

Stronger Together

Northwest Arkansas Ostomy Support Group's Newsletter

Meetings Remain On Hold



The question I get most often is, "When are we going to start our meetings again?" I understand everyone is anxious to resume our monthly meetings and see one another again. I know that a number of the countless new ostomy patients who have had surgery since our meetings were cancelled due to Covid, would benefit from the education and support. Our

group's leadership is as frustrated by the limitations posed by Covid as everyone else. Covid, however, is still a reality. Although some areas have shown significant progress in controlling the spread of Covid, there are 4 states that are currently struggling with increased incidence and mortality. In addition, we have to accept that these variants are an unknown. The Brazilian variant appears to be spread more easily and is causing real concern. It is not the only variant that we have to consider.

Hope Cancer Resources is not open to the public. Even the Care Closet is only accessible once the door is unlocked and a social worker or volunteer is available to help you find supplies.

PRESIDENT-
Anne Hartney

VICE PRESIDENT-
Greg Kittle

TREASURER-
Judy Siefert

SECRETARY-
Paul Sims

**CLINICAL CWOCN
EDUCATORS**

DIANA
GALLAGHER

JENNIFER
JUERGENS

TAYLOR GARCIA
WOC CANDIDATE

**INCREASING
MOBILITY**

Page 2

**THE VALUE OF
CERTIFICATION**

Page 4

**PARKWAY
CIRCLE MOVE**

Page 6

I am hoping that we can resume by early Fall. We will keep you informed and in the interim, your leadership team and volunteers remains hard at work behind the scenes.

Exercise and Activity

I think it is safe to say that winter's chill is finally behind us. Who would have expected that series of late freezes and April snow!!! With warm weather and more people vaccinated, we are all eager to get outside and get active. Whether you are a hiker, biker, swimmer, golfer, gardener or bird watcher, the warm weather and spring greenery is hard to resist. An ostomy should not stop you from any of your favorite activities - once you are fully recovered.

It does not matter if you have an ostomy or not- EVERYONE should work toward being as healthy and active as they can. Exercise is important to overall physical function, emotional well being and optimal health. Exercises that improve balance and stability have been shown to reduce falls. Tai Chi is a well documented example of this. Weight bearing exercise will help maintain strong bones. This can be as simple as a walking program. Walking has numerous benefits and can even promote better circulation for those who may have developed restricted circulation. Exercises that include a full range of motion will assist in maintaining supple joints. This can reduce pain caused by arthritis and/or other causes of joint inflammation. Regardless of what physical limitations you may have - no one has an excuse to avoid exercise. There are programs for individuals who are confined to a chair or even a bed. Begin where you are and work toward getting stronger.

Recovery from surgery begins with the immediate post op period. For the first few weeks following ostomy surgery, your abdominal muscles may be tender. It is important to avoid slouching and maintain good posture while sitting and while walking. That means head up, chin out and shoulders back. Maintain a posture that both you and everyone who visits will be impressed by. Good posture will help your abdominal muscles recover and will help give your lungs room for expansion and better breathing.

In the beginning when the abdomen is still tender, it is acceptable to use a soft folded pillow over the abdominal muscles if needed for walking and when you sense that you know you are about to cough or sneeze. This can help "splint" the abdominal muscles and prevent any sudden change in abdominal pressure that might increase discomfort. Focus your attention on maintaining good posture. Along with maintaining great posture, set a goal to walk a bit farther with each excursion and adding more walks during the day. To determine that you are walking farther, you can count steps or laps around a particular location. Strive to increase by at least 10 steps with each walk or to the point you can

tolerate. Keep in mind that once you are home and walking outside, you have to consider that you have to maintain enough energy to walk back. For outside walks, look for a smooth and level path in the beginning. Avoid inclines and rough terrain.

Several times throughout the day, add deep breathing exercises to help with relaxation and improve your oxygenation after anesthesia. Deep breathing will help with pain management. Surprisingly, most people do not breath properly. We do it all day every day and yet most people are "lazy breathers"; we fail to optimize every breath by breathing deeply and slowly. Practice breathing in slowly as you mentally count to 4 and then exhale slowly over the same count to 4. As you build lung capacity, you will find that these breaths can be longer and more refreshing.

During your immediate recovery period, it is important to avoid lifting more than 10 pounds. This is critical to avoid developing a peristomal hernia. A gallon of milk weighs about 8 pounds so it is important to be mindful that a family pet, child or grandchild can easily exceed these limits. It is not that you can not hold them, but it is a matter of being smarter. Sit and allow the child or pet to climb into your lap or have someone else lift them as opposed to lifting them. This restriction stays in place for 3 months. During that time, you can improve your abdomen's core muscles and gradually increase your tolerance for lifting.

