



October 2021

# Ostomy Association of the Houston Area

## AFFILIATED SUPPORT GROUP

"We help ourselves by helping others to help themselves."

We are a volunteer-based organization dedicated to providing education, information, support and advocacy for people who have had or will have intestinal or urinary diversions.

P.O. Box 25164  
Houston, TX 77265-5164  
[www.ostomyhouston.org](http://www.ostomyhouston.org)

## Moisture Math & My Ileostomy

by Sarah Biggart (from UOAA, [ostomy.org](http://ostomy.org))

Though having ileostomy surgery 15 years ago gave me my life and freedom back, it does bring its own unique set of concerns and challenges in daily activities and pouch changing schedule. I typically change my full appliance every fifth day.

Change day is day one, and I change my entire pouching system again on day five. I feel confident in my appliance, and this changing system has worked really well for me. Leaks are few and far between; however, as is true for most ostomates, they do happen occasionally. Leaks can happen to all of us, although my longest stretch without a leak is five years—not too shabby!

For me, my daily routine includes showering, exercising, getting sweaty—and weather permitting—swimming and jacuzziing in our community pool with my friends, family and neighbors. Even while doing all of these regularly, a five day wear time holds up for me.

So now, let's talk what I like to call "Moisture Math", and the moisture related variables that may affect my wear time.

### Travel & Convenience

If I am going away for the weekend, or traveling, I will do a full pouch change the night before I leave. I have always been a "better safe than sorry" girl, and being an ostomate has reinforced that mindset. If I can get away with not having to do a full pouch change in an unfamiliar setting, I will, just for my own ease and comfort. I've been held up traveling before, and it can feel stressful and uncertain. When you've had to sleep in an airport, just the

added comfort of knowing I have a few days before needing to do a full change is just one less thing to be concerned about. So when setting off on a journey, I like to start with a freshly changed system.

### Weather

I live in a very mild climate, not too much heat and humidity at any given time. My Ostomysecrets® Underwear keeps my pouch away from my body, and it helps limit complaints about excessive heat and moisture. I am a person who enjoys travel and adventures! Sometimes I wind up in warmer, muggier parts of the world. On those sweaty days, walking and exploring in the heat, moisture math joins the pouching equation. A couple of summers ago my family, friends and I spent 10 days in Florida, in July. Between walking an average of 10 miles each day enjoying Walt Disney World, swimming in the pools, afternoon downpours daily and being a general sweaty mess, I went to a very strict every other day change.

(Continued on page 4)



We are a health support group, a non-profit, tax-exempt, organization of volunteers whose purpose is to provide mutual aid and education to persons who have ostomies and to their families. We are a Texas non-profit corporation. Membership fees and donations are tax deductible.

## Patient Visiting and Support Services

*Doctors and WOC Nurses, please note:*

Upon request from a doctor, nurse, or social worker, a specially trained visitor will be asked to contact an ostomy patient by phone or visit them in person before and/or after surgery. The visitor will be matched as nearly as possible according to sex, age, and type of ostomy. The visitor does not give medical advice, and there is no charge for this service. Please contact our Visitation Coordinator, Marian Newman at 713-392-5768, or [newmarian@gmail.com](mailto:newmarian@gmail.com).

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## News from the OAHA Board

On Saturday, October 2nd we celebrated World Ostomy Day around the world. In Houston we celebrated together at [Ray Miller Park](#), 1800 Eldridge Parkway, Houston, 77077. Allison Rosen, OAHA board member and UOAA's Ostomy Awareness Champion went live with UOAA on social media and we were in the background cheering her on. World Ostomy Day is celebrated every three years and this year the theme is *"Ostomates' Rights are Human Rights—anytime and anywhere!"*



You are also invited to join us at any or all of our virtual monthly meetings which are listed in this newsletter. Don't forget to include your spouse, partner, family members and caregivers as we are a warm and welcoming group. Our virtual meetings offer interesting and useful topics and give you an opportunity to participate and ask questions and they offer some fellowship during these COVID stay-at-home times.

Saturday, November 13, 2021—[Get Your Rear in Gear Houston!](#) This is a Colon Cancer Coalition event and you can participate virtually or in-person. Location: Constellation Field—Sugar Land Stadium Parking lot, 1 Stadium Drive, Sugar Land, TX 77498. Opening Ceremony is at 8:45 a.m. followed by a Kid's Fun Run, 5K Timed Run/untimed run. Better hurry and pre-register early so you can snag a great race t-shirt!

