



# SHORT CIRCUIT

## AFFILIATED SUPPORT GROUP

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Our 45th Year! Serving Ostomates of Eastern Iowa since 1972    [www.iowaostomy.org](http://www.iowaostomy.org)    February 2017

### Welcome!

The Cedar Rapids / Iowa City Area Ostomy Support Group is dedicated to providing information, advocacy and service to our members, their caregivers, and to the intestinal and urinary diversion community at large.

### Our local chapter

We meet regularly to share experiences, provide mutual support and learn about the latest products and information for ostomy, urostomy, and intestinal diversions.

Meetings are held at area hospitals, and involve informal round-table discussions on topics of interest, potential new product demonstrations, occasional guest speakers, and a question and answer session with one of the local WOC nurses. Families and friends of ostomy and intestinal diversion patients are always welcome to attend.

For more information about the local chapter, contact us at 319-775-0175, online at [www.iowaostomy.org](http://www.iowaostomy.org), or find us on Facebook at Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Area Ostomy Support Group.

### The U.O.A.A.

The United Ostomy Associations of America is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The UOAA serves to unify and strengthen ostomy support groups in America. UOAA services include:  
• Advocacy • Non-profit Status • Conferences • The Phoenix magazine  
• Toll-free Help and Referral Line • Special Interest Groups  
• Ostomy Community Liaison

For more information, contact the UOAA at 800-826-0826, or at [www.ostomy.org](http://www.ostomy.org).



### From the Coordinator:

Hello everyone. I know it's been a good month but hopefully everyone had a great holiday and awesome start to 2017. I hope to have some great things happen this year for our support group. I think one of the coolest things is that Vicki came up with the idea to try and sell our donated overstock of supplies on Ebay. Vicki, Carol and I started that and it is going great.

I was able to visit Mt Mercy University in January to talk to nursing students about my life with an ostomy. I told my story and opened it up to have about 45 minutes of questions. They seemed extremely interested and had some great questions. There were even lots based on care while in the hospital so I am glad to see they want to learn.

Finally, I am really thinking about taking a bigger part in the UOAA. I am starting to get involved in advocacy. I may even think about running for a board member position. We will have to see what is open for the next vote. That will be coming out here soon. Maybe even before the February face to face meeting.

Until then I hope everyone is well.

*Sina Carlile*

## Need a Wound/Ostomy Continence Nurse (WOCN)?

St. Luke's UnityPoint Hospital  
1026 A Ave NE  
Cedar Rapids, IA  
Ostomy Clinic  
319-369-7538

Mercy Medical Center  
Cedar Rapids, IA  
Healing Center  
319-398-6400

Mercy Hospital  
Iowa City, IA  
Wound Center  
319-339-3967

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Are you interested in the Ostomy Education Day put on by the Iowa WOCNs? It will be held on Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 from 8am - 330pm. Guest speakers will be Brenda Elshager - ostomate and comedienne and Dr Raman - colorectal surgeon

If you have yet to go to this event held annually across Iowa you should consider going. I know I will be heading up there. We should be able to have carpooling opportunities available. You can register by emailing [iowaostomyday@gmail.com](mailto:iowaostomyday@gmail.com) and give them name, contact info, and number of people attending.

Registration for the event is FREE, Want to spend the night in Des Moines - rooms are available at Quality Inn for \$114 a night. You can reserve by calling 515-282-5251 and say you're going to the Ostomy Ed Day.

The SHORT CIRCUIT is the official newsletter of the Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Area Ostomy Support Group #171, and is published 6 times per year.

MEMBERSHIP is open to ostomates and their families, friends and caregivers. Dues are \$10 per year and include an email subscription to the SHORT CIRCUIT newsletter. Copies are also available free on our website at [www.iowaostomy.org](http://www.iowaostomy.org).

If you wish to subscribe to the printed edition of the newsletter there is an additional \$10 charge per year to cover the costs of printing and mailing.

