



Make a note...

Mid-Island Ostomy Group

will hold its next

COFFEE BREAK

beginning at 10:30 a.m. on

FRI., APR. 5, 2019

**Sessions are held in the second floor meeting room
of Country Grocer on Bowen Road in Nanaimo**

**Access is via the stairs to the left of the entrance to the
store cafeteria**

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These are not business style meetings but rather just a group of ostomates, families and friends who meet once a month to spend some time in informal conversation as well as discussions on the various aspects of living with an ostomy.

Newcomers and visitors are always welcome

PHOTO: A sure sign of Spring, as a lone crow chooses the highest piece of driftwood on the beach to loudly proclaim the area as his territory. Fair warning to any bird that may be passing anywhere near his nesting site. The few people seen on the pebble beach at Pipers Lagoon give the lie to the fact that the parking lot is crammed with vehicles as their owners and passengers scout out the paths and trails away from the cold breeze coming off the ocean.

Recent weather has swung wildly from a surprising late heavy snowfall that shut down all forms traffic to temperatures reaching 100-year record-breaking highs.



COFFEE BREAK

NEWS !!!

It came as a surprise to find, with a bit of research, that April 5 Coffee Break will mark the sixth anniversary of Coffee Breaks and the very beginning of Mid-Island Ostomy Group. Coincidentally, six years ago April 5, 2013 also occurred on a Friday.

The first Coffee Break get-together was held in the cafeteria of Country Grocer, with a half dozen people seated around a couple of tables. As time passed and word spread it snowballed into a problem when we started rounding up and pushing together many cafeteria tables and chairs to accommodate the numbers.

When it became evident the numbers were going to continue to climb we cast about looking for a free meeting place. It was found in the second floor meeting room of the store only a few feet from where we started, courtesy of Country Grocer. And we have remained there ever since. While the room can handle about 25 people we make jokes about what would happen if all 50-plus ostomates and partners on the membership list turned up at the same time. So far it has never happened, although we did once reach an attendance of 23.

However, we happily go on our way having enjoyable conversations and discussions over coffee and among friends. I would imagine that if we ever have a crowd problem we'll find a solution the same as we have done when changes occurred in the past. We can continue to look forward to a free and friendly venue to get together and enjoy the company of fellow ostomates, their families, partners and friends.

One member spoke up to say how she enjoyed the gatherings and how so much useful information was passed around the table during general discussions.

Wayne has completed an updating of the membership list and it has been distributed to members. A reminder: this list is confidential, for members only, and is not to be loaned out or passed on. We don't want members to be inundated with useless material from commercial outlets.

Newcomers Janice, a colostomate, and husband Greg from Ladysmith were welcomed to the group. She is getting used to the world of ostomies and meeting challenges along the way but can be assured members will always be there to offer support and the benefits of experience.

Debra Rooney's letter concerning the ostomy problem she developed while holidaying in Mexico prompted Karen Kirkby Hardy to comment on an experience she had as a relatively new ostomate.

Describing her problem she said:

“Shortly after my surgery (a few months), we were crossing the Pacific towards Hawaii on a cruise and my stoma was swelling. It became a bit of a panic as I needed more cut-to-fit

appliances, and I was having totally unexpected “issues”. My excursion in Honolulu by myself was to an ostomy supply store.

“It took rapid research to find a place as most pharmacies have nothing and know nothing about ostomies! But I found this one that carried what I needed.

“I remember taking the free bus to Wal-Mart and then walking several blocks in the heat to purchase my specific box number. I was so excited that I even bought extra, and they gave me a couple of items. I put in a good review for the company when I returned home.

“I had a good laugh today when I read the latest edition of Coffee Break News. The story about “renting” use of a household bathroom was cute. It definitely wouldn’t be “pretty” or relaxed at the time!

“And now I’m again packing for a long voyage to the South Pacific. Once we leave Honolulu we will be three weeks in remote areas (French Polynesia) until the ship returns to San Diego (our embarkation port as well).

“Always pack double or triple what you think you’ll need. Count and re-count. I’ve done that but now want to add more. I usually return with half of what I’ve taken with me, but I do need to pack a few drainables “just in case”. I take almost an entire pharmacy with me to sea because “you never know”. See Pages 4-5 for more information from Karen)

The request from the national ostomy organization for us to contact local Members of Parliament to protest the omission of ostomy supplies from the planned national pharmacare program was quickly quashed when a second note arrived stating that we were not to submit any letters. The reason for the abrupt reversal has not been explained.

A letter from former long-time member Flo Wandler was received saying how she enjoyed the newsletter and asking to pass along greetings to all, saying she is “well, keeping busy and staying out of trouble”. Flo, formerly of Ladysmith, recently moved to the Vancouver area to live near family following the death of her husband.