If you missed the UOAA's Ostomy Academy quarterly webinars, you can find them on YouTube but, better yet, register with this link: [Ostomy Academy—Education for Everyone](#). Here's the link to their first installment of this free webinar series: [Total Body Ostomy Health—June 9, 2021](#). And here is the link to the September 14, 2021 program: [Educate & Navigate: Life with an Ostomy: ABCs of Ostomies](#).

## Central Group News

We had a wonderful September joint meeting with our Central and Northwest Groups. Patti Suler is a master Zoom operator and Allison Rosen's presentation "Living Beyond Colon Cancer" was both interesting and inspiring. Thank you Allison, Patti, and all who attended.

Everyone is invited to join us on **Monday, October 18th** at our virtual Central Ostomy support group meeting. We will have a presentation from Lisa Osterhaus, Ostomy Sales Specialist with Hollister Incorporated. The program begins at 7 pm and the Zoom meeting details are in your email—I hope to see you there!

The Ostomy Association of the Houston Area provides support for people with ostomies. You know this but not everyone who needs support does. Please, help us spread the word that we exist and we are here to help support patients and their families in the practical and emotional adjustments to an ostomy.

Recently, a dear friend contacted me. Her husband had emergency surgery. The culprit, diverticulitis, caused a rupture in his large intestine and he now has a temporary ostomy. He's at Memorial Hermann—Memorial City Hospital in ICU. On the third day following surgery, they were visited by an ostomy nurse and I was thrilled to learn Memorial Hermann—Memorial City Hospital now has an ostomy nurse on staff. They did not have one when I had my surgery back in 2003. The ostomy nurse brought them a folder with all kinds of ostomy information and a bag of Coloplast ostomy supplies. Upon reviewing the literature in the folder, I found lots of great information about living with an ostomy, distributors for ordering supplies, etc. but I was very disappointed there was no mention of the Ostomy Association of the Houston Area and our fabulous local support groups. I will be contacting the nurse and sharing with her our association and asking her to add our information with her packets.

So, my message to you is this: Although we have been supporting ostomates in and around Houston for more than 60 years, we need to do a better job getting our name and information out to those considering ostomy surgery, those undergoing ostomy surgery and those living with an ostomy. Please, share our newsletters, our patient visiting and support services, and our website Ostomy Association of the Houston Area ([ostomyhouston.org](http://ostomyhouston.org)). We don't want any ostomate going through this life saving surgery without the support they need—we can HELP!

Thank you!

**Kathleen Duplessis, President, OAHA, 713-299-3180**

We encourage you to bring your spouse or significant other and members of your immediate family to our meetings.

## HOPE—TCH Woodlands, Pediatric Group News

The HOPE group will not be meeting in October. You are welcome to join the other support groups listed in this newsletter.

**MaryAnne Lewis**, [maryannelewis@hotmail.com](mailto:maryannelewis@hotmail.com) or  
281-948-1490

## Baytown Group News

Baytown Ostomy Support Group did not meet in September. We will meet virtually on Monday, October 18 from 6:00-7:00 p.m. We hope you will join us!

Sincerely,

**Cindy Barefield, BSN, RN-BC, CWOCN**  
281-428-3033, [cbarefield@houstonmethodist.org](mailto:cbarefield@houstonmethodist.org)

## Sugar Land Group News

The Houston Methodist Sugar Land Ostomy Support Group met on September 16, 2021 at 6:00 PM. Shannon Triplett provided us with speaker Kristen Furey, an ostomate who shared her personal journey and her commitment to helping others who have ostomies. Very inspiring and key points from Kristen include:

- Using an odor eliminator (M-9 and Ozium were mentioned)
- Using an ostomy belt for confidence in that bag hugging your stoma
- Sample other bags if your bag is not working for your lifestyle
- Consider possible use of an ostomy wrap that may relieve any anxiety about your bag not being secure
- Seek help if you need it

The presentation was followed by a question and answer session.

Our next meeting will be October 21, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. Topic to be determined. For more information please contact Joan Burnham (info below)

**Joan Burnham, MSN, RN, OCN, MEDSURG-BC**  
Oncology Nurse Navigator  
281-274-0188 [jmburnham@houstonmethodist.org](mailto:jmburnham@houstonmethodist.org)

## Northwest Group News

The Northwest Group joined with the Central Group for a presentation by new board member Allison Rosen. Sparkles rocked it! Everyone loved being a part of her journey as she shared both the good and bad parts of her journey. She left us with the following wisdoms:

- Attitude is Everything
- Celebrate the little victories.
- Stomas are life-saving—enjoy your life the best way you can.