You do not need any special equipment or a gym membership to get healthy and stronger. If you already belong to a gym that is ok but keep in mind the exercises that will be most beneficial during your immediate recovery period. If you have access to a pool, that is a good alternative as well. Swimming is great exercise and water therapy in a heated pool is especially advantageous for those with aging joints.



What CAN I do is a common question. Convatec has developed a wonderful program called Me Plus that outlines recommended activities following ostomy surgery. You can access the program at Convatec Me+ Recovery Series or by asking your CWOCN for a printed copy. This guide provides you with important information on mobility as you recover. It guides you through safe exercises and advances the intensity on three levels. As you master the first level, you can add or move to the second and then the third. The secret is to keep moving. Living life with an ostomy is about living a full, active, healthy life.

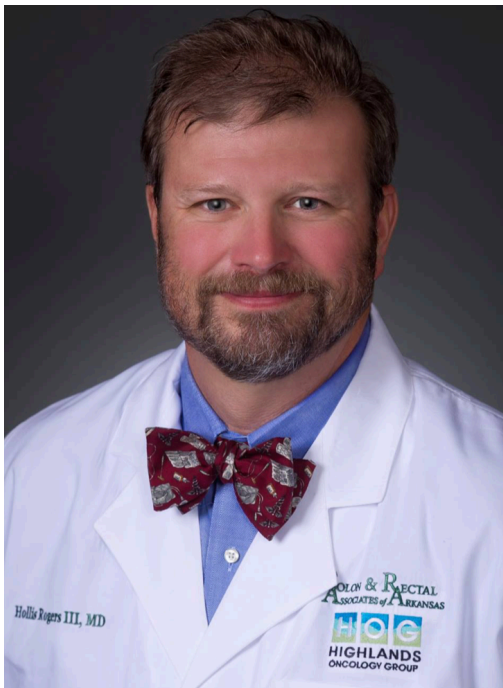


Specialty Certification-

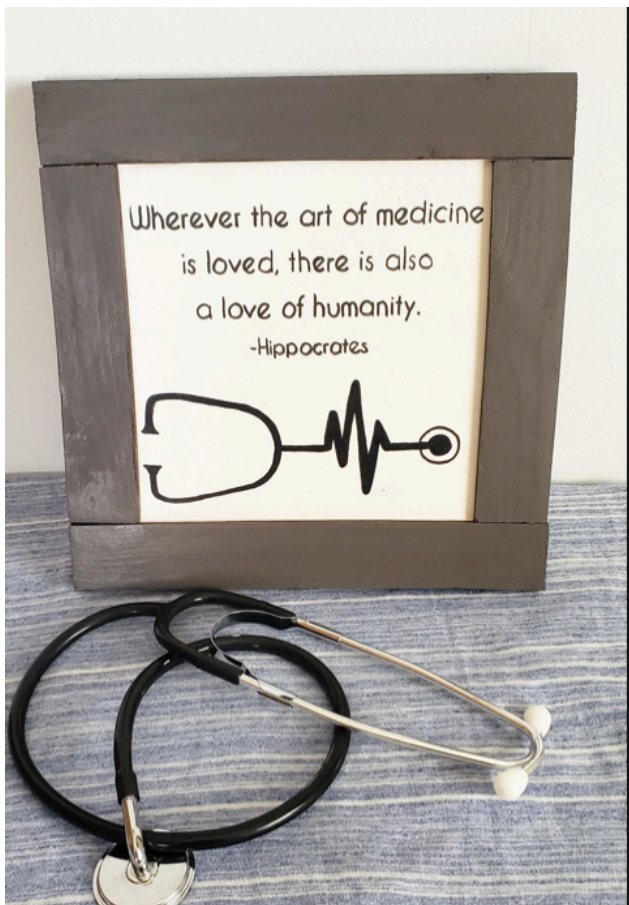
What YOU need to know

Both nurses and physicians have the opportunity to excel within their chosen specialties. This is a personal choice driven by a desire to build knowledge and expertise that will allow them to provide the best of evidence based care to those that they will care for. Specialty recognition is accomplished through advanced education, clinical preceptorships, and finally validation of their advanced knowledge and skills with a formal board examinations. It is a rigorous endeavor and not a path for everyone.

