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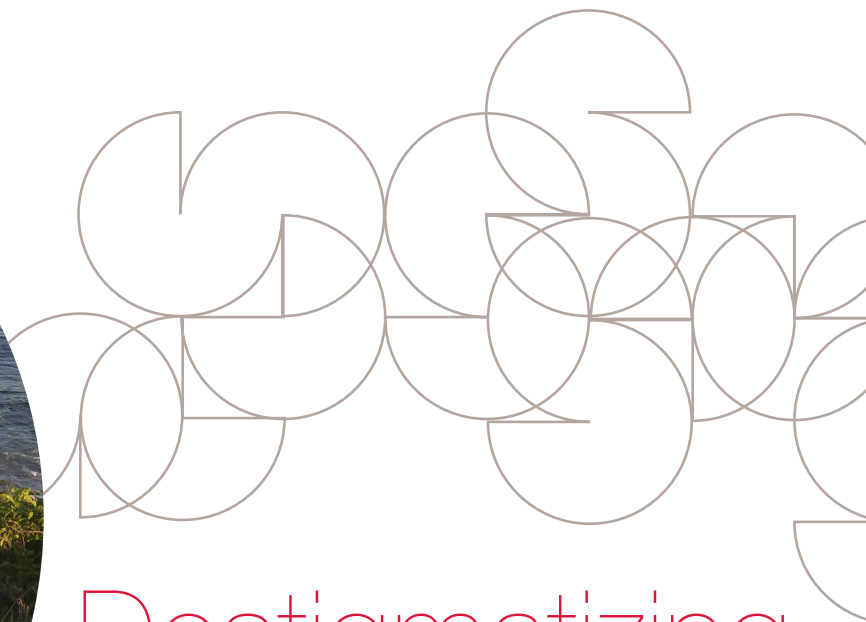
## Be Comfortable in Your Own Skin



### Highlights:

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## FEATURE STORY



# Destigmatizing Life With an Ostomy

**Tina Aswani Omprakash encourages people from diverse cultures to speak up about IBD and ostomy surgery.**

Tina Aswani Omprakash is an advocate, blogger, speaker, and thought leader. She is also a person with Crohn's disease and an ostomy. And she has dedicated her life to urging others with IBD and ostomies to own them fully, in order to lead happier, richer lives.

"Give it a voice, because what knocks us down can make us stronger, fiercer, and more united if we let it," explains Tina, who learned this lesson firsthand.

When meeting this motivated, confident woman, you would never imagine that she has experienced a myriad of health issues while continuing to support others. She encountered many roadblocks in her journey to where she is today.

### **A Misdiagnosis and Multiple Surgeries**

Tina was born into a close-knit South Asian family in New York that taught her to aim high and achieve a successful career. So, she was elated when she landed a fast-paced job with an investment banking firm on Wall Street after college. Then, at age 22, inflammatory bowel disease

(IBD) started causing her pain and fatigue, and she was uncomfortable telling others what she was going through. Tina was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis initially, and she underwent a series of surgeries resulting in temporary ostomies that her doctors were able to reverse.

Alternative medicine is widespread in the Indian community, and practitioner after practitioner gave her remedies that made her ill. Though they meant well, they suggested that she had brought the illness on herself because of her diet and her stressful work life. She started blaming herself, but also knew deep down that she had no control over her disease.

### **Crohn's Disease and a Permanent Ostomy**

Eventually, Tina's diagnosis changed from ulcerative colitis to Crohn's disease, and recurring bouts of fistulas (abnormal openings between two organs or vessels) forced her to decide whether or not to get a permanent ileostomy. Unfortunately, a decision to get an ostomy would clash with

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## FEATURE STORY

Destigmatizing Life With an Ostomy *(continued)*

her culture's high standards for jobs, marriage, and health. "In Indian culture you hide your disease," explains Tina. "It was a tug of war between the possibility of having a full, healthy life and upholding the South Asian standards that I was brought up with."

Tina was not the only one in her family who had faced pressure to live up to those cultural ideals. In fact, her father had struggled with Crohn's disease as a young man. When his doctor recommended an ostomy, he refused due to concerns around marriageability. When he finally underwent ostomy surgery 15 years later, it was too late. He passed away from colorectal cancer when Tina was eight years old.

"My aunt also had Crohn's and I wondered why nobody was talking about genetics," says Tina. "I witnessed my father's passing and I didn't want to wait until I had cancer to have the permanent ostomy."

**"We cannot look at the ostomy as a last resort..."** —Tina Aswani Omprakash

So, at 28 years old, Tina made the decision to take her life back and get a permanent ileostomy. Afterward, her life blossomed, and she was finally able to travel, eat more of her favorite foods, go on long walks, and be a full partner in her marriage.

### Becoming an Advocate

When Tina connected with various gastroenterologists and patient advocates on Twitter to learn more about her condition, she realized that she wanted to become an advocate herself. "We are suffering so much by delaying our treatment," Tina admits. "We cannot look at the ostomy as a last resort, but as a viable treatment option and potential solution."

It took four years for Tina to decide to come out publicly as a person with an ostomy. Her illness had already derailed her career and any prospects for further education, and it had negatively affected her self-esteem. However, she wasn't going to let it stop her from speaking out on behalf of others in diverse communities.

In 2016, when she was finally in remission from Crohn's, Tina wrote a few well-received articles and led a women's support group for the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation.

