Hand in Hand

Real stories • Real advice

Issue 28

Alan Martin

SecuriCare customer and ostomate

> “My greatest concern was the change to my body image... Please know that there is always hope”

Alan’s story

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Dear Reader,

A very warm welcome to this edition of Hand in Hand.

Hopefully, it's not too late to wish everyone a Happy New Year!

When sitting down to write my foreword, I often look back at previous editions, generally to make sure I don't repeat myself but also to give myself a chance to reflect on what has changed for us as a company and for the world.

I don't suppose there has been a more challenging period to look back on in both of those respects in recent years, considering the significant impact of COVID-19 on every aspect of our lives. The challenges have been immense but I am proud of our team at SecuriCare for what we have achieved in remaining open as usual and providing the first class service we always strive to deliver.

On a personal level, I am sure that many of you will have been impacted in any number of ways over recent months. I hope that through it all you have been able to remain upbeat and positive, something we should all aim to be.

Being positive in all walks of life is vital and I hope that this theme comes across in the articles and topics contained in this edition of our popular magazine. The contributions are, as ever, thought provoking and enlightening - I trust you will find them as interesting as I do to read.

I would like to thank everyone for their contributions to this edition of Hand in Hand and our team for producing it.

May 2021 be a year of positivity for you all. I look forward to welcoming you to future editions of Hand in Hand.

Happy reading!