Next month the Northwest Group is not having a meeting and encourages every member, their families and friends, to join the Ostomy Association of the Houston Area in celebrating World Ostomy Day—see details elsewhere in the newsletter.

**Billy Locke**  
337-515-6354



United Ostomy Associations of America  
8th NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
**2022 HOUSTON TEXAS**  
Embracing New Frontiers  
August 11-13

The link below will take you to the new 2022 announcement for the UOAA's 8th National Conference which will be in Houston at the **Royal Sonesta Houston Galleria Hotel**.

<https://www.ostomy.org/event/uoa-8th-national-conference/>



## Moisture Math & My Ileostomy *(continued from page 1)*

It was more moisture than I typically deal with, and going back to my better safe than sorry mentality, it seemed like my best course of action. My sting free ostomy care products helped to make frequent pouch changes more gentle on my peristomal skin. I would do my changes at night in our room, in the air conditioning, so that my wafer had plenty of time to adhere to my skin before heading back into the sweltering Florida heat.

### Daily Activity:

We all find our own way of managing our changing schedule, most Ostomy Nurses (WOC nurses) would recommend 3–5 days of wear time. What I would definitely advise against is waiting until you HAVE to change due to a leak. Before you realize you have a problem, waste is coming into contact with your peristomal skin, and that may lead to skin damage. Above all, you want to keep your skin healthy, happy and intact. So when would my daily activity impact my wear time? Again it's moisture math! I mentioned earlier that I like to swim and jacuzzi; a quick dip for an hour or so is very different than a big day out that involves being in a wet bathing suit all day. If I am planning a big day out on the water, in the pool, at a beach or waterpark, I figure that in to my changing schedule. For example if day one was Thursday, and day three is a big day out involving water, when I get home, I'll typically shower and do a full change.

I'm always mitigating risk, and making smart, informed decisions regarding my ostomy. Adjusting my routine accordingly to moisture variables helps to keep my peristomal skin healthy allowing me to enjoy whatever life brings my way. Whether you are new to the ostomy world, or a seasoned pro like myself, planning ahead—just a little—may help you to experience life to the fullest.

Editor's note: This educational article is from one of our UOAA's sponsors, ConvaTec. Sponsor support along with donations from readers like you help to maintain our website and the free trusted resources of UOAA, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

## Support is Crucial

*Written by: Brenda Elsagher, Director of Affiliated Support Group (ASG) Affairs, United Ostomy Association of America (ostomy.org)*

Support. I'm not talking about my bra, although it could win an Oscar for a supporting role! I'm talking about the kind of encouragement you get from knowing another person with an ostomy.



I freaked out when I was 39 and had to have a colostomy. I wanted a point of reference and needed to talk to someone who had a stoma. I wanted to know what to expect; I wanted to prepare my body and mind for the changes coming my way. There was no internet and no social media. I didn't even know there was any other kind of ostomy besides a colostomy.

My Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurse (WOC Nurse) was a great source of comfort. She calmly explained, without horror, that excrement (OK, I think she actually said "stool"—and I wouldn't have used either of those words) would be coming out of my abdomen and into a bag that would somehow adhere to my body.

She made it sound like it would become so natural, as if I was adding a quart of milk to my shopping list. No big deal. You'll get this in no time at all. And she said all of this with a confident smile—a genuine one, not a fake one like when people are trying to help you through something awful. I felt she meant it! So, I let myself believe her.

During one of my subsequent visits to her office, I saw a newsletter that listed a meeting time for people living with ostomies. I went to the meeting, and realized that this was my tribe. For many attendees, these gatherings were the only ostomy support they had, other than their loved ones who tried to understand but could never quite get it. Besides, here were people I could eat a meal with while talking about changing ostomy pouches. You can't do that with every crowd! I met life-long friends at those meetings, and that was an unexpected perk.