Two years later, The Foundation named her a Take Steps Honored Hero for being an advocate in the Crohn's and colitis community and sharing her story to inspire others. Despite her fears, she accepted the award and spoke in front of 600+ people, and her story went viral on social media. There would be no hiding after that!

### Supporting and Empowering Others

After the story came out, a flood of publications reached out to her. She also received speaking invitations and requests to advise healthcare companies. She created a private Facebook group for people who hesitate to identify as having a bowel illness, so they would feel comfortable asking questions and receiving support.

Some of her followers have messaged her saying, "The ostomy option has been presented to me, but I want to do everything possible to not have one," or "I'm too young for that, and I don't have a cancer diagnosis." Tina finds this devastating. "People need to live proudly with Crohn's disease and own it every step of the way," she says. "Ostomy product technology has come such a long way; nobody will even know that you have a pouch. I can still wear a sari—I just tie it a little higher."

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## FEATURE STORY

Destigmatizing Life With an Ostomy *(continued)*

Tina empowers others to speak up through her website **Own Your Crohn's**, and her social media platforms on **Facebook, Instagram** and **Twitter**. She co-created **IBDesis**, a global initiative comprised of a team of South Asian, or "Desi," advocates with IBD and/or ostomies in order to help other promising voices in the South Asian community speak up and destigmatize IBD and life-saving ostomy surgery. IBDesis' mission is to create resources, education, and awareness for South Asians around the world living with IBD and/or stomas to minimize the cultural stigmas and normalize the diagnosis in addition to treatment and/or surgery.

Tina also volunteers with **Girls With Guts**, a popular non-profit organization. She is the Diversity Chairperson for their Community Connection initiative. "Our aim is to grow the number of voices from diverse communities sharing how to live a fulfilling life with IBD and how an ostomy has improved their quality of life," says Tina.

Though she feels very fulfilled, Tina still has days when she's susceptible to her illness. Yet, even at her most vulnerable, she manages to reach out to others and share her experiences. The support and prayers of her newfound friends help her pull through and continue her mission. Her advice to others with IBD

and ostomies who want to do advocacy work is to hone in on what is empowering them. "Find what makes you whole and give it a voice," advises Tina. "To help eliminate stigmas, you have to feel comfortable with yourself first and be authentic about your struggles."

The world has taken notice of how Tina is empowering others. Her **Own Your Crohn's** blog was named one of the Best Crohn's Disease Blogs of 2020 by Healthline Media, and one of the 2019 Top IBD Blogs for Advocacy by MyTherapyApp.com. In addition, Tina's advocacy work won the Healo Gastroenterology Disruptive Innovator Award for "The Patient Voice" in 2019. More recently in 2021, the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation recognized Tina for her phenomenal leadership and powerful impact on the IBD community with the Above & Beyond Volunteer Award.

IBD knows no culture or standards—it can happen to anyone, and can change life for better or for worse. Tina chose to make something great out of it. "Diseases like IBD don't define us, but they do shape our perspectives; they help us develop the empathy and ability to provide support to others," concludes Tina. "I don't take life for granted anymore and that's the silver lining with this illness."



Tina Aswani Omprakash is a health advocate for patients living with chronic illnesses and disabilities. Through her writing, social media presence, and public speaking engagements, she spearheads public health causes, including those creating awareness for IBD (Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis), life-saving ostomy surgery, and initiatives supporting global women's and minorities' health. She is presently working on her Master's of Public Health at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Tina lives in New York City with her husband, Anand.

*Financial Disclosure: Tina Aswani Omprakash received compensation from Hollister Incorporated for her contribution to this article.*



*Please share this article with anyone you know who may be inspired by Tina's story.*

## MEET THE EXPERT

# WOC Nurse With an Ostomy Helps Patients Prevent and Solve Peristomal Skin Issues



**Living with an ileostomy for more than 18 years, Wound, Ostomy and Continence (WOC) Nurse Aimee Frisch shares her experience and tips on how to be proactive with maintaining healthy skin around the stoma.**

*By Aimee Frisch, BSN, RN, CWOCN*

My family is no stranger to Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). My father passed away from complications of Crohn's disease at age 57. My grandmother had ulcerative colitis and I have several cousins with Crohn's. At age 26, just when I thought I had avoided the family curse, I began to have symptoms associated with IBD and was ultimately diagnosed with Indeterminate Crohn's/Colitis. This meant that I had symptoms and disease progression of both Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

## Making a Difficult Choice

Given my mixed family history, it was very difficult to determine which disease was causing the symptoms. In only eight months, I went from being active and healthy to being hospitalized and close to dying. My medical team eventually gave me the option of getting an ileostomy, as I was getting worse as each day passed.

**"I am able to empathize with the struggles and successes of those in my care."** —Aimee Frisch

At the time, I was just starting my life—planning for my upcoming wedding and studying to be a bilingual elementary school teacher. And up to that point, I had only negative experiences with ostomies. Much to the surprise of my medical team and family, I said that I had to think about my options, even though not choosing surgery would mean death.

## Deciding to Live and Fight

I'm very grateful that I ended up making the decision to get the ileostomy—and to live and fight. I had several complications and multiple surgeries, however, I was able to make it to my wedding day. I even became pregnant eventually, and am now mom to my miracle daughter who recently turned 10!

Along the way, I met several people living very productive and joyful lives with an ostomy. I also met an ostomy nurse who changed the course of my life. She was the most dedicated, kind person I had ever known. She was relentless in helping me overcome complications and finding solutions that would allow me to make it to my wedding day without worrying about my pouch.

