



FEDAO

Federación Española de Asociaciones
de Ostomizados

Expatriate Ostomates of Spain (EOS)

Madrid Reg.170939Sec1ª CIF G53806055 Jávea Reg. Nº 63

OSTOMIZADOS EXTRANJEROS DE ESPAÑA
UNA ASOCIACIÓN SIN ÁNIMO DE LUCRO

HINTS AND TIPS: BOOKLET SPONSORED BY CONVATEC

Vol 1 2001

Foreword

This booklet, full of useful hints and tips, has been collated by ConvaTec from people who are living their lives successfully with their stoma.

The Hints and Tips which are described here., are a result of individuals trying and testing ideas which either they found for themselves or had been passed on from people who had found something that worked and wanted to share it.

There were many, many people who were kind enough to supply their hints and tips. Whilst not all those submitted were able to be included, what is found here is a broad range of hints and tips under various headings which will provide useful information and advice to you, a person wanting to live life to the full.

You are in good hands!

The parent company of ConvaTec - Bristol-Myers Squibb has been ranked America's most admired pharmaceutical company by FORTUNE magazine (2001). This acknowledgement highlights the excellence of our products and services and our people. As one of our valued customers you can rest assured that you have the very best people working to provide you with a first class service.

General Hints and Tips

Get a number of resealable plastic bags and make up all that is required for a change of appliance, put these in the bags and seal them. By having a couple made ready, when you are going anywhere. just slip one in your pocket and there is no messing about, you are ready for the day.
Mr Stuart Edwards

When having a bath I put a little water in my bag with a sponge and then re-clip the bottom of the bag. After my bath I open the end of the bag and flush the contents down the toilet. Mrs S Walford

Use a large clothes peg to peg up tops out of the way whilst dealing with colostomy pouch change and emptying. Mrs JA Spencer

Please remember when ordering prescriptions from your GP to give as much information as possible and include code numbers. Jackie Burns, Practice Nurse

If you are tired of your pouch cover dropping down your trouser leg try pinning it to your under-pants and you will have no more problems. Mr Dryden

As an ostomist of nearly thirty years experience, my advice to new ostomists is to keep your skin clean, find out which foods cause problems, use a good appliance then forget about it. . Mr R Jackson

I bought a cool bag for a six pack which is just a handy size for my equipment. It keeps things cool and well protected. Mrs Busfield

When I went into hospital for a small operation on my rectum, I was given small nylon pants to wear afterwards to hold a small dressing in place. I have been wearing them ever since. They are called "Daisies TM" and are like ladies tights with. out the legs. They hold everything nice and flat with no risk and can be worn by men and women. The larger branches of chemists sell them. Mrs Johnson

Use nappy wipes to clean around the stoma. Mr DW Keeper

Always carry an 'emergency' change kit, and keep one in your drawer at work. Nappy bags are excellent for the disposal of rubbish. Name withheld

Sometimes disabled loos are also baby-changing areas. A forgetful mother had left behind a nearly empty box of baby wipes. Ever since then I have used them when travelling. Sometime after this I started using them whenever Fred needed changing. My skin seems to appreciate this and is now as smooth as a baby's bum.. Miss C Taylor

It can be difficult to see what you're doing, as most bathrooms don't have lights in the right place. To overcome this problem I purchased a "Decker TM Snake Light" a light with its batteries at one end, a flexible middle section, and the light at the other end. Other companies make the same kind of light under a different name. They cost about £10. Wills Martin Smith

To make the application of stomahesive® paste easier, place the tube in some warm water i.e. in the sink in the bathroom. Leave it for a few minutes. When you go to apply it to the required area, it is much easier to squeeze out of the tube. Name withheld

Tips for people with a Colostomy

As I sometimes have a lot of discomfort with pancaking I have hit on a solution, I use an empty eye drops container and fill it with olive oil. One drop of oil in the replacement pouch, no mess or greasy hands, its perfect and problem solved. Ms J Hann

For anyone with damaged fingers, e.g. arthritis, removal of the thin filter cover from the pouch can be impossible, due to the difficulty in lifting the protruding tab on the cover. When preparing the pouch, either fold the tab double, or place a small piece of ribbon between the tab and the pouch, (avoiding contact with the filter cover). The tab can then be grasped and lifted more easily. Mrs C Robinson

An idea is to insert a couple of pieces of plastic foam or polystyrene into the bag when emptying it to help with pancaking, these are readily available from 11. pharmacist or other retailers who's goods are packed with these. Mr Carter