Then I heard of a conference, the United Ostomy Associations of America (UOAA) national conference, where people came from all over the USA, and some from Canada and other countries too. It featured classes, social events, great speakers, and time to get to know more people with ostomies. A young man I talked to recently told me that he met someone at the 2009 conference who changed his life and made all the difference. If we only knew the power of a quiet conversation and how its impact can be phenomenal. We can be a resource for one another. That's why I suggest regular telephone check-ins or video calls with UOAA Affiliated Support Groups (ASGs), because both can play a crucial role in helping someone feel connected.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Central Group

**Date:** Monday, October 18, 2021  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Place:** Virtual Meeting (Please contact your group leader for log-in information)  
**Program:** Guest Speaker: Lisa Osterhaus, Ostomy Sales Specialist with Hollister Incorporated  
**Contact:** Denise Parsons 713-824-8841 [rockynme2@gmail.com](mailto:rockynme2@gmail.com)

## Baytown Group

**Date:** Monday, October 18, 2021  
**Time:** 6:00 p.m.  
**Place:** Virtual Meeting (Current Baytown Support Group members have been invited.)  
**Program:** Presentation from the TSA. *“Traveling with an Ostomy: Considerations for Medication, Medical Equipment, TSA Pre-Check and READ ID”*  
**Contact:** Cindy Barefield, CWOCN, 281-428-3033

## Northwest Group

**Date:** No Meeting This Month  
**Contact:** Billy Locke 337-515-6354

## Sugar Land Group

**Date:** Thursday, October 21, 2021  
**Time:** 6:00 p.m.  
**Place:** Virtual Webex Meeting (Information is provided in the email of your October Newsletter.)  
**Program:** Topic TBD  
**Contact:** RSVP to Joan at 281-274-0188 or [jmburnham@houstonmethodist.org](mailto:jmburnham@houstonmethodist.org)  
**Contact:** Joan Burnham, MSN, RN, OCN, RN-BC, Oncology Nurse Navigator (info above)

## Woodlands Pediatric Group

**Date:** No meeting in October—Join one of the available group meetings this month.  
**Contact:** MaryAnne Lewis, [maryannelewis@hotmail.com](mailto:maryannelewis@hotmail.com) or 281-948-1490

## J-Pouch

For J Pouch questions, attend any of our group meetings, or call or text Ron Meisinger at 281-491-8220

## Opportunities and Announcements

### Use Those Shopping Cards

Kroger (LB326) and Randalls (3698) return a percentage of your purchases to the Ostomy Association on a quarterly basis. For information about shopping cards, please visit the website: <http://www.ostomyhouston.org/>

### Anniversary Gift

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

### AmazonSmile

On your first visit to AmazonSmile ([smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)), you are prompted to select a charitable organization from the list of organizations. You can change your selection at any time. To change your charitable organization: Sign in to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) on your desktop or mobile phone browser. From your desktop, go to Your Account from the navigation at the top of any page, and then select the option to Change your Charity. Or, from your mobile browser, select Change your Charity from the options at the bottom of the page. Select Ostomy Association of the Houston Area as your charity.

### Memorial Fund

Donations can be made to our Memorial Fund to memorialize or honor individuals. Checks should be made payable to the ***Ostomy Association of the Houston Area*** and sent to the address below. When sending a donation, be sure to include the name of the person being honored so that acknowledgement can be sent.

### Moving? Changing Your Email Address?

Please make sure we have your current contact information so we can reach you by email, U.S. mail, or phone. Send updates to Lorette Bauarschi at [lorette@bauarschilaw.com](mailto:lorette@bauarschilaw.com).

### For Anniversary Gifts, Memorial Donations, Mailing Changes, or Sponsorships, please send all correspondence to:

Ostomy Association of the Houston Area  
 Attn: Mike McGinity, Treasurer  
 P. O. Box 25164  
 Houston, TX 77265-5164

(When sending a donation, please include the name of the person being honored so that appropriate acknowledgement can be sent.)



The **United Ostomy Associations of America (UOAA)** can be contacted at:  
[www.ostomy.org](http://www.ostomy.org) or **800-826-0826**

## WOC Nurse Directory

Cindy Barefield, RN, CWOCN (281) 428-3033  
Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital  
[cbarefield@houstonmethodist.org](mailto:cbarefield@houstonmethodist.org)

Pat Thompson RN, BSN, CWON (281) 397-2799  
[Patricia.Thompson6@hcahealthcare.com](mailto:Patricia.Thompson6@hcahealthcare.com)



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## Support is Crucial *(continued from page 4)*

I also found information galore and updates on the latest innovative technology for people with ostomies in *The Phoenix* magazine (the official publication of the UOAA), which still exists today. Not long after, I got America Online (AOL) and felt like I was on the forefront of technology. I had a computer, and now the internet. Imagine horns blasting – my world opened up and the exchange of information worldwide was awesome. Even more ways to communicate! A woman in Colorado who read my book, “If the Battle is Over, Why am I Still In Uniform,” emailed me, decided to get a colonoscopy, and was spared from cancer. That is a satisfying feeling, to know you gave up a year of your life to write a book and it saved another.