## Giving Back to Others With Ostomies

It was during that time that I decided that I wanted to share my experiences and give back. I wanted to be that source of knowledge for others living with an ostomy that my nurse was for me. In 2007, I decided to completely change my career and become a Wound, Ostomy, and Continence (WOC) nurse. I was accepted into a rigorous, accelerated nursing bachelor's degree program. I then worked for two years as a nurse before being accepted into the Cleveland Clinic WOC nursing program. I celebrated my tenth year as a Certified WOC nurse in 2020, and I am so happy that I chose that path. It has been the most rewarding experience.

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## MEET THE EXPERT

## Prevent and Solve Peristomal Skin Issues

*(continued)*

As a WOC nurse with an ostomy, I feel I have a unique perspective to share when working with people with ostomies. I am able to empathize with the struggles and successes of those in my care, since I have learned to manage and overcome my own challenges. I strive to be a credible source of knowledge, and to teach my new patients to be proactive vs. reactive in managing their ostomies and life with an ostomy in general. When appropriate, I share some of the issues that I and other people with ostomies have experienced, and provide helpful tips.

### Preventing and Managing Peristomal Skin Itchiness and Irritation

One of the issues that I have had to deal with is skin itching and irritation. For a long time, I thought that it was normal for the skin under my pouching system to be itchy or red, given that it is covered 24 hours/day. I figured that this was something I just had to live with. There were times, however, that it was very difficult. Sometimes I itched so badly that it would interrupt what I was doing and I couldn't focus on anything else. It was especially noticeable when I was due to change my wafer and several hours after changing it.

As a clinician, I saw patients struggling with the same issue. Some, like me, did not have noticeably red skin but were still experiencing intense itching. When I researched solutions to this problem, most focused on what to do after the irritation and/or itching became a nuisance. I realized that I needed to change my mindset from being reactive to proactive—both in my personal experience and in my professional practice.

After years of trying different techniques and products—myself and with patients—I made the following list to help people know what is normal/abnormal and be proactive in solving skin issues. I also encourage people with ostomies to try different pouching systems until they find one that keeps the skin under the wafer looking as healthy as the rest of their skin.

### What's normal:

The skin under your wafer should look and feel just like the skin anywhere else on your abdomen.

- It should be smooth, not raw or dry
- It should be the same color as the rest of your skin

### How to keep your peristomal skin healthy:

- Consider using only warm water to cleanse your skin. Many soaps and cleansers contain ingredients that can leave behind a film. This film may irritate the skin or disrupt your skin barrier's ability to adhere, which can lead to leaking.
- Make sure your skin is dry before replacing your wafer
- Change your pouching system regularly. I used to push the limits and wait until it was almost too late before I changed my wafer, which would irritate my skin. It's best to change more frequently when possible (i.e., every 4 to 5 days). If you are active or live in a warmer climate, you may want to consider changing more frequently.
- Use gentle products like water-based adhesive removers to remove your wafer
- Utilize **ostomy accessories** to help get a good skin barrier fit. This will help you avoid leakage, which can make your skin more susceptible to itching and irritation.
- Use ostomy products that are infused with **ceramide**, a natural component of human skin that can help keep your skin healthy
- Don't try to "live" with the itching, as this is a sign of something abnormal. Meet with your ostomy nurse to determine the cause.

I hope to continue to share these tips with many more people living with an ostomy. I've met so many amazing people along the way who have reminded me that an ostomy does not define you. And it can't stop you from living life and following your dreams.



Aimee Frisch was diagnosed with indeterminate Crohn's Colitis in 2002 and has had many surgeries. First for a temporary stoma, then in 2004, she received a permanent stoma. In 2008 Aimee went back to school to become a WOC Nurse. She was certified in 2010 and since then has worked at Froedtert Menomonee Falls Hospital in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.

*Financial Disclosure: Aimee Frisch received compensation from Hollister Incorporated for her contribution to this article.*



*Please share this expert information with anyone you know who may benefit from solving skin issues.*



## TIPS FROM HOLLISTER

# When and How to Use Skin Protective Films

**Skin protective products can protect your skin from stoma output and from the effects of repeated skin barrier application and removal.**

Skin protective films go by many names, such as skin prep, barrier film, and skin protectant. They also come in different forms, such as **wipes** and sprays. Although these products are manufactured or named differently, they perform the same job: protecting the integrity of the skin around your stoma.

## How Skin Protective Films Work

Skin protective products create a layer of film over the skin to help protect it from corrosive stoma output, and from skin stripping associated with improper or frequent removal of the adhesive skin barrier. Some products contain alcohol, which will cause a stinging sensation when applied to raw skin areas—so be sure to read the list of ingredients on the packaging.

## How to Use Skin Protective Films

Below are some general suggestions for using skin protective films:

1. Wash your skin with warm water and a mild soap (optional). Let the skin dry thoroughly.
2. Open the packaging of your skin protective film (i.e., wipe, spray, swab stick, bottle, etc.)
3. Apply the product directly to the peristomal skin
4. Allow the area to dry completely
5. Apply your ostomy pouching system as usual

Browse through our **care tips** for step-by-step instructions.