Neil Freeman,
Managing Director, SecuriCare (Medical) Ltd and CliniMed Ltd

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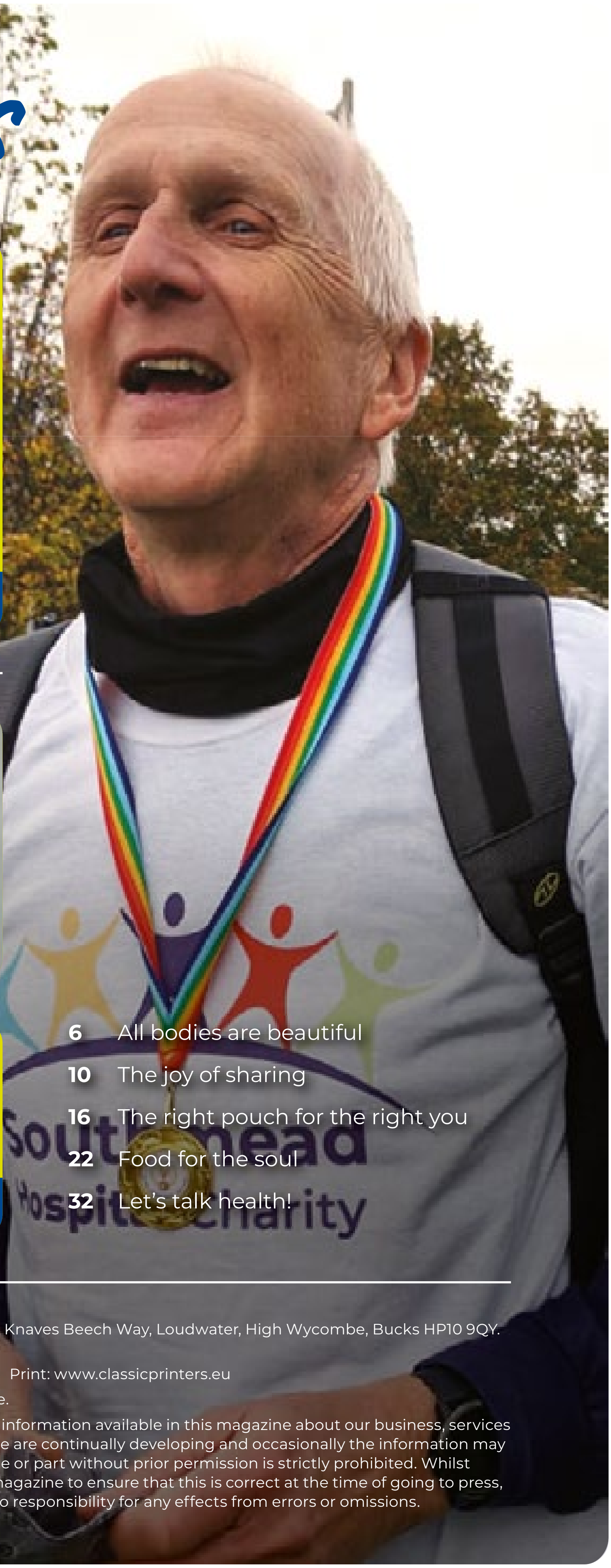
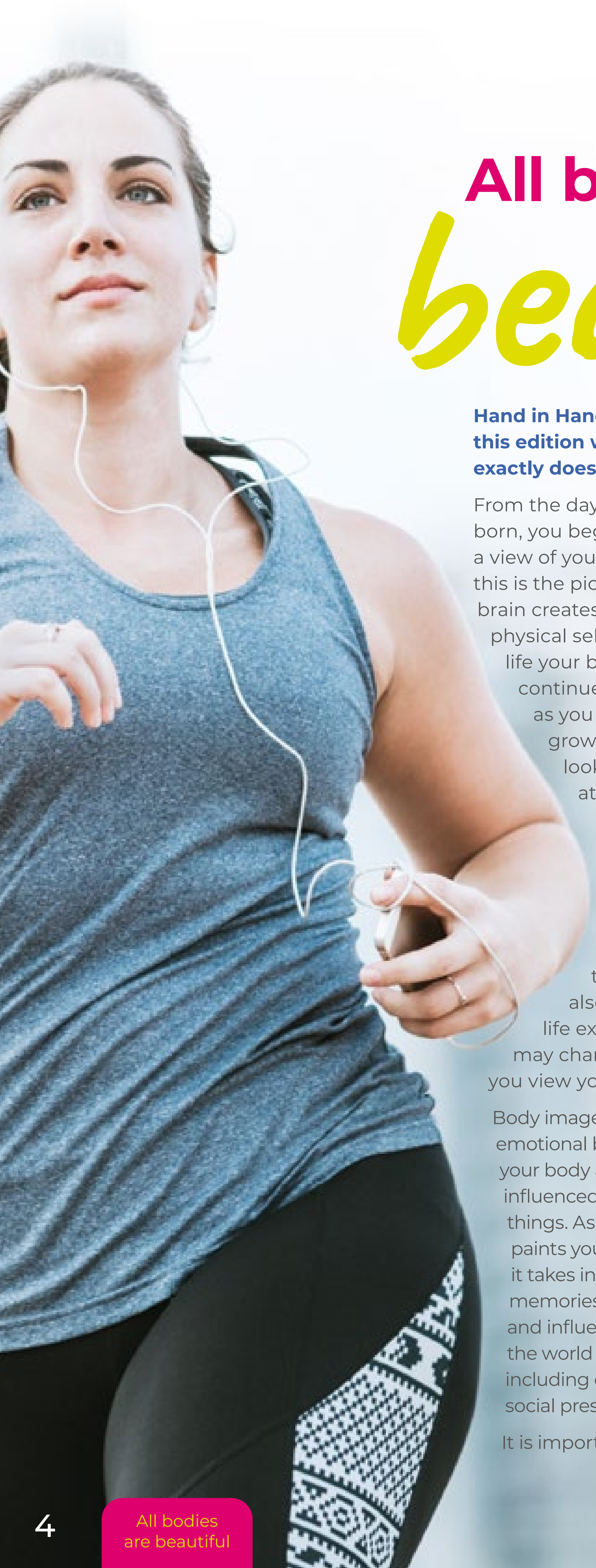


Published by SecuriCare (Medical) Ltd. Compass House, Knaves Beech Way, Loudwater, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 9QY.
T: 01628 850100 E: editor@securicaremedical.co.uk

Editor: Maddy Mills Design: www.cherrythinking.com Print: www.classicprinters.eu

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue.



All bodies are beautiful

Hand in Hand delivers real stories and real advice and in this edition we're celebrating body positivity, but what exactly does it mean?

From the day that you're born, you begin to develop a view of your body image; this is the picture your brain creates of your physical self. Throughout life your body will continue to change as you develop and grow – nobody looks the same at 6, 16 and 66, that is a fact! As your body physically changes, the image that you see in the mirror will also differ. Some life experiences may change the way you view your body.