Membership dues and print subscription fees are collected on the honor system. If you are reading this newsletter you are a member even if you are not able to attend meetings. Your membership fee is tax deductible and will help support educational activities for ostomates in eastern Iowa. Send membership dues and subscription fees to Vicki Kee, P.O. Box 5227, Coralville, IA 52241

Officers of the Cedar Rapids / Iowa City Area Ostomy Support Group

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319-775-0175

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## UPCOMING MEETING INFO

Thursday, Feb. 9, 2017 630pm	<b>Support Group meeting</b> Mercy Medical Center in Cedar Rapids. Meet in Training Room B. Park in the ramp at the east end, and enter the main doors by the Gift Shop. Take elevator to lower level.
Saturday, April 1, 2017 ***NEW***	Ostomy Education Day - Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines More information on page 2
Tuesday, April 18 2017 630pm	<b>Support Group Meeting</b> St Luke's Hospital in Cedar Rapids. Room 163 behind gift shop
Monday, May 15, 2017 ***NEW*** 630pm	<b>Support Group Meeting</b> Iowa River Landing in Coralville off I80. Usually in the lowest level. Ask at reception desk.
Thursday, June 22, 2017 630pm	<b>Support Group Meeting</b> Mercy Medical Center in Iowa City. Meet in the medical arts building across the street. Lower level. Signs will be posted by elevators.
Thursday, Aug. 10, 2017	<b>Support Group meeting</b> Mercy Medical Center in Cedar Rapids.
Tuesday, Sept 19, 2017	<b>Support Group Meeting</b> Iowa River Landing in Coralville off I80.
Tuesday, Oct. 17 2017	<b>Support Group Meeting</b> St Luke's Hospital in Cedar Rapids.
December 2017	Holiday Party - information as date gets closer

Meeting cancellations — If it becomes necessary to cancel a support group meeting due to weather conditions, the information will be posted on our website: [www.iowaostomy.org](http://www.iowaostomy.org). If you receive the Short Circuit via email, you will also receive an email notice of cancellations. If you suspect a meeting will be canceled because of inclement weather but don't have access to email, just give the group number 319-775-0175 a call to find out the status of the meeting.



## Can You Plan An ER Visit?

By: R. S. Elvey, OAGC via Ostomy Assn of Greater Chicago

All Ostomates have the experience of dealing with a medical condition, disease or traumatic injury that lead to the creation of their stomas. During my pre stoma days I saw many doctors for various treatments and tests. My most traumatic medical encounters were visits to the ER. I was a novice and knew nothing about how an ER worked or what to expect. As we mature our visits to the ER will become more numerous.

As Ostomates and consumers of emergency medical services, what do we really know about them? And when you can, how do you prepare for an ER visit? Every year U.S. News & World Report publishes their well-publicized list of the top ranked hospitals in America by their specialties. Unfortunately, the list of sixteen specialties does not include Emergency Services. You have to look long and hard to find a similar list for hospital emergency rooms. They do exist; two examples being "Healthgrades 2012 Emergency Medicine in American Hospitals" and the "Women's Choice Awards".

These studies analyzed the most common conditions treated, mortality rates and wait times for various services. Much of their information comes from patient surveys and Medicare. Like the U.S. News & World Report they also publish lists of recommended ER's. The very nature of the word emergency means the visit is not planned and this fact is not lost on the authors of these studies. They merely want you to consider outstanding ER's in your area.

For many Ostomates an ostomy is not our only medical condition. And the authors of these studies also realize that many medical emergencies require that you go to nearest ER as soon as possible. However, when the need arises they emphasize planning ahead in order to maximize your chances for a satisfactory outcome. From my own experience and research, I have put together the following items to take with you to the ER:

1. An emergency kit containing at least three days of your ostomy supplies.
2. Your complete medical history, written down in advance, to include a list of your current medications, an immunization history, your primary care doctor's name and contact information, contact information for all other doctors treating you and conditions, a list of allergies, insurance cards, name and telephone number of your emergency contact person and a photo ID.
3. If you have an ileostomy and a blockage take the "Ileostomy Blockage Treatment Card" available from United Ostomy Associations of America website, [www.ostomy.org](http://www.ostomy.org)
4. When possible take another person
5. A pad of paper and a pen