## When to Consider Using a Skin Protective Film

If you are experiencing **peristomal skin irritation** such as redness, rashes, bumps, itching, or bleeding, contact your Wound, Ostomy, and Continence (WOC) nurse or other healthcare professional. They might inspect your skin, determine the source of the problem, and recommend the appropriate treatment—which may include a skin protective film.



Adapt™ skin protective wipes



## Myths Regarding Skin Protective Films

**Myth:** Skin protective products are adhesives and will make the ostomy skin barrier stick better.

**Truth:** Most skin protective products do not contain adhesive properties. Although they may feel sticky upon application, they simply add a protective layer to the surface of the skin. Some manufacturers do not recommend using their skin protective products if you are using an extended wear skin barrier, because this may decrease wear time.

**Myth:** When using a stoma powder to absorb moisture from broken skin around the stoma, you must use a skin protective layer on top.

**Truth:** Skin protective films are optional. As mentioned, some may contain alcohol, which will cause a stinging sensation when applied to raw skin areas. It's not necessary to use a skin protective product over stoma powder, but your WOC nurse may recommend it.

**Myth:** My skin has some normal irritation, so I need to use a skin protective film.

**Truth:** Skin irritation is not normal. If you have irritated peristomal skin, seek the assistance of a qualified healthcare professional. Skin irritation may happen for a variety of different reasons, such as leakage, allergies, sensitivity to skin barrier tape, etc. It is important to determine the source of the irritation in order to find the best solution for improving the condition of your skin. Don't hesitate to contact your WOC nurse/healthcare provider if you are experiencing skin irritation.



Please share this information with anyone you know who may benefit from solving skin issues.

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

# The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation – Vision to Visionary

**For over 50 years, the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation has made a positive impact with IBD research funding, education, support, and advocacy.**

The mission of the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation is to cure Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, and to improve the quality of the life of children and adults affected by these diseases. Prior to the founding of this organization, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) was not well understood, and there was very little research conducted on its causes and treatments.

## Visualizing a Future Without Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis

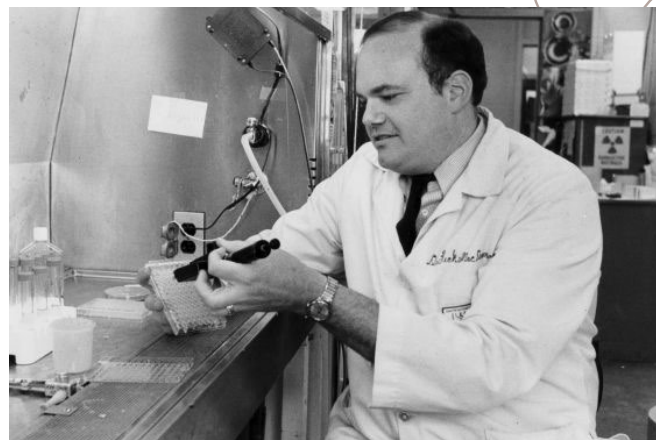
In 1956, Suzanne Rosenthal came down with debilitating symptoms and, after being misdiagnosed for years, was finally diagnosed with ileo-colitis. Her husband Irwin became overwhelmed with frustration that there was no known cure for Suzanne's illness and no efforts to find one. In 1967, he joined forces with Dr. Henry Janowitz, Suzanne's gastroenterologist, and William Modell, a fellow businessman whose son was suffering from the same disease, to form the Foundation for Research in Ileitis (now known as the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation).

The non-profit organization began raising money and awarded its first grant to Dr. Daniel Present, a young researcher and clinician, to work on a comprehensive study of regional enteritis (another name for Crohn's disease). In the years that followed, the organization's research portfolio grew significantly.

## How the Foundation is Making Its Vision a Reality

To date, the Foundation has funded more than \$400 million into the causes, treatments, and cures of Crohn's and ulcerative colitis. It currently has 40 chapters and more than 500 volunteer leaders, covering all 50 states. It serves patients, families, and caregivers in a wide variety of ways, including:

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**Top: From its inception, the Foundation has hosted major fundraising events; raising millions of dollars for patient education, support resources and research.**

**Bottom: Awarding numerous grants from funds raised, the Foundation has played a role in every major breakthrough in IBD research.**



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

# The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation – Vision to Visionary

(continued)

• **Ongoing IBD Research**

Research sponsored by the Foundation has led to breakthrough discoveries about how genetics and the human microbiome play in IBD onset and progression. The Foundation continues to strengthen their research to help quickly develop treatments and cures for IBD.

• **Education and Support Resources**

The Foundation offers webcasts, support groups, **IBD Help Center**, and printed materials with the latest educational information and assistance for those living with IBD and their caregivers.

• **Advocacy Efforts**

Foundation advocates such as patients, caregivers, supporters, researchers, and healthcare providers share their stories to advance the organization's public policy goals, including improved access to insurance and medication, as well as research funding.

• **Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives**

The Foundation is committed to working with the healthcare community to confront systemic racism and support communities of color. These efforts include a research partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and a collaboration with Pfizer, an American multinational pharmaceutical company.

• **Coronavirus Support**

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foundation has provided educational resources, relief and assistance programs, and vaccine information via its website, as it applies to those living with IBD.

• **Fundraising Opportunities**

Apart from direct monetary donations, people living with IBD and the larger community can attend community-building events that help fund critical research, education, and advocacy efforts.

Rising from humble beginnings to become a national foundation serving 1.2 million patients, the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation remains committed to improving disease remission rates, increasing access to care, and advancing new therapies and innovative products.