When I feel that irrigation is completed, I attach a small bag for the first few hours, rather than a cap, in case there is an "afterthought". Whatever comes out will be very liquid, since then I wear clothes which may inhibit its free flow to the bottom of the bag, I always cover the air vent with a patch to avoid stains on clothes. Dr A March

Instead of using toilet roll to clean the end of a drainable pouch; I use kitchen roll torn off .into squares. To remove anything from the end of the pouch I use a cotton bud. Miss M Chandler

My husband found that the plastic clip closing his ileostomy bag was chafing his leg so I cut a piece of tubigrip bandage about 3" cross-section, stitched along one open end and approximately 0.5" from each end across the top. The elastic in the bandage prevents it from slipping off. Mrs S Alexander

Change pouch last thing at night to get maximum benefit from filter during the night. Use high output drainable pouches at night, wonderful, can sleep through. Mrs C Clarke

Tips for people with a Urostomy

I had my urostomy operation three years ago, no problems. From my medical supplier I received a frame for the night bag to hang on, but as I seem to do a lot of "wee" in the night it was unstable. The main reason was to disguise it. We bought a small cheap waste bin and my husband stuck the coat hooks on it, it was fine for a while but the weight of the liquid some nights was too much so the solution was to pot-rivet - it, problem solved.. It looks like a pretty waste bin with its lacy cap on, my bed is high enough to hide it under at the top end, or it can be left in the bathroom. The main thing is its no longer a medical aid. As we travel quite often I have a soft nylon bag to put it into and it is completely disguised. When we go abroad I use a hotel bin and take two pegs, that works quite well'. Mrs GM Davies

When cleaning the body skin round the stoma, take care to clean the skin as near as possible to the circular area round the stoma. Neglect can cause a hard build-up of urine around the stoma, becoming difficult to remove if neglected. Mr DA Toothill

I put my night bag in a plastic bag for the night. If there should be any leaks this saves the situation. Mrs AE Dalgety

When I first had a urostomy six years ago, I was advised to put two or three thick towels on the floor under my night drainage bag in case of leaks, but I stood my night drainable bag and its stand inside a plastic carrier bag so it would catch any leaks instead of wetting the carpet etc. Just make sure the carrier bag doesn't have any of those little holes in it which so many now do. So simple and yet very effective. Mrs Taylor

Odour

Regarding your hints and tips book which I think is a wonderful idea. I must tell you of my discovery BREATH ASSURE CAPSULES™. Name withheld

The most effective and cheapest odour eater is the common or garden "match". After emptying or burping one's pouch, strike a match away from your pouch and hence the odour burns away. Mr M Whitworth

After suffering from a short spell of ulcerative colitis, I have had the ileostomy for nearly two years now. Since having my operation I have suffered with indigestion and the problem of smell when going to the toilet to empty my bag. After trying all sorts of different remedies without much success, I have recently discovered a remedy that really does reduce the smell problem, but unfortunately does not completely cure the indigestion problem. This product is called PAPAYA PLUS™ and is manufactured by a company called GERARD HOUSE. I am able to purchase this product from my local Safeway supermarket and a health food shop in Coventry. This product is not cheap at £4.99 for a hundred tablets, but I feel the benefits are worth it. Although I cannot recommend this product for people who get indigestion, I can for people who have a problem with smell. I find the best dosage for me is to take one tablet before and after meals. I then take one tablet before going to bed. MrWood

1. Charcoal tablets for wind from my chemist, called medicinal charcoal. 2. Eat marshmallow sweets, to move down your output in a natural way. Lisa Trickett

If you are worried about unwelcome smells in the bathroom, I have found burning a match away from your pouch is quite effective. Also when draining the bag away from home where water may not be available for rinsing, the end of the bag can be rolled up using a soft wire tie. (ConvaTec S205) Mrs J Cooper

I have found some tablets for 'odour' they are called Breath Assure™, which I buy from Boots. I take two with my breakfast and they really do take the smell away. Mrs C Hender .