Body image refers to your emotional beliefs about your body and can be influenced by many things. As your brain paints your body image it takes inspiration from memories, assumptions and influences from the world around you, including cultural and social pressures.

It is important to maintain a positive body image to live a healthy and happy life, and it works the other way too, a healthy lifestyle with a good diet and exercise can promote a positive outlook on body image. Someone who has a positive body image is happy with the way they look, even if it does not match what society suggests is 'desirable'.

Throughout history, humans have decided that the way someone looks is important and this has shaped what is seen on the front covers of magazines, on television screens and in newspapers. Although these standards seem to be popular, they aren't always helpful or realistic. Constantly seeing these images can cause some people to feel uncomfortable about their body and can negatively affect the way they see their body image.

Back onto body positivity! There is a difference between body image and body positivity. Body positivity is a phrase that describes the opinion that all people deserve to have a positive body image, regardless of airbrushed views about the 'ideal' way someone should look. The body positivity movement aims to challenge unrealistic standards of beauty and hopes to promote the acceptance of all body types in order to build people's confidence and acceptance of their bodies. Fortunately, this attitude has become more popular over time.

Officially, the body positivity movement was seeded in the 1960s as people pushed for a change in how society viewed and talked about people's bodies, in particular people's weight. However, the phrase 'body positive' was first officially used by a Psychiatrist in 1996 and since then the body positivity movement has been gaining momentum. It was in 2012, that the focus of body positivity began to shift from a message anchored on weight to a wider message that ' all bodies are beautiful'.

Since then, social media apps, such as Instagram, have played a large role in the growth of this movement and in recent years, many companies have made a conscious effort to be more inclusive within their public efforts. It is important to recognise that body positivity is not just about someone's physical size and shape, it also includes judgements made on race, gender, sexuality, disability and many other factors.

In 2021, body positivity has become a phrase that most people are used to hearing and using. As always, it is important for people to not only raise awareness of the body positivity movement, but for people to act on it and continue to spread the message in hope that it will encourage anyone who is struggling to feel body positive to seek help and make small changes if needed. This way everyone can hope to live a happy and healthy life, and learn to appreciate their body exactly how it is.

A big change such as surgery or ill health can change the way your body looks and going through a difficult time or feeling low can have a toll on your mental wellbeing too; this can alter your body image. If you are struggling with accepting your body image there are a number of steps you can take towards body positivity, a few of which are detailed in this edition of Hand in Hand as we discuss the journey to acceptance with people living with a stoma and look at topics such as taboos, diet and relationships in the pages that follow.

There is always hope

"In 2016 I was given a life changing diagnosis, I had bladder cancer. Let me rewind to tell you how this came about… In April 2016, I woke to find my urine was the colour of Merlot wine. Alarmed, I went see my GP immediately who recommended some investigations, including a cystoscopy, to get to the bottom of the problem. A cystoscopy is a procedure used to look inside the bladder using a thin camera called a cystoscope. The cystoscope is inserted into the urethra (the tube that carries urine out of the body) and allows the doctor to see inside the bladder. In total, a cystoscopy takes around 15 – 30 minutes.

I was diagnosed with a grade 3 muscle invasive bladder tumour. We were all shocked at the news. I have always been a fit person, I do not smoke and I'm not a drinker. On top of this, at the same time as my diagnosis, my son was critically ill and in intensive care. My wife thought she was going to lose us both.

I commenced chemotherapy and had a number of pre-operative check-ups; this is when I went to pieces. I could not accept the thought of having a stoma, I had so many strong feelings. My greatest concern was the change to my body image. Anxiety and depression set in. I was offered psychological help before my operation, but I declined. I was desperate, I pushed everyone away, my family and friends.

On 1st August 2016, I had a robotic radical cystectomy/prostatectomy, meaning that my entire bladder and prostate were removed, with pelvic lymph gland removal too. After my operation I was very sick. I should have stayed in hospital for 4 days, but instead I was kept in for 10 days. The months and years that followed were a major struggle. I could not accept this foreign object on my belly! I routinely had dark thoughts; I could not look in the mirror and I did not want my wife to see me naked.