For nursing, there are three programs that offer certification. Each has unique advantages. A nurse can earn certification in wound or ostomy with a one week class and be designated as a WCC (Wound Care Certified) or OMS (Ostomy Management Specialist) These credentials are offered by the National Alliance for Wound and Ostomy Care. It is available to CNA/MAs, LPN/LVNs and RNs. Another option that is only for wound care is the CWS (Certified Wound Specialist) This is offered by the American Board of Wound Specialists. It is a multidisciplinary credential available to those holding a license as a DO, DPN, DVM, MD, NP, PA, PT, RD, or RN providing they have 3 years of clinical experience in wound care. The original certification for nursing is offered by the Wound Ostomy Continence Nursing Certification Board. It is only available to a RN with a Bachelor's degree. The recommendation is that candidates should only seek certification after developing a strong foundation of clinical experience. WOCNCB certification is considered the "Gold Standard" for nursing. It requires formal education as well as 40 hours of supervised clinical experience for each of the three specialty areas. After the successful completion of the board examinations, the CWOCN must recertify every 5 years either by taking another examination or completing a professional growth portfolio. This option requires a mix of mandatory continuing education and activities like publication, research, and teaching that demonstrate a commitment to advanced knowledge. Physicians who chose to specialize in wounds, ostomies, or continence follow a similar rigorous path toward board certification in their chosen specialties. For example, for a surgeon to attain certification by the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery (ABCRS) they have to already earned certification with the American Board of Surgery. We are so fortunate to have TWO surgeons, Dr. Hollis Rogers III and Dr Irlna Tantchou, who have earned this designation.



Without question, the people in every group - no matter what we are talking about has a spectrum that ranges from excellent to poor. There are those who have had surgeries with a general surgeon and had a great outcome. Sometimes surgery is done in an area without a specialist and at other times it is an emergency and other times it is a personal preference. Likewise, some of you may have worked with an "ostomy nurse" who did not have certification or had a lesser certification and were happy with the care you received. The difference is in making an informed decision when you can. Be an advocate for yourselves and demand the care that is best for your circumstances.



Certification is one aspect to be considered when making those decisions on who will provide your care. Individuals who have earned certification have demonstrated that they expect more out of themselves....They chose to go above and beyond the basic requirements for their jobs. They excelled. You can expect more out of them. Knowledge is Power and you deserve to work with clinicians who meet your needs.

NEW LOCATION -PARKWAY CIRCLE

3901 PARKWAY CIRCLE 5TH FLOOR, SPRINGDALE, AR 72762

Highlands Oncology at Parkway Circle is now home to their entire Surgical Team. We are located on the 5th floor. Dr Hollis Rogers, Dr. Irlna Tantchou, Dr. Willie Pickhardt, Dr. Joseph Ivy and Dr. Michael Cross are supported by a strong staff of nurses, medical assistants, ancillary staff AND the WOC Nurses, Diana Gallagher, RN, MS, CWOCN, CFCN and Taylor Garcia, RN, BSN, WOC Candidate. Dr. Rogers and Dr. Tantchou are colorectal surgeons. Dr. Pickhardt is an Urology Surgeon. Dr. Ivy's expertise is gynecology oncology, and Dr. Cross is a breast cancer surgeon.

Diana and Taylor are thrilled with more space to better serve their patients. In less than 5 years, the service has grown from an exam room at NorthHills to another at BCC and then at Futrall. The current space like all of the Parkway facility is beautiful and state of the art. Each WOC has their own room for patient care with a "Jack and Jill bathroom" connecting the exam rooms. This feature is critically important for those hopefully rare emergencies with a pouch failure but more importantly allows us to teach proper pouch emptying, ostomy irrigation and allows an actual pouch change following a shower. Being able to replicate what a patient is working with at home makes for "real world" education. Not all CWOCNs are fortunate to work in a facility that has met the needs of patients so well. The bathroom has a push button lock for both doors that unlocks when you open either door. This had to be modified after Diana forgot to unlock the door 3 times on the first week!!! The modified lock works perfectly and the bathroom has not been a problem since.

We love the space and all of the special touches such as hands-free sinks and trash cans. As if "hands-free" wasn't high tech enough, another example of our new space being state of the art is the video screen in each room. Think of this as a giant wall mounted iPad that displays information about anatomy and physiology, most cancers, chemotherapies, managing side effects and much more. It allows you to scan the icon and have that same material readily at hand at home on your device of choice in an email or text. In addition, it has a white board feature that allows the clinician to draw or write a note and send it to your device. This might be an illustration to help you understand what is planned for the surgery, or a list of items that you need to buy before surgery (marshmallows and fluids for an ileostomy, tampons for a urostomy, or Cheerios and applesauce to thicken stool for a new colostomy). It could even be a reminder to begin a prescription. It could be almost anything. As time allows, we plan to build specialty education on living a full life with our ostomy for our patients. It is yet another resource that Highlands has made to invest in your care.