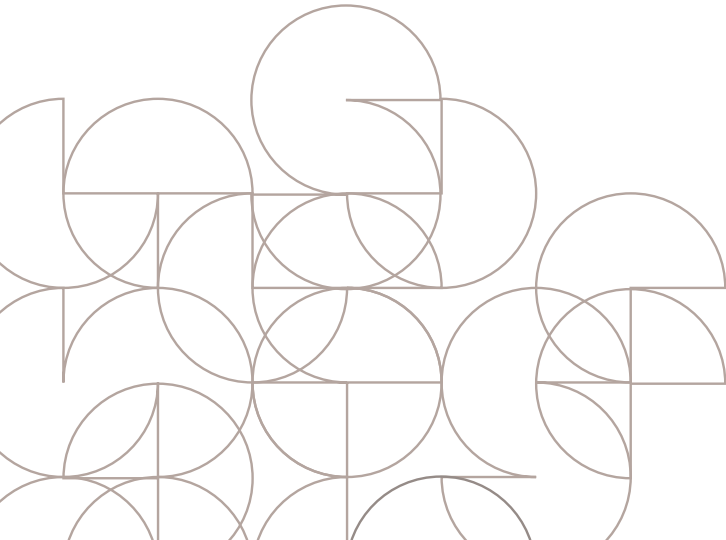
Want to get involved or learn more? Visit [crohnscolitisfoundation.org](http://crohnscolitisfoundation.org).



spin4 crohn's & colitis cures is a high energy fundraising event happening across the country this fall



Know someone who could benefit from everything the Foundation stands for and the educational resources and advocacy support it provides? Share this article with them and their caregivers.



## NEWS FROM HOLLISTER

# Skin Around the Stoma Deserves to Be Healthy

## Hollister website provides new resources to help you maintain peristomal skin health

This is what healthy peristomal skin looks like



Our enhanced **Peristomal Skin Health website** contains new resources and product information that can help you if you are having issues with the skin around your stoma or want to prevent issues from happening. Using the “Fit + Formulation” equation for healthy skin and the latest in skin care science, we have the products and resources to answer your peristomal skin health questions, such as:

**What are some of the causes of skin breakdowns around the stoma?** The skin around a stoma should look like the skin anywhere else on your abdomen. People living with an ostomy commonly believe skin issues such as burning, soreness, or itching are primarily caused by adhesive tearing their skin and by leakage. The most common causes of leakage are a poorly fitted barrier, improper application, and excess movement and sweating. We show you **how to prevent those breakdowns**.

### What are the most common misconceptions about skin complications?

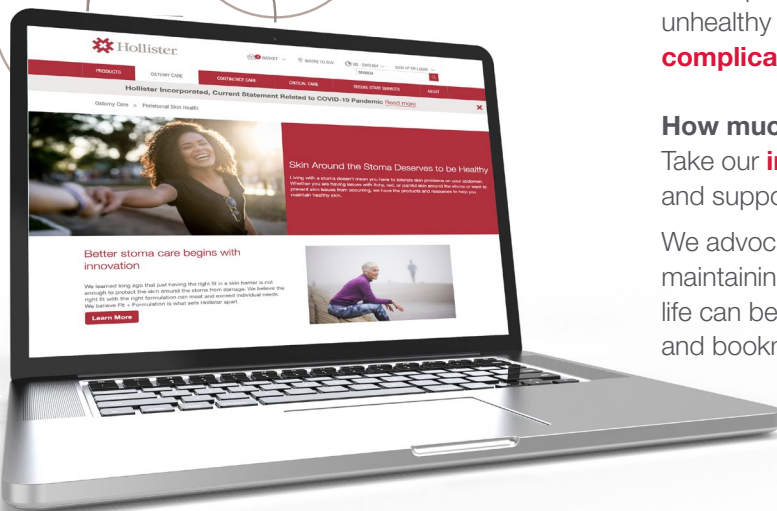
The **#1 most common misconception** is: Peristomal skin complications are to be expected.

While it's true that skin complications around the stoma occur for many people, they shouldn't happen. If they are happening, it could be due to an improperly fitting skin barrier or the skin barrier being changed too frequently. **Watch this video** that shows you how the cycle of unhealthy skin develops. **Read more misconceptions about skin complications here.**

### How much do you know about itching around the stoma?

Take our **interactive itching quiz**, then learn more about products and support you can count on to ditch the itch.

We advocate a simple philosophy: The more you know about maintaining healthy skin around your stoma, the better your quality of life can be. So, get started in the right direction by visiting our website and bookmark it for quick access.



**Start Learning!**



Please share this article with someone you know who could benefit from these new resources on maintaining healthy skin around the stoma.

## WHAT'S SO FUNNY

# How I've Shared My Ostomy Journey Across Cultures and Countries

**Brenda Elsagher talks about how ostomates of all colors, creeds, and ethnicities find themselves on common ground.**

Diversity is a hot topic these days, and recently I asked a Wound, Ostomy, and Continence (WOC) Nurse if people of different colors and cultures have different colored stomas. Her answer was that unless their colons are unhealthy, most stomas are usually anywhere from pinkish to deep red.

I have visited with many people around the world and have interviewed hundreds of people for my books, but not one has ever told me anything about their ostomy being different. Does your stoma have rhythm? Is your stoma good at math? Is your stoma emotionally stoic? Does this stoma make me look fat? Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? We make assumptions about people and often engage in silly stereotyping, and it doesn't get us anywhere. I prefer to be curious myself. I love learning about others instead of fearing what I do not know. That's why ostomy support groups are so helpful.