My surgeon recognised my desperation and referred me to the psychology department at my hospital. After 18 months of intensive psychology therapy, which included EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), I began to feel much better.

I received amazing support and care from all departments at Southmead Hospital through all my experiences. From when I had chemotherapy and surgery, and then working so closely with the psychology team, who helped me find my feet again.

The help of a Clinical Psychologist has been wonderful for me and supported me with the everyday issues. I have so much hope for the future and I wanted to say thank you in some way. In the 4 years since my diagnosis I have become an avid open water swimmer and long distance walker, so decided that I would walk from my home in Weston-Super-Mare to Southmead Hospital on October 17th 2020 to raise money for the psychology department. The walk was around 25 miles and took 8 hours to complete. Luckily I had my friends Nick and Laura with me to keep spirits up during the walk, as well as support from my wife and son.

I wanted to raise some money for the psychology department in particular to say thank you for the help they gave me, as the emotional toll taken on a person who goes through such a diagnosis and life changing surgery is immense. Thanks to them, I now live a very active life. I accept my lovely stoma, it is all mine. I swim in the sea all year, I endurance walk and I can look in the mirror. Yes, I am very happy with life.

I hope to inspire others who have gone through similar experiences. Please know that there is always hope."

Alan Martin

Normalising normal bodies

Sarah Smith has been an ostomate since 2019 when she was rushed in for emergency surgery that resulted in the formation of her ileostomy. Since then she has felt stronger than ever and has been spreading the message of body positivity.

“Being diagnosed at the young age of 16 with ulcerative colitis (a form of inflammatory bowel disease) was very difficult. The path my life then took for the next 13 years was fully controlled by this disease. Strong medications, hospital admissions and tough flare ups defined my life for a long time and I hated my body for the pain it put me through. What I didn’t know was that at the age of 29 I would be rushed for emergency surgery to have my colon removed and to then live life with an ileostomy and a stoma bag on my stomach that now collects my poo.

My fear of having an ileostomy was high. I had always said that I would rather die than have a stoma bag. I had thought that having a bag would ruin my life, I was too young to need one, surely? Would anyone love me? All these thoughts rushed round in my mind and caused me to put off having surgery for years.

After years of harsh medications, my body could not cope anymore and began to reject all medications I could have. As a result, my colon turned toxic and needed to be removed via emergency surgery. I didn’t have time to come to terms with having a stoma as I was told 2 days prior to my surgery. I was petrified my life would change, how I looked would be different and I thought I would hate my life with a stoma.

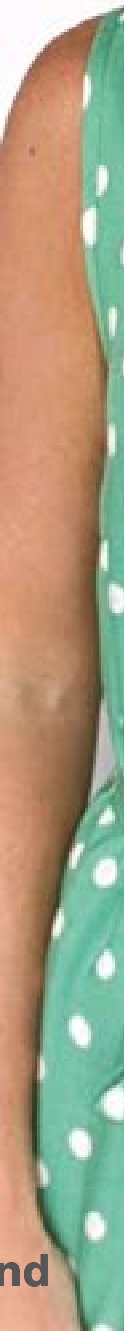
I can’t quite believe how wrong I was about living with an ileostomy.

My life post-surgery is amazing! Why did I think having an ileostomy would be so terrible? Just because I live with a bag on my stomach doesn’t make me any less worthy than able bodied people. The body confidence I have now, I have never ever felt before. I look in the mirror and looking back is a strong warrior that I am proud of. My body has been through so much and it is finally pain free and strong. My ileostomy has made me feel the most well I have ever felt in my life and I am so grateful for it.

I have been able to get physically fitter and stronger post-surgery too because I don’t have the worry of having to rush to the toilet or have accidents. My body was put through so much for so long and now it is time for it to be what it wants to be. My body helps me to enjoy the life I know I was meant to have. I am now in control and can do everything I ever wished of doing.

Since my surgery, I have been promoting the message that not every disability is visible. I have been educating people around life with a stoma to show others that it is okay to have a bag and that life will be okay.

My aim is to normalise normal bodies. My body is my normal and it is worthy to be included and considered ‘normal’ in today’s society.



