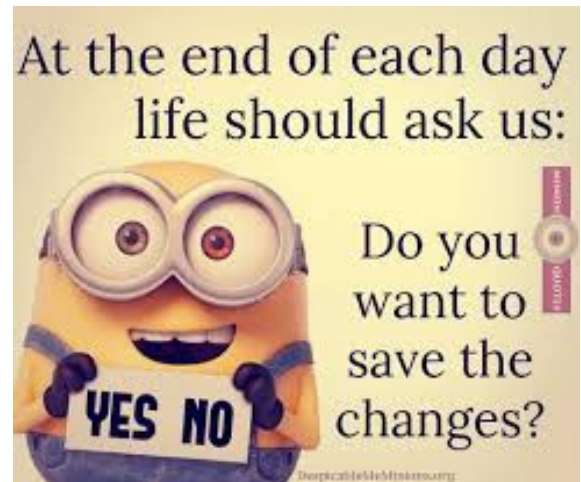
According to the United Ostomy Associations of America (UOAA), there are approximately 316 ostomy support groups located in 48 states. I would like to think that the members of these groups have found these groups as helpful as I have found the OAGC. However, this is not true. For various reasons ostomy groups around the country have ceased to exist. One of the prime reasons for this is lack of funds and another is dwindling attendance.

The biggest expenditure faced by our chapter is the publication of the newsletter - The New Outlook. We solicit donations to help pay for the newsletter and ask our members to receive the newsletter via the internet. Some have complied with our request, but many have not. In order to remain solvent and continue to furnish our members with a newsletter, the publication schedule has been cut back to four quarterly issues instead of 12 monthly issues.

If you would like to see the group continue to prosper we are asking for your donations in any

amount. Donations can be made to Ostomy Association of Greater Chicago and mailed to Tim Traznik, Treasurer/OAGC, 40 Fallstone Drive, Streamwood, IL 60107.

Our chapter looks forward to your continued support.



### **“More Water”**

One afternoon, a man went to his doctor and told him that he hasn't been feeling well lately. The doctor examined the man, left the room, and came back with three different bottles of pills.

The doctor said, “Take the green pill with a big glass of water when you wake up, the blue pill with a big glass of water after you eat lunch and just before going to bed, take the red pill with another big glass of water.”

Startled to be put on so much medicine, the man stammered, “Jeez Doc, exactly what is my problem?”

The doctor replied, “You're not drinking enough water.”

### **What's the Difference between Juicing and Blending?**

Juicing extracts liquid from fresh fruits and vegetables. This liquid contains most of the vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients but very little of the fiber found in whole fruits and vegetables. Blending, on the other hand, purées the edible parts of fruits and vegetables. Thus, less fiber is lost. Blending also results in higher levels of phytonutrients than juicing does.



Write down one thing you're grateful for every day. Research shows expressing gratitude may actually improve your mental and physical health.



*December 12 – 20*

"Balance out the good things and the bad that have happened in your life and you will have to acknowledge that you are still way ahead. You are unhappy because you have lost those things in which you took pleasure? But you can also take comfort in the likelihood that what is now making you miserable will also pass away."

— Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*

## *Heard You're An Ostomate*

by Louis J. Wray, from the UOA Library Archives

I heard that you're an ostomate. Is it true what I heard about you? That you have no guts, your bladder is gone, and that you're all washed up and through?

Yet, whenever I look at you, you're beaming with joy and grace. You never hint at the strife you've borne, disguised by the smile on your face. You seem to be a special breed, bent on helping others to live. Your suffering must have battered your life, yet you reach out and always forgive.

I'd think that you might be angry at the way Fate has picked on you. But, I'd never suspect it if you are, for your love always seems to shine through.

I assume your second chance at life makes each new day a pleasure. And, your thankfulness for health and friends makes itself a treasure. Now I better appreciate the Phoenix (bird), the symbol of your dear UOA: "Reborn from the ashes of disease." What a message of help this conveys.

See, I know you are an ostomate—a pattern you have set for me. Like you, I'll try to help others cope with their new way of life, cheerfully.

A second chance, reborn to serve, and as happy as can be. Ostomates inspire me and my friends with service offered so free. So out in the open—your secret is known, your formula for success is in view. You're an asset to this weary old world; we're blessed for having ostomates like you.



## Ostomy Association of Greater Chicago

### Confidential Membership Application

We invite you to join our association. You are especially welcome if you have an ostomy, are preparing for surgery, are a healthcare professional and/or have a loved one who has had surgery. We are a completely volunteer-operated ostomy support group. Our mission is to support, educate and advocate for people with ostomies.