When someone comes to a **United Ostomy Associations of America (UOAA) support group** meeting, they will often see racial and cultural diversity in the attendees. However, in our discussions, we are mostly concerned with how things are working with our stomas; our differences in color or ethnicity usually take a back seat to our shared experiences. I have heard support group members talk about their personal shyness and the awkwardness in their cultures when they engage in conversations around stomas...and almost all people with stomas can relate to that.

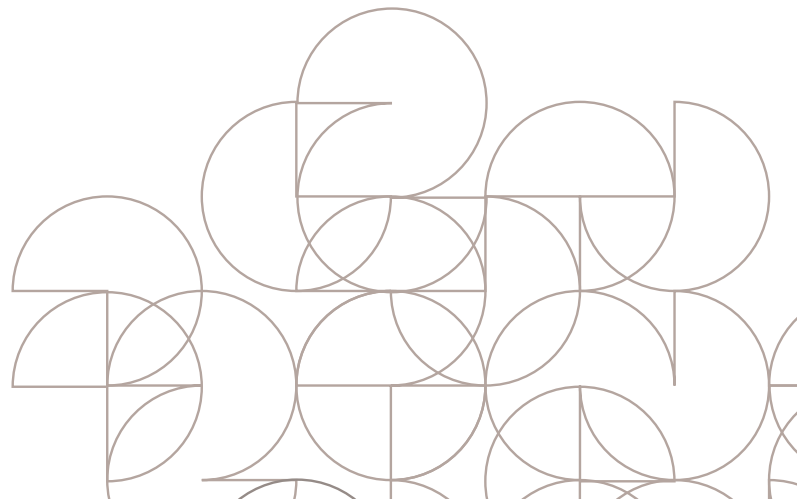
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**Brenda recently visited the Great Wall of China.**

“Stomas don't care what color your skin is...They want you to be happy and so do I.”

— Brenda Elsagher





## WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

## How I've Shared My Ostomy Journey

*(continued)*

When I first started talking publicly about having an ostomy and urging people to get a colonoscopy, I used to make the audience shout out the words, "Rectum, rectum, rectum!" This was specifically so I could talk about the subject without shocking people. Once they said it aloud, it broke a taboo.

As I was writing my first book *If the Battle is Over, Why Am I Still in Uniform?* I read some of it to my husband, who is from Egypt. I wanted to make sure he was OK with me revealing certain details about our personal life. I read to him the part about my diagnosis of colorectal cancer and how the doctor explained that I would need major surgery—which included a permanent colostomy, the removal and reconstruction of part of my vagina, and a complete hysterectomy. "Whoa," he said. "My family is going to read this, and in Egypt we can't even talk about shaving legs in mixed company. No way can we talk about our sex life!"

A good discussion followed. We determined that it was more important to help others who might need this book



**Brenda has never let her ostomy stop her from visiting places like Cape Point, South Africa.**

Brenda Elsagher is an author, international speaker, and comedian, and also volunteers with the UOAA. She has been living well with an ostomy for over 30 years. Find out more about Brenda at [livingandlaughing.com](http://livingandlaughing.com), and follow her on Facebook @BrendaElsagher.

*Financial Disclosure: Brenda Elsagher received compensation from Hollister Incorporated for her contribution to this article.*



Please share this uplifting article about Brenda's unique outlook on life with someone you know who could use more support.



than to worry about what his family might think if they read it. And I know my husband would want you to know that even with that drastic surgery, everything turned out all right (wink wink!). It's been 32 years and counting so far...

Writing books and becoming a national speaker led to 24 years of talking about bowels and butts. A couple of years ago, I was on my way to South Africa and our plane was delayed in Nairobi for six hours, so I took advantage of a private bathroom at the airport. I asked a maintenance worker to help me find a big bottle of clean water, requested use of the bathroom for an hour, and tried to explain my medical condition. I don't think she understood anything about colostomy irrigation, but the \$5 I gave her was good enough communication. She showed me how to lock the door and I did what I needed to do.

Later in the year, we traveled to China to hike on the Great Wall. Another bonus of having an ostomy: not worrying about needing to use a non-Western-style restroom, which might require squatting. I worried more about my bad knees than about having a stoma! I have traveled all over the world, ridden my bike long distances, and snorkeled in the ocean—and I have never let my ostomy stop me.

Ostomies are the great leveler. Stomas don't care what color your skin is, what socio-economic background you come from, who you voted for, or if you wear a mask or not. They just want to be a pretty pinkish-red color and do their job. They want you to be happy and so do I. They relate to another person with an ostomy with compassion and encouragement—and that's what we all need, regardless of our diversity.

## EVENT UPDATES

# Summer Event Updates

Due to COVID-19 check websites for updates

## Colon Cancer Coalition

Several in-person **Get Your Rear in Gear Run/Walks** are planned for August in Portland, Oregon; Chicago, Illinois; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Des Moines, Iowa; and Richfield, Minnesota. During September, in-person events will be held in Columbus, Ohio; Indianapolis, Indiana; Boston, Massachusetts; and Kansas City, Missouri.

Virtual Run/Walks take place August 1-14 in Colchester, Vermont, and also August 2-7 in Green Bay, Wisconsin. On September 18, there is an in-person (or you can participate virtually, if you prefer) Run/Walk at Central Connector Park in Redmond, Washington. For the most updated event list visit [coloncancercoalition.org](http://coloncancercoalition.org).

## Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Virtual Walks to End Colon Cancer are scheduled for the Jersey Shore (July 17) and Buffalo, New York, (July 24). You can walk safely in your own neighborhood and then take part in an amazing day-of experience complete with a drive-thru victory lap, socially distanced high-fives and swag. Check the status of these fundraisers at [ccalliance.org](http://ccalliance.org)

## Crohn's & Colitis Foundation

### Camp Oasis

The **2021 Virtual Camp Oasis** will be a re-imagined and dynamic experience designed to empower and engage campers, build confidence and provide plenty of opportunities for fun. Weekly sessions based on school grades 2-12 will take place July 12 thru 30, with an Opening Campfire set for July 11. Registration information can be found at [crohnscolitisfoundation.org](http://crohnscolitisfoundation.org)

## Take Steps

Due to COVID-19, some events will be taking place in person, with social distancing guidelines in place, while others will happen virtually. You can join in as a walker, team member or supporter for a campaign filled with inspiring patient stories, supporter recognition, entertainment and more. To locate an event near you, visit the **Take Steps** website.

## Girls With Guts

While in-person events are on hiatus due to the pandemic, the popular **Love Your Guts Mail Gals** are continuing to send love notes to fellow Girls With Guts who could use a bit of extra love. You can nominate someone, including yourself, to receive some heartfelt words of encouragement by filling out and submitting the form online at [girlswithguts.org](http://girlswithguts.org).

## Youth Rally

After a temporary transition to the virtual space in 2020, the **2021 Youth Rally** is gearing up for another exciting (virtual) program this July. There will be no shortage of laughter shared and memories made as we gather to learn and share from one another. This unique experience designed for kids and teens living with conditions of the bowel and bladder promotes independence, self-esteem, learning, and relationship development all wrapped around hours of fun. Visit [youthrally.org](http://youthrally.org) for more details and **like us on facebook** for up to date announcements and events.



You can show your support for these organizations by sharing their Event Updates with someone you know living with IBD or an ostomy.




Join a Take Steps event near you!

**HELPFUL TIP and SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE**

# Is It Time to Place an Order for Your Ostomy Supplies?

Let the Hollister Secure Start<sup>SM</sup> services team help you locate a national supplier that is in-network with your insurance(s) to receive your Hollister products. Over the years, Hollister has built relationships with several mail-order suppliers across the country and we can assist in helping find the right company for you. These suppliers will work with your insurance companies and doctors to ensure you receive the products you need in a timely manner. You can find a supplier at any point in your journey, regardless of the brand of product you use.



 Please share this helpful tip with your caregiver and anyone you know who is living with an ostomy.

Please call us at **1.888.808.7456** to speak with a dedicated Consumer Service Advisor today. Our office is open from Monday through Friday 8 AM – 5 PM CT.



# Share Your Experience

Hollister Secure Start services members appreciate the personal touch they receive from our knowledgeable representatives.

**“Thank you so much for always listening. Your kindness, compassion, and knowledge are appreciated more than you know.” – Leslie**

**“Each Secure Start services representative I have talked with has given me emotional support when I thought I was ready to give up.” – Caroline**

Would you like to share an experience you had using our free personalized services? Your testimonial could be featured in a future issue of the eNewsletter.

**Click and submit your comment today!**

 Please share this article with anyone you know who has used Hollister Secure Start services.

*The testimonials presented are representative of their experiences, but the exact results and experience will be unique and individual to each person.*



## SHARE YOUR STORY

# Share Your Story

There is an opportunity for you to lend your voice to the ostomy community. You could be the inspiration for someone to turn their life around. All it takes is for you to share your story—your life's journey—on the pages of a future eNewsletter.

**Were you inspired by Tina Aswani Omprakash's story of how she overcame a cultural stigma associated with ostomy surgery to become an advocate for helping others within the ostomy community?**

**Did this issue's theme of "Be Comfortable in Your Own Skin" get you thinking about changes you can make in your own life?**

We would like to know about the path your life has taken—every twist, every turn, every wise decision—until you achieved your dream and began living your life to the fullest. Your story about overcoming adversity to become the person you are today could be an inspiration to others in a future eNewsletter.



**Click and submit your story today!**



*Please share this article with anyone you know who has a life story that may be interesting and inspiring to others.*

“Give it a voice, because what knocks us down can make us stronger, fiercer, and more united if we let it.”

—Tina Aswani Omprakash

# Hollister Secure Start Services

## eNewsletter

### Resources

#### **Hollister Secure Start Services**

1.888.808.7456

[www.securestartservices.com](http://www.securestartservices.com)

Hollister Facebook 

Hollister Instagram 

#### **United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc. (UOAA)**

1.800.826.0826

[info@uoaa.org](mailto:info@uoaa.org)

[www.ostomy.org](http://www.ostomy.org)

#### **Crohn's & Colitis Foundation**

1.800.932.2423

[www.crohnscolitisfoundation.org](http://www.crohnscolitisfoundation.org)

#### **Colon Cancer Coalition (CCC)**

1.952.378.1237

[www.coloncancercoalition.org](http://www.coloncancercoalition.org)

#### **Colorectal Cancer Alliance (CCA)**

1.877.422.2030

[www.ccalliance.org](http://www.ccalliance.org)

