

Harry Cronje - A shared experience



During all this time I've not experienced a single leak, and nor have I experienced an adhesion failure. Added bonuses are the 1-way air release flap and the charcoal filter. It's of great comfort to know that the bag won't suddenly inflate like a party balloon, and that offending odours won't unexpectedly permeate the air around me.

As a result of unforeseen surgical complications, I'm required to self-catheterise once per week. I've performed this task for five months now using the Coloplast EasiCath catheters, and so far I've not suffered a single infection.

Via an informative newsletter, as well as by way of regular telephonic contact, the Coloplast Care service has offered helpful advice on stomal care, both preventative and curative. I've already shared much of this beneficial advice with others. For me personally, as a permanent ostomate, it's very reassuring to know that, if and when needed, friendly assistance is only a phone call away.

I want to express my gratitude to Coloplast. It is truly inspiring to realise that companies who produce high quality products still exist.

Since my colostomy surgery in August 2012, I've used the SenSura 1-piece maxi open ostomy bags. Originally I used the transparent bags, but for obvious reasons I soon switched to the opaque option. Being a stickler for cleanliness, I change my bag every three or four days.

Since my retirement, I do all my own gardening (mowing and trimming etc), and play golf two or three times per week. The quality of your products make it possible for me to continue this active lifestyle, and participate in general activities with self-assurance, while the levels of service I experience significantly ease the colostomy burden — thank you.



Care

1st Birthday Issue

Edition 5



Making life easier for people with intimate healthcare needs is the Coloplast Mission and after launching Coloplast Care (a free service) in June 2012, we feel we are "walking the talk".

We have touched the lives of more than 1300 new and existing people living with an ostomy via our call centre since the launch, with the number growing monthly. Feedback suggests that this service certainly makes a difference to the users of our products following discharge from hospital. Mostly, new users are faced with having to cope with this life changing experience in the "less secure environment" of the home and without the expertise of the healthcare professional. Now they have the peace of mind that the support from a Coloplast Care appliance specialist is only a phone call away.

In a recent study conducted in Korea, 88% of new ostomates interviewed and who had enrolled in Coloplast Care, expressed an increased level of confidence in managing their stoma following discharge as opposed to only 45.7% who had not enrolled in Coloplast Care service. This is clear evidence that a community support service (like Coloplast Care) extends the services of the hospital based ET nurse and facilitates the challenges experienced during the initial turbulent times post discharge.

In an under-resourced and over-burdened healthcare environment we at Coloplast believe that through partnering with hospitals, healthcare professionals and payers, we develop services and solutions that will only improve the quality of care for the ostomy community of South Africa.

From the Coloplast Care Team &
Dave Dudley
Country Manager Coloplast

More on Coloplast® Care

Coloplast Care:

- Touched the lives of more than 1300 ostomates in the past year.
- Of these approximately 850 were new patients faced with the challenges of approaching everyday life after a life changing surgery.

This turbulent period was made easier through Coloplast Care and its various offerings to members. Some of the components of this service include:

- Regular and personalised support
- Solutions and answers to practical problems and concerns
- Advise on use Coloplast appliances in order to improve quality of life
- Referral to a healthcare provider when necessary
- Newsletters that are pertinent to people living with a stoma
- Enabling ostomates to best manage their condition through informed decisions

A further 450 existing ostomates also chose to benefit from this service and testifies to the value of such a service in our South African market.

Coloplast is the global number 1 in Ostomy and Continence Care.

Coloplast Care is designed to help our users by providing tools, support and access to information in their transition. Coloplast Care is now implemented in 14 countries and around 7,000 new ostomates enrol for this service every month worldwide.



Coloplast® Care - Intimacy After Ostomy Surgery

Intimacy After Ostomy Surgery

After your ostomy surgery, you might have questions about how your surgery may affect your sexual health. Intimacy and intercourse are a natural part of life. That doesn't change when you've had ostomy surgery—you can still have a very satisfying sex life.

With this change to my body, how do my partner and I approach intimacy?



As you recover, you will be getting used to the way your stoma and pouch look. The same will be true for your partner. Despite what we see in ads and movies, a perfect body isn't needed for a fulfilling life or a fulfilling sex life. Feeling comfortable with these changes to your body is a critical first step in resuming intimacy.

It's important to feel good, not only physically but psychologically too. Anxiety and doubt affect both desire and sexual function. Anxiety also prevents you from focusing on your partner. Your self-esteem and confidence not only make you feel better generally, they help your partner feel better as well. Together, the two of you can rediscover the intimacy that you enjoyed before.

What if I don't feel quite ready for intercourse?

Once both of you are feeling more comfortable with the changes to your body, think about how you can approach sexual activity in a relaxed, non-pressured way. Be open to discussing your feelings, too, so that your partner doesn't misinterpret an initial reluctance to have intercourse. Share your concerns, and listen to your partner's concerns. Honesty in talking about this topic will only help build mutual trust and respect between the two of you. Be patient and allow both yourself and your partner the time you need.

Most important, remember that intimacy alone, without intercourse, can be fulfilling—and fun. Make time for holding each other, talking, kissing and cuddling. In time you both may feel ready for intercourse.

With this change to my body, how do my partner and I approach intimacy?

You might want to try positions that keep your weight off your stoma. Some options include lying side by side, front to back, or putting a pillow under your abdomen for support.

You should never have intercourse through the stoma. Depending on the reason for your surgery, you might need to avoid anal intercourse as well. If a woman has had vaginal reconstructive surgery, she will need her doctor's OK to resume vaginal intercourse. Talk with your doctor or your Stoma Care Nurse about any types of sexual activity that you should avoid.