I began to speak across the USA. Who would have thought that 25 years later I am still talking about bowels and butts, or dare I say the lack of them in some cases? The people I have met, the conversations I have had, the opportunities that have come my way—all because I chose to meet with a small group of people. That experience led to an abundance of support, not only for me but for others I know with ostomies or continent diversions, because of all that we shared. Some shared their misery, some shared their success, and some listened, learned, and began to feel that they could deal with their situations. Finding the group was

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ASC2019

life enhancing, and even life-saving in many cases. I kept coming to help others, but have been helped in return many times over. A phrase that I often heard at the meetings was, “Someone reached out to me in the hospital, and I want to do the same.”

In my new role as the UOAA Director of ASG Affairs, I have come full circle as a volunteer. I meet so many people across the USA that are actively reaching out to others, and helping them on their paths to recovery of mind, body, and spirit. I am their cheerleader. Sometimes I can offer a suggestion or teach them how to use Zoom to stay connected. I have always known that the UOAA had our backs but I have now found so many more resources on their website that I never knew existed. There are over 300 ostomy support groups in the USA for people with ostomies and continent diversions. And for people who don't like to go to group meetings, there is an individual membership too that gives them full access to an abundance of resources.

There is no right way or wrong way to have an ostomy. You don't have to shout it out to the world, but there also is no reason to be ashamed about it. I honor your privacy, and thank you for honoring my desire to be public. Both are good. We are alive and grateful!

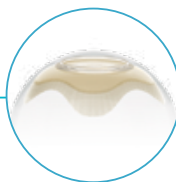


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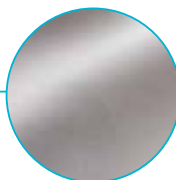
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## Membership Application

Membership in the Ostomy Association of the Houston Area requires one easy payment. Please complete the following form and mail as directed with payment as shown. Dues of **\$25.00 per year** are payable to:

**Ostomy Association of the Houston Area, Attention: Treasurer**  
**P. O. Box 25164, Houston, TX 77265-5164**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: **(required)** \_\_\_\_\_

Surgery Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for surgery ☐ Crohn's ☐ Ulcerative Colitis ☐ Cancer ☐ Birth Defects ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to English, I also speak the following language(s). Foreign language spoken: \_\_\_\_\_

Why do we ask this? We have a patient visiting program and we are occasionally contacted by ostomates who are not fluent in English and we look to our membership to assist with communication.

### Procedure or Relationship:

To help us complete our records, please answer the following.

**Check all that apply.**

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colostomy         | <input type="checkbox"/> Continent Ileostomy | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent of Child with procedure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ileostomy         | <input type="checkbox"/> Continent Urostomy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse/Family Member           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urinary Diversion | <input type="checkbox"/> Pull-Through        | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____      | <input type="checkbox"/> J-Pouch             | <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse                          |

*Membership benefits include:  
Monthly Support/Information  
Meetings, Social Events,  
Monthly Newsletter*

☐ I would like to attend meetings with the **(please circle one)**:

Central Group    Baytown Group    Northwest Group    Sugar Land Group    Woodlands Pediatric Group

☐ I would like to become a member but cannot pay dues at this time. *(This will be kept confidential.)*

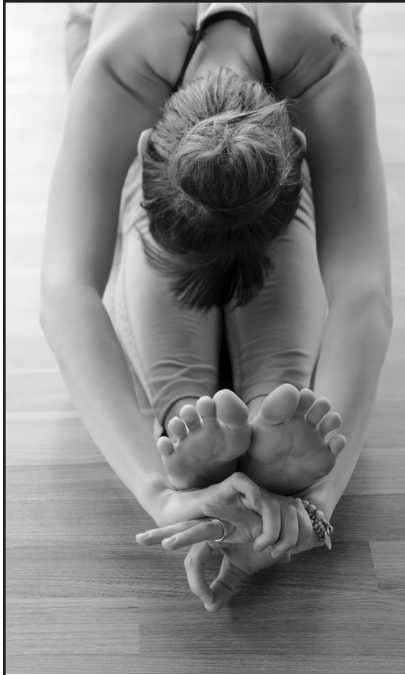
I learned about the Ostomy Association from

☐ WOC Nurse ☐ Physician ☐ Newsletter ☐ Surgical Shop ☐ Website ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in volunteering. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have enclosed an additional \$\_\_\_\_\_ as a donation to support the association's mission of helping ostomates.





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<sup>†</sup>Global User Evaluation. Data on file, Hollister Incorporated.

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