Typically, the discussion again took a wild swing into a whole new area when a magazine was presented describing the use of cannabis for the treatment of pain. While we don’t recommend the use of the product (we never recommend any product) it turns out some members are at least familiar with it. One buys it in the form of a stick (similar to a deodorant she says) and rubs it on the painful area and claims effective relief. Another member said she has two friends who have experimented with the item and claim good results. The story by one member describing in detail how she very tentatively went into a store to buy the cannabis product for the first time while keeping an eye out for police rushing in to arrest her provided another humorous highlight.

The next luncheon question reached a stalemate when no majority could be found for a favorite spot. Wendy solved the

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problem by making individual “ballots” by tearing up note paper listing the individual names of all five suggested locales, putting them into Ray’s hat and giving the task of drawing one to Yours Truly. And the chosen one was **Boston Pizza, date Friday, March 22 at 12 noon.** Wendy again made the arrangements. A reminder and map were sent to members prior to the date.

Anyone with interesting experiences about living with an ostomy is invited to share their story with the group via Coffee Break News. Send them to my e-mail address and I will check them out, see they are edited and appear in an upcoming Coffee Break News. No names will be used unless specifically requested by the writer. One thing about this group, things like these are openly talked about and commented on around the table. We are all survivors and have undergone many of the very same things.

To those who have been asking what happened to the older woman in south Nanaimo (mentioned in the last News) who asked her husband for help when she couldn’t get out of the bathtub:

When the two of them couldn’t solve the problem she told him to get help, assuming he would call 911. A few minutes later he came into the bathroom with his old buddy from next door.

I never heard how long it took his bruises to heal!

Next Coffee Break: Friday, April 5, same time, same place.

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Suggestions for travelling ostomates By Karen Kirkby Hardy, Parksville

In addition to recounting her travel experiences that appear in previous pages of this issue, Karen Kirkby Hardy has contributed her list and general suggestions for ostomates bitten by the travel bug. It might be wise for travelling members to print out the list for future reference. Some are basic but others are definitely worth adding to your personal list.

- 1) Take double to triple the quantity of supplies that you normally use at home.
- 2) Keep ALL ostomy supplies in your carry-on bags (except scissors). Never put essentials in your checked luggage.
- 3) Have some cut to fit in addition to pre-cut (if you regularly use pre-cut appliances).
- 4) Have a few ready to use, already cut, bags when flying as your scissors will need to be with sharpies in your checked luggage.
- 5) Take some appliances with open end (drainables).
- 6) Have Imodium with you when travelling in case of diarrhea or more liquid stools.
- 7) Travel with a stool softener, again, just in case of constipation.
- 8) Drink lots of water when flying or travelling and especially in hot climates (keeping in mind that bottled water is safest in many areas). Staying well hydrated is very important.
- 9) Remember that everything can change or adjust when flying and travelling – diet, time zones, delays, temperature, humidity, etc. These factors can affect your digestive system and output.
- 10) When flying, travel with a small portable bag of essential ostomy supplies in your carry-on, preferably with a handle that can be hung on a door and easily carried to public



washrooms. Also, when travelling, have a couple of stick-on hooks which you can attach and leave in any public washroom (even in a plane). Sometimes, there is no clean place to sit your essential supplies. Keep a few folded paper towels in your kit as these can be placed on any surface to provide a clean area. A small mirror with suction cups is handy too.

- 11) Don't be afraid to ask a flight attendant which washroom on board is best for a "change", i.e. which may have a fold down change table that provides a surface to sit supplies and also which washroom you can occupy for longer than usual, etc. If the flight attendant is aware, he or she can divert people to other washrooms so that you aren't feeling rushed.
- 12) When travelling in any third world country or if you have a sensitive digestive system, drink only commercially bottled water. Use this water also to brush your teeth and to clean around your stoma. Avoid ice cubes or drinks diluted with local water in areas where water may be unsafe.

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Five foods to eat if you have diarrhea or chronically loose stool

Source: Ostomy Outlook, NC Oklahoma, via Green Bay Area Ostomy Support Group

---**Bananas:** Bananas are a great food to eat when you have diarrhea. Bananas are easy to digest, and they are high in potassium which is lost through diarrhea. Bananas are soothing, filling and readily available.

---**Rice:** Eat plain rice during bouts of diarrhea. Rice is easy on the digestive system. It is also low in fiber and helps slow down the gastrointestinal tract, which is beneficial for cases of diarrhea.

----**Applesauce:** Incorporate applesauce into your diet when you are suffering with diarrhea. Applesauce contains pectin, a water-soluble fiber, which is known to help reduce diarrhea. Apple sauce is also very nutritious, containing an appropriate balance of vitamins and sugar.

---**Boiled Eggs:** The body loses energy during diarrhea. Eggs provide protein which energizes the body and gives it strength.

---**Pretzels:** Eat salted pretzels while dealing with diarrhea. This will help your body retain water and keep you from becoming dehydrated from your diarrhea. The salted pretzels will also help to soothe and settle your stomach.

A terrible story

A new neighbor moved in and he is quite an adventurer. Apparently he has climbed the highest mountains, sailed the stormiest seas, jumped out of airplanes and he even swam with sharks. When he said he is from India it was no surprise to learn his name is Bindar Dundat.