I have been in touch with many companies to try and spread this message. Recently I spoke with an amazing lady from Asda who was interested in 'normalising normal bodies' and the idea of promoting inclusivity in their clothing range. I was kindly gifted some items of clothing, which I modelled at home and the images were shared via their social media channels. I feel so proud to be the first female model with an ileostomy in Asda's history. I am confident that we are making the right step towards making the invisible visible and I would love to make other people feel as confident as I do about their body.

Your body is your body, no one else's. No one should have an opinion about your body. Everyone has curves, rolls, stretch marks, scars, they make up who we are and we should be proud of our bodies for what they have been through.

It is so easy to criticise parts of our body, I often did this before my surgery and I was concerned that others would criticise me too. We need to have our own positive view of ourselves and love the bodies we were given. We must accept ourselves for who we are and not compare ourselves to others as every single person on this earth is unique and that is your power."

Sarah Smith,
SecuriCare blogger

The joy of sharing

In this article, Bob Smith shares his story of how his stoma changed his life and how he supports people going through stoma surgery. As an active member of the online stoma community, Bob is keen to share his experiences with as many people as he can. Recently Bob interviewed for our Invisible Illnesses: Stoma and Continence Radio Series and took part in our sister company, CliniMed's 'Everything you want to know about parastomal hernias' webinar.

"I was diagnosed with diverticulitis a few years ago as some people over the age of 50 are. Mine progressed to diverticular disease due to infection. In the Autumn of 2019 I was suffering from constant internal infections and my colon had practically become glued to my bladder. After being introduced to my colorectal consultant at the Royal Bournemouth hospital I underwent an exploratory procedure and I was told I had to have a colon resection.

I felt fine with this because I had been so unwell, however, after my first appointment at the stoma clinic I realised there was a possibility that I may end up with a stoma!

Like most people I had no idea what this entailed and was terrified at the prospect. I remember, in January 2019, before going in for surgery I asked my consultant to do all that was possible to avoid me having a stoma.

Post-surgery everything was good and I had no stoma. After 24 hours the join was leaking and I suffered with sepsis and had to have an emergency operation. Unfortunately this didn't help and 2 days later I had another emergency operation where the join was undone and a stoma was sited. Towards the end of the operation there was a complication that resulted in me being on a respiratory machine in the ICU.

I recovered and went back to work with a planned reversal for September 2019. This, however, was not successful. Since the initial operation my stoma has been re-sited 3 times and I have had 3 parastomal hernias with 2 repairs, so 8 procedures in total in 2019 – I joke about having a loyalty card!

My partner, family and friends give me great support and I work for a company that has been super supportive.

I have a wonderful consultant who looks after me and an amazing stoma care nursing team, but one thing that I realised is that I need support for daily life with a stoma. Like most people I have never had anything like a stoma before and it has changed every aspect of my life. I started looking for places where I could ask for help with things that are non-clinical to help me live as 'normal' a life as possible.

Online support groups have been helpful, I have found that some groups are smaller and better for me. In these groups I have been able to ask questions that I felt were either silly or personal without being embarrassed. I have found that even though I have never met the people, I have made friends from all over the world. We share experiences from which we all learn and it means we don't feel so isolated. My stoma (called 'Fred') has opened a world that I did not know existed and has allowed me to meet some inspiring people.

As I became more involved in the stoma community, I decided that I would like to share my experiences as others had shared theirs with me. I had found talking to fellow patients so helpful. I was contacted by a friend from one of the stoma groups who told me about a webinar being held by CliniMed who were looking for a patient who has a parastomal hernia to take part and talk about their experience – before I knew it I was on the panel! Although it was quite nerve wracking, I really enjoyed it and had some great feedback from viewers from all over the world which was amazing. Following on from this I was part of SecuriCare's series of radio interviews about invisible illnesses - I'm such a chatterbox it ended up being a whole episode just with me!

Going forward I am looking to take part in a course held by the Ileostomy Association to get a qualification to be able to support others with a stoma or facing having one by going into hospital to visit as a non-clinical fellow 'bag-holder'. I hope I can answer the kind of questions I had and hopefully make things a little easier for them. This is something I have spoken to my consultant and my hospital about and I'm very excited about the prospects for the future."