What about the pouch?

Keeping the pouch clean and empty is a good idea. You may want to put a new pouch on beforehand, and there are several good options if you'd like to use a smaller pouch. Some people switch to a stoma cap. Other people may switch to a smaller mini-pouch or a closed-end pouch. All of these choices are smaller, less bulky and more discreet. (These smaller pouches are so often preferred for intimacy that they are known as "passion pouches.")

Switching to a smaller pouch—as well as keeping your pouch clean and deodorized—should allow you to be worry-free. Just make sure that you return to your regular-sized pouch afterwards.

Is intimate apparel a good option?

Definitely. It can help to secure the pouch with clothing, and can prevent pouch movement as your body moves. Intimate apparel can help you feel and look sexy too. Another product is an array of colourful pouch covers, which can allow you to feel more discrete.

A web search will give you many options. Men might want to consider tank tops, a cummerbund-type garment or boxers with a waistline that helps secure the pouch. Women might consider teddies, camisoles, wraps or silky robes, certain types of thongs, or panties with pouch pockets.

Are there potential problems I should know about?

Sometimes ostomy surgery involves removing the rectum. In men the nerves that regulate erection and ejaculation are near the rectum. In some cases men who have had this type of surgery have problems with erections. However, the majority of men encounter no problems having an orgasm.

For some women surgery might involve removing the rectum and part of the vagina. In these cases women may feel pain during intercourse. Different sexual positions or use of vaginal lubricants can be useful.

If you're unable to resume having intercourse, or if you're unable to find the same level of enjoyment as before, talk to others. Your doctor and Stoma Care Nurse are an excellent source of information.

Some final comments

Resuming or developing an intimate relationship is good sign that you've resumed living a full life after your surgery. Remember, your ostomy is a change to your body only. You are still the same person. And there is no reason why your intimate relationship with your partner should change.

Coloplast® Care - Keeping Your Skin Healthy



Keeping Your Skin Healthy

It's hard to overstate the importance of maintaining the health of your skin around the stoma. Skin that's healthy is much less likely to become irritated. The pouching system also attaches better to healthy skin. We've put together the following suggestions to help you keep your skin as healthy as possible.

Is skin irritation common?

According to a recent study, almost half of all people living with an ostomy have irritated skin around their stoma. But the study had two surprising findings. First, people often don't recognize that they have preventable skin irritation. Second, when people notice signs of skin irritation, they often don't realize they need help from their Stoma Care Nurse or doctor. By seeking help, the problem can be addressed and resolved before it gets out of hand.

What causes skin irritation?

Some people expect leakage from the stoma to be normal, but it's not. And leakage is the main cause of skin irritation. Once your skin becomes irritated, the adhesive on your barrier won't adhere properly to your skin. This leads to a vicious circle of more leakage and worsening skin irritation. The only way you will know if your skin is healthy around the stoma is to look!

What should I look for?

Get in the habit of checking the skin each time you change your barrier and clean the area. If you are unable to see the skin around the stoma, use a hand-held mirror. Then follow this routine and ask yourself these questions:

Examine your barrier before you remove it

What does it look like? Is any of the adhesive melted or washed away? Is there evidence that stool or urine has leaked underneath the barrier? (If so, your skin is directly exposed to the stool or urine from your ostomy, and this can cause skin irritation and / or breakdown.)

Examine your skin

What does it look like? Is there any leakage on my skin? Is there any adhesive residue? Is the skin colour the same as on the rest of my abdomen? Is there evidence of irritation, redness or rash? Does my skin feel sore? Are there open areas of skin?

How do I keep my skin healthy?

There are things you can do to prevent stool or urine from coming into contact with your skin. And even if your skin does become irritated, proper care should return your skin to good health.

- When cleaning the skin around the stoma, use water. If there is any adhesive residue on the skin after cleansing, leave it alone.
- Avoid using bath oils, or soaps with moisturizers and perfumes, since they can make it harder for the barrier to adhere to your skin.
- Before applying the barrier, make sure your skin is clean and completely dry.
- Adjust the hole in the barrier so that it fits exactly to the diameter of your stoma.
- Periodically check the size of your stoma. If there are any changes in stoma size, be sure to adjust the hole size of the barrier.
- Ensure full contact between your skin and the barrier by using your hand to put light pressure over the barrier for two or three minutes.

Change your base plate as soon as possible if you notice any discomfort, itching or leaking.

What should I do if I notice that my skin is irritated?

It is important to know what caused the skin irritation. See your Stoma Care Nurse or your doctor to find the underlying cause of the problem. Your Stoma Care Nurse can then help you decide if you need to make changes—perhaps checking your skin more carefully or making changes to your pouching system.

How can I find more information?

In addition to talking to your doctor or Stoma Care Nurse, there may be support groups in your area. Consider attending the groups, since many other people have faced and overcome the same challenges. You'll find that it can be very helpful to get suggestions from others. Or, for more one-on-one advice, you and your partner might want to talk to a therapist or counsellor. A counsellor is a good resource to help with both body image issues and intimacy issues.

If you have any questions regarding stoma care, product usage and availability please contact your Coloplast Consumer Care Specialist at 0861 61 2273 / 0861 61 CARE

Coloplast does not practice medicine. The recommendations and information in this material are not medical advice. Contact your healthcare professional for personal medical advice or diagnosis. IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, CALL 082 911.