

# IT'S IN THE BAG

Important



October 2023



## ST. CATHARINES MEETINGS:

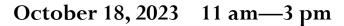
October 18—no evening meeting
Be sure to stop by our Ostomy Fair.
See details below.

SOUTH NIAGARA OSTOMY GROUP

In-person meetings postponed until further notice

## **OSTOMY FAIR DAY**

Mark Your Calendar!!



Grantham Lions Club (wheelchair accessible) 732 Niagara St., St. Catharines

MEET LOCAL OSTOMY VENDORS INCLUDING:

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Free Seminar 11:30-12:15\* — Roxie Demers, NSWOC Proper measuring of your stoma/appliance, and skin care, Q&A \*limited seating-first come, first served. Tickets available at welcome desk

FREE Private 15-min Appointments available with Roxie Demers, NSWOC

Call to book: (905) 321-2799 \*confidential voicemail\* (bring an ostomy supply change so that your assessment can be made)

Refreshments available. Free Admission & Parking.

Please call if you can help us out in any way that day.

## Location:

Grantham Lions Club (in the smaller hall)

732 Niagara St, (corner Parnell & Niagara St.) St. Cath.

Use Parnell Entrance

Doors open @ 7:00p.m.

Meeting starts @ 7:15p.m.

\* fully accessible—no stairs\*

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# Presidents Message

Welcome! As always, I hope everyone is doing well. I guess we're having another kick at Summer, the last few days have been hot again.



Remember that it's membership renewal time again. We depend on your support so we can do things like print the newsletter, hold our ostomy health fair day, and hold meetings to help educate people living with an ostomy. Please consider renewing your membership so we can continue with our mission. We now have a 2-tier membership; you can join Niagara Ostomy for \$30 per year, and if you wish to support Ostomy Canada you can do that with an additional \$25. New membership forms are in the newsletter and online. We now offer easy online transactions to pay your membership. Visit our website at www.niagaraostomy.com and scroll to the Become a Member page and follow the directions.

Speaking of newsletters, Cathy & Jim have been mailing the newsletters via snail mail to members without email for many years and they have decided that the time has come for them to step down. I want to thank them for the many years they have done this for. Ken has offered to take over mailing them for us, so he will be taking on that job.

We're not holding an evening meeting this month, but instead we're holding our annual Ostomy Health Fair day. You should try to attend this event. The Major Ostomy manufacturers will be there, as well as many ostomy related vendors. Roxie (NSWOC) is doing a session on proper measuring & care of peristomal skin. Be sure to get there early as space for her session is limited and a ticket is required for entry. Tickets are available at the Welcome Desk. Also, at the time of writing this message there are a few appointments left to see Roxie and discuss any ostomy related concerns you may have. I expect these spots will fill up very quickly. If you would like an appointment leave a confidential voice message at 905-321-

2799 and I will get back to you.

We have a great team of volunteers, but we still need some more help, please consider stepping up & volunteering with us. Your help will be greatly appreciated by everyone.

If anyone has topics or people they would like for guest speakers, please let us know. We're working on filling up the calendar for speakers at our 2024 meetings.

Cheers

John Molnar,

President



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#### **SHARE YOUR STORY**

Do you have a story you'd like to share with us for our newsletter? We'd love to hear from you about Life with your Ostomy.

# Why, you might ask?

Sharing our stories, tips and helpful advice is a powerful way to let others know that living a full, active life is possible after Ostomy Surgery. Many of us have learned along the way that our best learning comes from each other! Especially now, when we aren't able to meet in person, our newsletter provides a way to connect with people and inspire others.

How did you react when you heard you were go-

ing to need Ostomy Surgery? How did you deal with it then, and how are you dealing with it now? Do you have tips and helpful advice? Where do you find your best support?

Your privacy will be maintained, if that's what you prefer. Just be sure to mention that in your submission.

#### To submit:

Please send an email to Marlene, our newsletter editor. She will review submissions and contact you, if necessary.

Email to: marlene.h@niagaraostomy.com

Thank you, in advance.



#### **ASKTHE NSWOC**

Do you have questions related to your stoma care? You can now submit questions via our website and they will be answered by Roxie Demers, NSWOC.

Roxie Demers, has been a nurse for 33 years. She received her certification for International Interprofessional Wound Care Course from University of Toronto in 2017/2018. She decided to continue her education and completed the NSWOCC (Nurses Specialized in Wound Ostomy and Continence Canada) in 2020. She wrote the

Wound Ostomy and Continence Canadian Certification (WOCC(C)) in the fall and passed. She has worked at Saint Elizabeth Health Care Hamilton for approximately a year and a half, first as a wound and ostomy nurse and now a WOCC(C).

To submit your question, please visit our website www.niagaraostomy.com. Click on the "Support" tab. From there, scroll down and select "Ask the NSWOC". This will direct you to the form where you can send your question.