As an ileostomist, I find the "AIRCHARM™" deodoriser most essential, which is in my bathroom, on the wall above the toilet cistern. One press of the button (it contains two batteries so no electrical wiring) and the small fan inside sends out pleasant odour. An adjusting screw inside the device determines the length of time you want the fan to run, so that you can have it running for one to ten minutes. Name withheld

I use lavender water in my bag as it kills the odour when I empty the bag. Mrs J Bell

Having been an ileostomist for over 30 years I still find the most effective way to mask odours in the smallest room is to strike a match and let it burn out. Mr B Westaway

When you buy your hair lacquer for your holiday make sure it is a heavy perfumed one. Then if you made a pong in the bathroom, spray your hair. Ms J Cowgill

Take one Amplex™ tablet am and pm rather than sucking them (used for bad breath) this helps deodorize faeces. Mrs J A Spencer

In cases where the generation of flatus is a problem it is much easier to release this if the two piece appliance is used, since the pouch having only been partially opened up can be resealed without any loss of adhesion as compared to a one piece pouch, Mr Carter

Take two to three tablets of charcoal after meals to absorb wind. Eat and drink slowly, try to be relaxed. Stoma reacts to stress causing more wind. Mrs C Clarke

Storage

Having a small bathroom I keep all my equipment in a briefcase which makes it portable and accessible in a confined space. Another useful item is having a piece of melamine chipboard that I place on the wash basin to which I clip a car rear mirror allowing me to see the underside of my stoma for cleaning purposes. Mr D Garland

Equipment: Coat hanger (wooden) some strong cotton material for back, two pieces of same material for pockets, velcros. All requirements, bags creams etc are kept in place can be hung behind towels in the bathroom when visiting or on holiday. It can be folded easily in your case. Mrs Horlock

Skin Care

I found out myself that the white of an egg used on sensitive skin around the stoma when it is very sore seems to cool it and forms a barrier when dry. Mr Boag

I use a hairdryer to dry around the skin when washing and changing appliance. This is more hygienic than a towel and dries the skin more effectively. The flange always adheres better. Mrs Mulvaney

Hairy Abdomens

I need to shave the abdomen around the stoma every couple of days, and I find that traces of adhesive which would otherwise be of no consequence tend to clog the razor, for which I use a

throwaway type intended for sensitive skin. If the skin is cleaned with adhesive remover wipe (Lift™ sachets) this does not happen. Dr A March

I have very tender skin and found shaving a real problem. I tried all kinds of razors including those used in hospitals, all without success. One day whilst trimming my beard I thought about using a beard trimmer without its adjustable guard. It worked a treat, no more sore skin! Care has to be taken when using it to keep it away from the stoma. The best method is to pull the trimmer gently towards the direction of growth, this prevents it digging in. The trimmer does not scratch the skin, leaves the hair just about a millimetre long and has the advantage that, if there is any residue from the adhesive left on the skin, it simply cuts right through it. I can honestly say that I have had no problems since I started this method. Wills Martin Smith

Practical changing tips

When changing an appliance the smell can be somewhat obliterated by burning a candle, even an ordinary domestic candle is very effective. Use a make-up sponge for washing the stoma and surrounding area. They are about 3" diameter and are easily available in pharmacies. When drying the area before putting on a new bag, dry off with a sheet of kitchen paper. Toilet paper or paper hankies disintegrate. The kitchen paper is a little stiff and is ideal for rubbing off any residual adhesive, from the flange that sticks to the skin. Name withheld

Disposing of the soiled bag and flange is easy. I retain the cardboard tubes of used toilet rolls and fold up the used bag and flange then roll them up and insert into the cardboard tube, placing it all into the plastic disposal bag and into the household waste bag. There is little smell and no possibility of the bag and flange unrolling. It works well and has done for over 20 years. E J Stanley

Take a garment, vest or pyjama top when changing your appliance and once in position place over the bag or flange just to warm up the flange for a few minutes This will help to mould to the body much better. Mr M Cooney

Two piece changing tips

A little tip is to wet the rim of the plastic on the flange and pouch before connecting. you will find it clips back much easier. Ms D Elliott

Besides my colostomy I suffer with Rheumatoid Arthritis and so until recently have found great difficulty sometimes clipping the pouch to the flange. My husband suggested a little moisture on the ring of the pouch might help and sure enough it makes life that much easier it just clicks on with no trouble. Mrs E Metcalf

To save any accidents of my pouch not snapping onto the flange properly I always have a mirror handy to check underneath is securely snapped into position. Mrs S Donnelly

If you use a two piece appliance with a plastic clip on the base of the bag, always carry a spare clip with you at all times. Mr J Watson

After putting the flange on oneself, warm it with a hair dryer, it helps it to stick on. Mr C H Jackson

I have a very active, high output ileostomy and use a two piece drainable system. (The wonderful ConvaTec S7467 series). Flange changing used to try the patients patience, no sooner was everything clean and dry, another trickle or spurt would entail starting again. Immediately post op, the nurses so carefully and patiently started again, at any time of day or night. At home, eventually I observed that "it" went quiet by dawn, now I do my weekly flange change immediately upon waking having laid out everything in the readiness the night before. This ploy catches my stoma in a resting mode and avoids the annoyance of much duplicated effort. RWR