All of the above means you were able to communicate when you got to the ER. But what happens when you arrive unconscious or conscious but not able to speak? The ER staff will not know you or your medical history. For these types of occurrences medical ID's can be life savers for all ages and medical conditions. There are a variety of medical ID's available. They range from vinyl bands to metal bracelets and necklaces. The information provided is up to the individual. But what should be considered are emergency contacts, blood type, and medical conditions. The more information provided to first responders and ER staff will enhance their ability to treat you quickly and effectively. Increase your odds for a successful ER visit by planning ahead.



## ALLERGIC?? HOW TO TELL FOR SURE

Stillwater Ponca City (OK) Ostomy Outlook, June 2001  
via Winnipeg Inside/Out, Nov/Dec 2016

Many times I hear that people are allergic to adhesive tape, or paper tape, skin prep, or any number of different products that are used in ostomy care. Allergies can occur with any product; they can occur with the first use of a product or after years without problems. Most people never have an allergic reaction, but a few are plagued with multiple sensitivities.

However, many things assumed to be an "allergic" reaction may be another problem. It is important to know whether or not you are truly allergic to a product, because eliminating products reduces your options. Believing you are allergic may cause you not to try a pouch that might be perfect for you. Allergic reactions are usually severe and cause blisters and/or weeping skin wherever the pouch touches. .

### Two situations are frequently labeled as allergic by mistake:

First, if a skin sealant wipe is used, it needs to dry completely to allow the solvents to evaporate. If the pouch is applied while the solvents are still on the skin, sore skin can easily occur. Since the solvents can't evaporate through the skin barrier as they can through the paper tape collar, this will look like an allergy to the skin barrier. .

Second, each time you remove a pouch, the adhesive takes with it the top layer of dead skin cells. However, if you are removing a pouch frequently, cells can be removed faster than they are replaced. This is called "tape stripping." Everyone's skin reacts differently to having tape removed. But it's important to be gentle and not remove a pouch more frequently or quicker than necessary. Skin that is stripped will be sore in some spots and not in others. Sometimes skin around the stoma becomes fragile and strips easily, and a pouch and tape with very gentle adhesive must be found.

To check whether you are really allergic, take a small piece of skin barrier or tape and place it on the other side of your abdomen or, with the help of someone else, on your back. After 48 hours, take it off and see whether you are reacting. (If pain, itching or blistering occurs, take it off immediately.) If it's an allergy, you will react. If you have a history of allergies, test this way before trying on a new pouching system. It's better to have a patch of sore skin on your back than around the stoma, where you need a good seal. .

If you develop an allergy to a product you have used for a long time, you can call the manufacturer and find out if they have made changes in the manufacturing process. Calls from users are sometimes their first notice that the new improvements aren't working.

## How Weather Affects an Ostomy

Ostomyguide.com

The temperature and climate of the region in which you live can have a game-changing affect on how you wear your ostomy appliances. Especially useful for traveling to new climates, or for those who live in temperate zones with extreme temperatures each season, an ostomate has to adapt to these new conditions to keep a consistent wear time and maintain the reliability of their ostomy appliances.



There is indeed more concern over heat and its affects on ostomy appliances than cold. Colder climates are actually far more ideal than excessively hot temperatures when it comes to ostomy appliances, but dry air can sometimes be an issue to affect the skin, causing dryness and irritation.

A dry skin surface is actually the best condition for applying adhesives and ostomy appliances, but excessive dryness on any part of the skin (especially parts covered with adhesives and appliances...) are more susceptible to irritation.

A solution for dry air may be to try a low-cost humidifier indoors to increase the moisture in the air. Use moderation in how much humidity you increase indoors, however, as excess moisture can cause adhesives to loosen, and can also cause issues with mold in the home. .