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Ostomy:      Colostomy      Ileostomy      Urostomy      Continent Procedure

Date of surgery \_\_\_\_\_ Age Group   <21   21–35   35–50   51–65   66–80   80<

Donation enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

Attend one of our general meetings. There are always friendly people to talk with you. You may even want to participate in our association's leadership. We always need talented people to share in our good work. Membership is free (our funds come primarily through donations). Please mail this application to

Judy Svoboda, President  
605 Chatham Circle, Algonquin, IL 60102

► A very special thank you to everyone who donates to our association! Our largest expense, the cost of printing and mailing this newsletter, is continually increasing and is only made possible through the generous donations of our members.

To make a tax deductible donation, please make check payable to Ostomy Association of Greater Chicago or OAGC and bring to a meeting, or send to

Tim Traznik  
Treasurer/OAGC  
40 Fallstone Drive  
Streamwood, IL 60107

Donations can also be made online using a credit card: [www.uoachicago.org/donations](http://www.uoachicago.org/donations)

**Without you, we don't exist!**



### Anniversary Gift

As you celebrate the anniversary of your ostomy surgery each year, consider making a monetary gift to our Association. Checks should be made payable to the Ostomy Association of Greater Chicago and sent to the Treasurer at the address shown to the left.

### Memorial

Donations can be made to memorialize or honor individuals. Checks should be made payable to the Ostomy Association of Greater Chicago and sent to the address shown to the left. When sending a donation, be sure to include the name of the person being honored so that applicable acknowledgement can be made.

The information contained in this newsletter and on our website, is intended for educational/informational purposes only, and is not a substitute for the medical advice or care of a doctor, surgeon, WOCN, licensed pharmacist or other health care professional.

## A Change in My Body Helped My Heart Grow

By Ellyn Mantell

### Support Group Leader Compelled to Give Back

Over two and a half years ago, after 22 abdominal surgeries and countless bowel obstructions, my surgeon and I took a big step...a surgery that resulted in the formation of an ileostomy. As you may know from others in your support groups there are three major types of ostomies or stomas, which divert either stool (a colostomy or ileostomy) or urine (urostomy) from the organs nature gave us to do so. An ileostomy is created to enable stool from the small intestine, to leave the body into a "bag" or a pouch that adheres to an appliance secured on the belly.

I was ready for this body-altering procedure, had been ready for years, waiting for the signal that it was the right time to do the ostomy. And in March of 2014, my world became infinitely better, thanks to my wonderful surgeon (Dr. Paul Starker) and my amazing Ostomy nurse (Angela Natale-Ryan.) As part of my recovery, I attended my first Ostomy Support Group at Overlook Medical Center in Summit, New Jersey. It was May, just six-weeks post-op and I was shaky and more than a little confused by the new language I was learning, but was welcomed by the members. I returned in July for the next every-other-month meeting, and I felt so much healthier than I had ever felt possible over the 23 years of that chapter of my life...only a few months after my ostomy!

As providence would have it, coincidentally, our support group was asked to incorporate and as such, would need a president. Although I was the newest member of the group, I knew for certain, that I was the one for that job. I felt there was a greater purpose for me, and I couldn't sleep until I threw my hat into the ring! As with so many of these groups, membership was delighted to have someone volunteer (I prepared a mission statement, outline of items I wished to accomplish, goals and outreach for the community, etc. to show my determination and vision)...all needless, because the minute my hand went up, the job was mine!

I share this health issue with you...something many keep very private, because what I have gained by my openness has come back to me beyond measure. It is an amazing experience because I am "the one" with whom people in our area connect when they are told by their surgeon they should consider an ostomy, or they have awakened from surgery with one. My name is provided by the American Cancer Society or by some of the health "hotlines." I have a chance to make a difference, and that never gets old or tiresome. This summer, I became certified in becoming a "visitor" to those in the hospital recovering from their surgery. In many cases, I am the "face of normalcy" for these patients, and thankfully, I can show them a healthy woman. As many say, we who are ostomates look just like any other person walking into the room. Patients are able to ask me the question they cannot ask the surgeon or nurses....what kind of life will they really have, and what changes will they experience? It is with profound responsibility that I mentor those asking for my support and guidance...it is not lost on me that my positive feelings may very well make the difference in their ability to embrace their new body

We are all unique, and there are many reasons we find ourselves at a place where we need help. Fortunately for me, I am surrounded by loving family and friends, as well as devoted medical personnel. And our Ostomy Support Group has grown beautifully over these past months...I feel so proud of us. We laugh, we cry, we mourn, we fulfill each other's needs as only we can. Walking in each other's shoes is something that brings us together...and assisting new members to take their first and most important step is an amazing accomplishment! My mind, my body and my heart tell me there is more to us than we can ever imagine, until we have to imagine it...and then we watch ourselves grow!

Ellyn is the leader of the Union County Ostomy Support group in Summit, New Jersey: [ellynmantell@aol.com](mailto:ellynmantell@aol.com).