Emptying pouches

I always carry a small make-up bag containing extra bags, flanges and disposal bags. It fits in my handbag easily. I also carry another zipped make-up bag that is made of thick rubbery material. When I change a bag, I do not empty it into the toilet. I quickly tie it up complete with contents in the plastic disposal bag and zip it into the empty make-up bag and then dispose of it when opportunity arises. Name withheld

(Are you a kneeler, croucher or sitter?) After my operation I was taught by the hospital nurses to kneel beside the loo and lean over the pan to empty the pouch which I personally, found uncomfortable, tiring and (it was winter) cold. A couple of weeks later a stoma nurse gave me a tip which, for me turned out to be the best advice I've had regarding life with a stoma. She said "why don't you try sitting on the toilet, just like before?". It worked a treat. I stress for me because we all know that what works for one person may not suit another. It is important to hold the bottom of the bag upwards before removing the clip, it can then be gently lowered and emptied. A sheet of toilet paper down the toilet before emptying will prevent splashing. John Bohn

Here's a tip for ileostomists when using a public toilet. As soon as I have emptied my bag I flush the toilet, then put my clothes back. This gives the cistern a chance to refill whilst I am adjusting my clothes, as it invariably needs another flush, so everything is cleaned away properly. Mrs B Walker

I have found that by placing two or three sheets of toilet paper to cover the porcelain area where you empty your pouch will solve the problem of toilet flushing (ref Spectrum Volume 15 Number 4). The flushing water, no matter how slow or short, should flush the toilet paper and contents of your pouch into the toilet bowl and out of sight. Ms E Weich

Always take your slippers off when emptying or changing your bag, because feet are much easier to clean if a mishap should occur. Mrs L Sturt

On the subject of flushing public loos; since I don't like holding up the queue, I usually after two flushes put a layer of several sheets of toilet paper to hide the residue and trust the next two or three occupants will eventually clear the bowl My conscience doesn't trouble me, worse things happen in public places. Name withheld

Obstruction

I used to suffer regular bouts of painful obstruction and found the best relief via a drug called Buscopan™. Which can be purchased over the counter or available on repeated prescription from your GP. Mr M Cooney

If you are unfortunate enough to suffer a blockage, a few drops of peppermint oil and some sugar in hot water will help to ease the spasms. Mrs W Busfield

Output

When I became an ostomist I worried that I would no longer be able to sleep on my tummy because of the swelling and the bag on my front. However I found that positioning a pillow under me, supporting my rib cage and stopping at waist level gave me enough room for accommodating the appliance; and still let me sleep comfortably. I think pants, knickers or support of some kind is wise for frequent twisters and a thick towel on top of bedding at waist, will prevent and lessen stains. To reduce stoma output at night the main meal of the day should be taken before 2pm. Ms M James

Use a light dosage of loperamide (Imodium™) to slow bowel activity at critical times. For those men who wear boxer shorts, pin your cloth overbag to your shorts to avoid the embarrassment of the cloth overbag sliding down your trouser leg. Mr R Dawson

Eating Quorn™ products will thicken and slow down output. Ms J Hutchinson

Eat a couple of marshmallows to thicken output. Eat evening meals early so that some of the output has gone through before bedtime. Mrs C Clarke

Diet

Try to make the evening meal low fibre foods (less output and better chance of sleeping through).

Foods that make output runny:

chocolate; wholemeal bread; and eggs.

Foods that increase output:

oranges; coleslaw; raw vegetables; and orange juice.

Mrs C Clarke

Hobbies

I do not swim but can sunbathe wearing a delightful swimsuit with a frill across the front of the skirt, designed by a company that advertise in the ia magazine. I have never felt in the least conspicuous in it and even my daughter gasped with admiration when she first saw me wearing it. Name withheld

A stoma works better when you take regular exercise e.g. walking. Mrs C Clarke

This is for ladies who are wondering if they dare go swimming and don't want to spend pounds on a special costume. All you need is an ordinary costume, even a cheap one, just make sure it is either black or has a pattern. Once you have got back into the water you won't regret it. Ms J Cowgill

Being a keen walker and enjoying a good days walk in the empty Northumbrian Hills, I find that if I eat a low fibre breakfast of white bread and a boiled egg. I can get through the day without having to empty my bag. (I eat fresh fruit and muesli!) Ms M Wallace

Intimacy

Reduce the worries over bedtime intimacy with your partner by wearing an elastic belt say three or four inches wide with Velcro fastening. The belt will hold or stabilise the pouch against the body and can easily be removed when appropriate.