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## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Our Website: www.niagaraostomy.com

Our Email: info@niagaraostomy.com

## 2023 dates

Oct 18— Ostomy Fair 11am-3pm: NO EVENING MEETING

Nov 15– Roxie Demers, NSWOC — Accessories and question period

# **Telephone Numbers:**

December no meeting

Niagara Ostomy Association:

905-321-2799 (confidential voicemail)

Coloplast: (866) 293-6349

ConvaTec (800) 465-6302

Hollister: (800) 263-3236



Niagara Ostomy Association



@ NiagaraOstomy



# **Car Pooling**

If you need a ride or are available to pick up someone in your area for our meetings, please call us at

905 321 2799

Anyone that would like to maintain a list of people offering/needing rides, please call.

# NOTICE TO READERS:...

Products and methods mentioned in this newsletter are not endorsed by the Niagara Ostomy Association and may not be relevant to everyone. Consult your doctor or NSWOC nurse before deciding to use any of them.

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# NIAGARA OSTOMY ASSOCIATION Volunteers 2023

Web Master	Peter Folk
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Newsletter Assistant	Cathy Waldeck

#### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

To be of service and assistance to all people with ostomies in the

Niagara Region.



# 7 UNEXPECTED BENEFITS TO HAVING AN OSTOMY

By Allison Rosen, University of Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center, via Triangle Newsletter; and Inland NW "Insider"—via:Inside/Out September 2023

The first few years after my stage II colorectal cancer diagnosis were pretty rough. I was in and out of the hospital with infections, chained to the toilet by bowel issues, and crippled by social anxiety. This is not how I envisioned my life going at age 32.

I was one of those people who really, REALLY did not want a permanent ostomy. I resisted the idea of getting one for a long time because, in my mind, there was still such a negative stigma attached to it. After multiple surgeries, hospital stays and sepsis infections, though, I finally gave in and let my doctor create a permanent ileostomy for me in 2016.

I was surprised by how dramatically my life changed for the better once I had an ostomy. It took some time to accept my body's changes and the new way it functioned. But once I did, it opened my eyes to all the things I could do that I hadn't been able to do before. I finally started to live again.

Here are seven unexpected benefits of having an ostomy.

- 1. <u>I'll never hold up the bathroom line again.</u> Before my ostomy, I always used to have to sit in the aisle on an airplane, so I could get to the restroom quickly. I was also very aware of the beverage cart's location and got stressed and worried whenever it blocked my path. Colorectal cancer is more than a physical disease, it impacted me mentally too. My anxiety was high all the time. Now, I can sit by the window, admire the view, and just relax and enjoy the flight. I also never have to worry about being caught short when I'm out with my friends. I can eat, drink, and laugh at the movies, ballet, and symphony or on road trips - and not have to worry where the restroom is (unless I have to pee!). Because ostomy pouches are always "on" I could be sitting just about anywhere "going to the bathroom," and no one would be the wiser. That also means I'm one of the quickest people in and out of the bathroom. It only takes me a minute to empty my pouch. I don't even have to sit on the toilet seat!
- 2. <u>Goodbye</u>, hours spent on the toilet. My stool is collected in a pouch outside my abdomen, without any conscious effort on my part. So, I no

(Continued on page 7)

longer spend hours on the toilet because I'm constipated or have diarrhea. I did have to figure out my diet early on and adjust what I ate to normalize my output. But even when that's looser than I'd like ti to be, I still don't feel any sense of urgency. I just empty my pouch more frequently, increase my fiber intake and use an over thecounter anti-diarrheal medication until things settle down.

- 3. <u>Gas is no longer an issue.</u> The first few months after my surgery, I noticed it would sometimes make little random noises. I had no control over when and where this happened. Because of my ostomy's location though, it was easy to pass it off as my stomach growling because I was hungry. Now it hardly ever makes a sound. It also has a filter to release gas odorlessly. So I don't have to worry about making excuses or embarrassing myself. And since I don't pass gas in the usual way, I can't be blamed for a smelly room either. You'll just have to admit it was you or or blame the dog.
- 4. Outdoor adventures, ostomy style. I recently took my dream trip to South Africa with a dozen women from all over the United States. Together we explored Cape Town and the Winelands district, went on a safari in the Gondwana Game Reserve and climbed Table Mountain. I saw penguins and zebras just feet away from me in the wild. It was my dream trip that finally became a reality. I never would've felt comfortable doing any of that without my ostomy. When you're high up in the mountains or way out on the savannah, you have to make do with what you have and "pop a squat" if you need to go to the bathroom. Like most people, my fellow travelers had to pull down their pants and underwear and risk

There is hope and there is light. Being happy is a choice that you can make. It's your choice."

Daha

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(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7-Ostomy benefits)

getting bitten by insects and inadvertently exposing themselves while they did their business. I just inched my waistband aside and emptied my pouch.