How much humidity is good? Sticking within a range of 30-50% relative humidity (measured with a hygrometer) is a good range to keep skin from getting too dry without overwhelming you or your home.

## Some Good Advice About Your Medical Insurance Coverage

by BA A, RN via Insights, Ostomy Association of Southern New Jersey

So, your doctor ordered a test or treatment and your insurance company denied it. That is a typical cost saving method. OK, here is what you do:

1. Call the insurance company and tell them you want to speak with the "HIPPA Compliance/Privacy Officer." (By federal law, they have to have one.)
2. Then ask them for the NAMES as well as the CREDENTIALS of every person accessing your record to make that decision of denial. By law you have a right to that information.
3. They will almost always reverse the decision very shortly rather than admit that the committee is made of low paid HS graduates, looking at "criteria words," making the medical decision to deny your care. Even in the rare case it is made by medical personnel, it is unlikely that it is made by a board certified doctor in that specialty and they DO NOT WANT YOU TO KNOW THIS!
4. Any refusal should be reported to the US Office of Civil Rights (OCR.gov) as a HIPAA violation.



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

via Vancouver (BC) Ostomy HighLife

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 a 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 pouch
- How often should things be emptied
- How to hook up a night drainage system (urostomy)
- How to tell if the system is leaking
- Where are your supplies kept?
- Where can you buy these supplies if they run out?
- Insurance information, including plan number(s)
- Can you be placed on your abdomen if necessary for an extended period of time?
- Do you usually irrigate? (Colostomy)
- What medications do you usually take?
- What is the name of your WOC nurse (if you have one) 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.



Looking for information on ostomy products or ostomy related organizations? Contact information below.

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**Major Manufacturers** - most have an ostomy nurse on staff to answer your questions about products. Call or go to their website for free samples!

- Coloplast 888-726-7872 [www.coloplast.us](http://www.coloplast.us)
  - ConvaTec 800-422-8811 [www.convatec.com](http://www.convatec.com)
  - CyMed 800-582-0707 [www.cymed-ostomy.com](http://www.cymed-ostomy.com)
  - Hollister 800-323-4060 [www.hollister.com/us](http://www.hollister.com/us)
  - Marlen 800-321-0591 (via Edgepark)
  - Marlen 216-292-7060 (directly) [www.marlenmfg.com](http://www.marlenmfg.com)
  - Nu Hope 800-899-5017 [www.nu-hope.com](http://www.nu-hope.com)
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**Suppliers** - will send a free catalog featuring many brands of ostomy supplies. A great way to compare different manufacturer's products!

- AOS Medical Supply 800-858-5858 [www.mmsmedical.com/aos](http://www.mmsmedical.com/aos)
  - Byram Healthcare 877-902-9726 [www.byramhealthcare.com](http://www.byramhealthcare.com)
  - Duke Medical Supply 888-678-6692 [www.dukemedicalsupply.com](http://www.dukemedicalsupply.com)
  - Edgepark Medical 800-321-0591 [www.edgepark.com](http://www.edgepark.com)
  - Liberty Medical 888-844-2651 [www.libertymedical.com/ostomy/](http://www.libertymedical.com/ostomy/)
  - SGV Medical 800-395-6099 [www.sgvmedical.com](http://www.sgvmedical.com)
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**United Ostomy Associations of America**

- 800-826-0826 [www.ostomy.org](http://www.ostomy.org)

**Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society**

- 800-224-9626 [www.wocn.org](http://www.wocn.org)

**Friends of Ostomates Worldwide-USA**

- Donate unused supplies [www.fowusa.org](http://www.fowusa.org).

**Osto Group** free product for the uninsured

- 877-678-6690 [www.ostogroup.org](http://www.ostogroup.org)

**American Cancer Society**

- 800-227-2345 [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

**Crohn's & Colitis Foundation**

- 800-343-3637 [www.ccfa.org](http://www.ccfa.org)
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