DISTRIBUTORS

Distributors are companies that buy and stock product, work with your insurance company and clinician and provide those products directly to you. Distributors do require a prescription. This may come from your surgeon or PCP but often it is generated by your CWOCN for a physician to sign. With physician permission, a CWOCN can initiate the first order for shipment without the signed prescription. We recommend making that first order for a month as a "test run" to be sure that we have everything you need and want included. After that initial month, some insurances will allow you to order 3 months at a time. You can change, add, and delete products with each order. For example, we will always include an ostomy powder to help address skin irritation with each initial order but it is HIGHLY unlikely that you will need powder every month. When you place your order, you can have them hold products. If you add a new item that is in a different category than what you have been getting, that will require a new prescription. If you are not satisfied with a distributor for any reason, you can always make a change. Different companies offer different benefits such as education, counseling, overnight shipping, free shipping, financial assistance, billing your insurance, sampling, etc.

180 MEDICAL 1-877-688-2729

ABC MEDICAL 1-866-897-8588

ARKANSAS OSTOMY- 501-868-7840

BYRUM MEDICAL SUPPLY 1-877-902-9726

COMFORT MEDICAL 1-844-338-6412

EDGE PARK MEDICAL SUPPLY-1888-394-5375

LIBERATOR MEDICAL 1-855-399-5086

LIBERTY MEDICAL

MCKESSON 1-855-571-2100 Now Adapt Health

MEDICAL MONKS 844-859-9400

SAFE N SIMPLE 1-844-767-6334

SHIELD HEALTHCARE 1-800-407-8982

Plus countless other companies and a few small pharmacies

RESOURCES

NWA Ostomy Support Group on Facebook

NWA Ostomy Support Group on the web -nwaostomy.weebly.com

Hope Cancer Resources 479-361-5031

United Ostomy Association of America -UOAA.org. **Go online or call to request their clinician-reviewed and written educational tools. Also consider attendance at one of the biennial UOAA Conferences for the education, networking and the exhibit hall. It is an incredible and worthwhile investment. Conferences are held at attractive destinations across the country every other year. Joining UOAA will provide you with a copy of their magazine 4x/year. It is filled with valuable articles and insight.

Wound Ostomy Continence Nurses Society-WOCN.org ** find a nurse feature allows you to find a specialty nurse anywhere in the world

Wound Ostomy Continence Nursing Certification Board -WOCNCB.org **allows individuals to find a certified nurse and identify their scope of practice and how to contact them

World Council of Enterostomal Therapists -WCETN.org ** International Organization for nurses practicing in Wound Ostomy and/or continence nursing. Web based resources are available and a perspective on living with an ostomy across the world.

Educational websites through manufacturers and distributors

In-person outpatient consultation with Diana Gallagher and/or Taylor Garcia by requesting a referral to Highlands Oncology Group- Surgical Department

Jennifer Juergens is available for inpatients at NW MEDICAL CENTER

*****Be careful about "Dr. Google" or information that is not sponsored by a reputable organization. It is not always accurate.**

MANUFACTURERS

Manufacturers are companies based in the US or abroad who manufacture products for distribution in the United States. There are a number of excellent manufacturers with amazing products who do not have their products available in the US. Some of these are products that we hope to see at some point in the future. MANUFACTURERS DESIGN AND PRODUCE PRODUCTS BUT DO NOT SELL DIRECTLY

COLOPLAST 1-800-525-8161

HOLLISTER 1-888-808-7456

CONVATEC 1-800-422-8811

MARLEN 1-216-292-7060

NU HOPE 1-800-899-5017

B BRAUN 1-800-854-6851

SAFE N SIMPLE 1-844-767-6334

HYTAPE 1-800-248-0101

STEALTHBELT 1-800-237-4491

OSTO-EZ-VENT 1-888-562-8802

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Having an ostomy is an adjustment. It impacts how you see yourself and your view of your health and perhaps mortality. We are here to help you recover. If you are struggling with learning how to use your appliances or experience an issue with skin integrity or pouch wear time, call your WOC team and make an appointment.

If you are struggling emotionally, reach out. We can set you up with a peer to talk about life with an ostomy. We try and match gender, age, type of ostomy and interests. If needed, we can suggest counseling.

If you are unable to afford ostomy supplies, reach out. The main ostomy manufacturers all have programs for individuals without insurance or the means to buy equipment. They will provide 3 months worth of product in any 12 month period of time. There is an application process to verify income and need, but it is worth the effort. We also have supplies at Hope Cancer Resources and Highlands Oncology (Parkview) to help fill a short-term need.

DO NOT SUFFER ALONE

THERE IS HELP...THERE IS HOPE...THERE IS LIFE