- 5. My childhood dream of looking like a doll became a reality. Growing up, I played with dolls a lot and always wanted to look like one in particular. Little did I know that once I was an adult, I actually would resemble her, at least in one way. My entire large intestine, rectum, and anus had to be removed to treat my colorectal cancer, so the place where my anus used to be is now sewn up. I have what is known as a "Barbie butt" in the ostomy community.
- 6. There is a whole community of 'ostomates' out there. I was very hesitant to tell the first guy I dated seriously after the ostomy that I had one. But I finally did when I knew things were going to get physical. It turned out that my boyfriend's

grandfather had had one, too, so he knew exactly what it was and wasn't bothered by it at all. I had no idea how common ostomies were. I was astonished to discover how supportive strangers could be. To help break the stigma of ostomies, I finally built up the courage to post a picture and video of myself on social media with my ostomy pouch showing. The feedback was amazingly positive. Millions of people viewed the video, and hundreds of thousands commented. Many were fellow "ostomates" or knew someone who was. Having an ostomy is not glamorous. But sharing it so openly was liberating. It made me realize that there's a whole community of people out there like me, and many have become friends who 'get it."

7. <u>I have a new excuse to accessorize!</u> It's sort of a tradition in the ostomy community to give your ostomy a name since it's your constant companion and will never leave you. When I went on a surfing trip with a group of cancer survivors,

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(Continued from page 8-Ostomy Benefits)

they helped me accept my ostomy and name it "Fill." after I described its function. Right now, he's got a pouch cover on that says "\u2214UR:" (check your colon). It's my way of building awareness around colorectal cancer prevention. The pouches themselves are usually pretty plain—

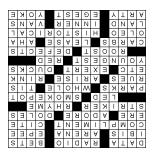
either white or tan. But you can dress them up any way you want - by hiding them under bright colourful covers as I do, decorating them with glue and sequins, or even painting them with your own designs. I see mine now as another excuse to accessorize.

8. Making peace with my ostomy. I'll be the first to admit that it's not easy to come to terms with having an ostomy. Accidents can happen, especially in the beginning, when you're still figuring out what works for you. But with the help and support of your care team, ostomy nurses, ostomy supply companies and other ostomates, you can deal with the challenges just like I did - one day at a time.

Source: Ostomy Outlook, Ostomy Association of North Central Oklahoma Sept. 2023

(Continued on page 14)





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\*St-Cyr, D., Gilbert, D., Dionne, II, & Kameka, N. (2022). Evaluation of SenSura® Mio Concave vs. non-concave appliances in people with outward peristomal body profiles (OPBP). NSWOCC 41st National Conference. Sponsored by Coloplast. Full study available on www.coloplast.ca. Please see complete product instructions for use, including all product indications, contraindications, precautions, and warnings
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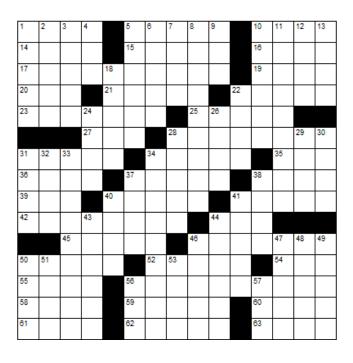
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### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or RENEWAL

#### **Our Mission**

To be of service and assistance to all people living with ostomies in the Niagara Region.

The Niagara Ostomy Association (NOA) is a volunteer driven, non-profit organization that provides practical help and emotional support to people with ostomies living in the Niagara Region of Ontario.

100% or your membership dollars is devoted to serving the Niagara Ostomy community via website, social media, newsletters (9/year), membership meetings, advocacy with the health care system, Ask the NSWOC service, Friendly Visitor Program, annual Ostomy Health Fair and affiliation with Ostomy Canada. Your membership is valued!

To become a member or renew, please complete this form. Payment can be made electronically via our website (www.niagaraostomy.com.) or by cheque.

Annual (membership year runs from Jan 1 to Dec 31):

NOA Membership (required) \$30.00 You will receive 9 newsletters, plus see box above

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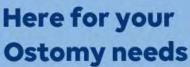
David Booth, Treasurer Unit 34, 525 Meadows Blvd. Mississauga, ON L4Z 1H2

Privacy Statement: NOA membership and Ostomy Canada information are not shared with anyone outside of the NOA and Ostomy Canada administration.

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2023

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#### **FACT FOR THE DAY**

Q: Why do we say "it costs and arm and a leg" when we talk about an expensive item?

A: One theory is that the term "an arm and a leg" originates from how portrait painting were priced. Paintings featuring just a head and shoulders were the cheapest. Larger, full-body paintings (i.e., those with arms and legs) were far more expensive. Detractors of this theory note that the term is far more recent than when portrait paintings were fashionable.