#### **Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network (BCAN)**

1.888.901.2226

[www.bcan.org](http://www.bcan.org)

#### **Friends of Ostomates Worldwide-USA**

[www.fowusa.org](http://www.fowusa.org)

#### **Youth Rally**

[www.youthrally.org](http://www.youthrally.org)

#### **Run For Resilience**

[www.ostomy5k.org](http://www.ostomy5k.org)

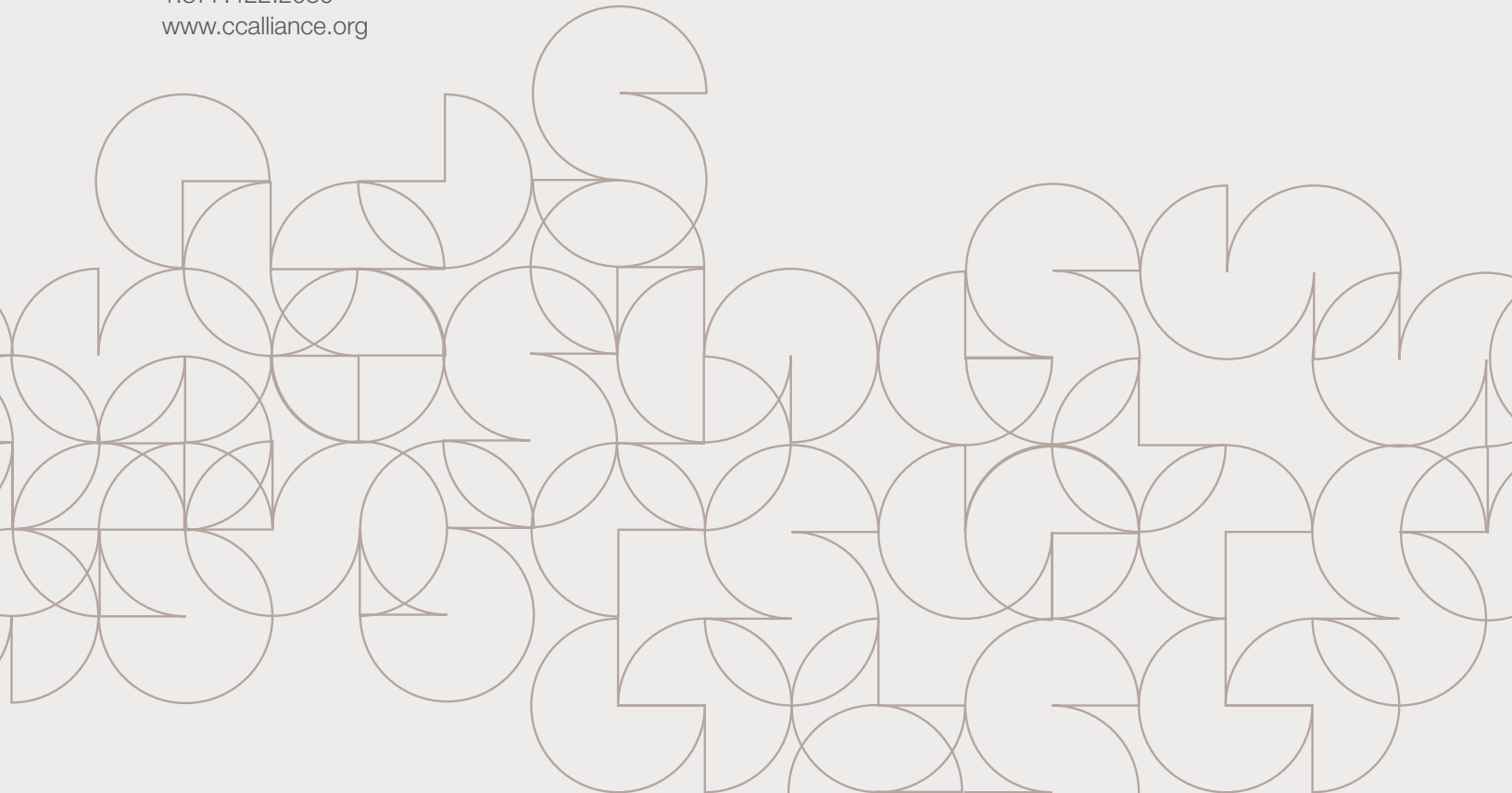
#### **Shadow Buddies Foundation**

[www.shadowbuddies.org](http://www.shadowbuddies.org)

#### **Girls With Guts**

[www.girlswithguts.org](http://www.girlswithguts.org)

**Click [here](#) to download past issues of the Hollister Secure Start services eNewsletter.**





**Secure Start**<sup>SM</sup>

## It's Personal

We are proud to offer dedicated support for each and every ostomy and continence care patient along the continuum of care. Hollister Secure Start services provide a lifetime of personalized support.



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The information contained in this newsletter is provided as general information only and is not intended to be medical advice. Please see our website for the most up to date information, as guidance can and does sometimes change. Prior to product use, be sure to read the Instructions for Use for information regarding Intended Use, Contraindications, Warnings, Precautions, and Instructions.

Hollister Secure Start services are free of charge, and there is no obligation to purchase anything to receive them. Product samples are provided for the patient's trial use and cannot be resold or billed. There is no obligation to accept samples or participate in insurance-matching to identify supplier options. Hollister Incorporated reserves the right to change Hollister Secure Start services at any time.

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