Mr D Bancroft

My tip for lady 'ostomists' is to wear feminine french knickers over your briefs, and look good all the time. We have to try to accept our situation and move on. Mrs S Cammidge

Travel

Get everything ready to put in a handbag for a day out or travelling. C Jones

If you don't routinely have re-hydration sachets or packets with you then at least have the information written out on paper in your (sponge) appliance bag. 6 x 5ml flat teaspoon of glucose, 1 x 5ml flat teaspoon salt, 1 x 2.5ml heaped teaspoon sodium bicarbonate make this 1 litre. When travelling, never pass a lavatory (to empty a bag) unless you know where the next one is. PJF Mead

If possible, try to have an en-suite bathroom on holiday. Take plenty of extra supplies when you travel, and keep some in the hand luggage, together with a change of underwear and shorts or trousers (just in case!) ConvaTec produce a very useful card explaining the situation in several different languages. Your pharmacist will give you an international help-line number for your product in case you need more supplies. Sports drinks (i.e. cans of isotonic drinks) are excellent for quickly replacing minerals etc. if the system has been over-active. Name withheld

If you carry spare supplies in the car, remember to replace them often especially during the summer. You can get a seat belt adjuster from Halfords and similar shops, I have had my ileostomy for about seven years now and this was one of the first things I looked into. The adjuster is not expensive about £4, it does not affect driving or passenger safety as if you have to make a sudden stop the belt releases as normal, all you have to do then is to apply the clip again. Mr Stuart Edwards

On a long haul flight (or even a short flight) don't eat much beforehand, don't eat much during the flight, drink plenty, carry some toilet paper and a spare bag clip and go to the toilet when other people don't, such as before meals and when they have settled down to sleep. In countries where there are 'squat' toilets, empty your pouch in a black disposal bag, double wrap it and dispose of it later where there are flush toilets or rubbish bins. This can also apply when you are advised not to put toilet paper down a flushing toilet. If I am worried about leakages when sleeping in a hotel or any bed other than my own, I carry a thick-ish hand towel and lie on that. Mrs Busfield

Save bright red sale carrier bags and if you are taking a long holiday abroad, pack your stoma equipment in them. Scatter them throughout your luggage and that of your travelling companion. You can then spot your supplies easily. If you are going on a long haul flight, ask your GP to prescribe some Codeine Phosphate tablets. These will minimise any bowel action during the flight. Also useful for the mornings when you have to catch a bus immediately after. Try one or two beforehand though, to be sure they agree with you. Bruce McKenzie at ia (0800 018 4724) is very helpful with travel insurance and has covered my (fit) 80-year-old husband. Mrs Y Penfold

I have found the following very useful in helping me to travel as normally as possible with a colostomy,

1) A radar key and book

2) "Mini-kits" of zipped insulated bag (from Ostomart) containing two pouches, wipes and disposal bags. I carry one in my handbag and one in my rucksack when walking. I have usually managed to find a pub loo.

3) An insulated lunch bag in which I pack all my supplies when going on holiday. Mrs J Passey

It can be helpful to carry one of the Travel Certificates, supplied by the British Colostomy Association, and signed by a medical practitioner, to explain in eight languages why one positively insists on taking a carry-on bag bulging with medical supplies. The same certificate can often be made use of to obtain an aisle seat, if something goes wrong, you don't want to clamber over other people with it. Dr A March

When travelling use a disabled loo whenever you can, especially at the airport. They are bigger, have a basin, running water and a disposal unit. Mrs R Wide

For travel to USA & Canada in particular take along a small piece of masking tape (a self adhesive label would also suffice) and place it over the magic eye in the cubical prior to sitting down to empty your appliance. (For those not familiar with North American toilets they use a magic eye flushing system). Don't forget to remove the label or masking tape when you have finished. Mr B A Wyscombe

When going on holiday take a little guest towel with you, when you go to bed put it between your pouch and underwear just in case. You probably won't need it but you will sleep easier. A while ago we were given an address to get a key for the disabled toilet. It was one of the best things I ever did. One of the best tips was said by someone in Spectrum - Remember what it was like before your operation: unless you were very unlucky the answer will be a lot lot better since the operation. Ms J Cowgill

Why not send us your Hint or Tip for inclusion here???