Bob Smith

Boosting confidence with Polar Moon


Polar Moon's **Roly Moly**

“As a kid in the 60’s, my dad used to have all sorts of odd sayings. While most were funny, there was one that resonated so much with me that it has stayed with me all of my life: ‘no matter what you lose in life, never lose your dignity’. Sadly, fast forward to 2011 and that was exactly what my dad lost when he passed away following a brave battle with dementia.

Now you might be wondering what this has to do with stoma bag covers, but it really was the starting point for my company Polar Moon. I decided that no one with dementia should have to lose their dignity again and instead of being given baby toys to play with, I would create an age appropriate fiddle toy suitable for all ages – from this the Roly Moly was born. I thought that would be it and Polar Moon would be a company for people with dementia but how wrong was I!

In 2016, after a long and challenging marriage, I divorced and moved hundreds of miles away to start my life again. It was there that I met somebody who had just had an ileostomy formed following many years of illness. After her bag had been fitted she was so grateful of the better quality of life she had, but she started thinking ‘who will love me with a stoma bag?’ and ‘how can I feel nice and sexy with a stoma bag?’. This was when I made my first stoma bag cover.

I thought it would be a one off but so many people liked it I decided to see what choices were out there. I was shocked at the lack of products that would be able to make someone feel good and boost their confidence, so I started making covers embellished with embroidery, crystal, satin and lace. Nowadays I make beautiful covers for everyone - women, men and children alike. I only use 100% cotton for the comfort and all my covers can be machine washed.

I also offer a free service for those who use unusual size bags. All I ask for this is for you to send me sample bag which I can use as a template so you’ll have a perfect fit.

My stoma bag covers can be found at www.polarmoon.co.uk and I look forward to seeing you there.”

**Kim Miles,
Founder of
Polar Moon**


SOS
LBF

The muscles down there

Becky Aston is a Physiotherapist who specialises in 'the muscles down there'. In this article Becky gives an overview of pelvic floor health and how you can activate your pelvic floor muscles anywhere.

Physiotherapist, **Becky Aston**

You can follow Becky on Facebook and Instagram: @beckyastonphysiotherapy

"I've been working in the world of pelvic health for over 20 years and it's a bit of a passion of mine. I'm a qualified Physiotherapist with extended knowledge about continence mechanisms. I worked in the NHS for over 15 years before launching my own clinic after moving to the Hertfordshire countryside. I now see and treat men and women of all ages with continence problems as well as pelvic organ prolapse symptoms, pregnancy related musculoskeletal issues and other pelvic related conditions such as painful bladder syndrome, endometriosis, erectile dysfunction and complex pelvic pain.

What are the pelvic floor muscles?

Everyone has them! They are a group of muscles that form a bowl-shaped diaphragm at the bottom of the pelvis. Sometimes talked about as a 'sling of muscles', they stretch from the front of the pelvis (the pubic bone) to the bottom of the spine (the coccyx, also known as the 'tail bone'). They have an opening for the front and back passage, as well as the vagina.

Pelvic floor muscles play important roles in:

- Maintaining continence mechanisms
- Stabilising the pelvis and spine
- Supporting pelvic organs
- Sexual arousal and function

Continence and the pelvic floor

The pelvic floor muscles are like other muscles we have in the body, they fundamentally contract, relax and provide a constant postural tone throughout the day and night. Their role in continence is both complex and simple. When working well, they contract every time there is an increase in the abdominal pressure above the bladder and bowel, commonly known as intra-abdominal pressure. This occurs when we cough, sneeze, laugh, but also when we walk upstairs and move in any way, including exercise. If you leak urine with activity, this is known as stress urinary incontinence.

These muscles also work to inhibit bladder contractions, which gives us the urge to 'go'. An urge to empty the bladder is normal but not if it makes you go to the toilet too often (more than 8 times in 24 hours), makes you stop what you are doing and need to dash to the toilet or leads to your bladder leaking on the way to the toilet. This type of bladder problem if often known as overactive bladder syndrome.

The pelvic floor muscles also have a role in supporting the pelvic organs in women. Pelvic organ prolapse affects many women after childbirth and can feel very uncomfortable. Pelvic floor exercises can improve, reduce or eradicate these uncomfortable symptoms.

Anal incontinence is less common but includes the inability to control wind or stools and has a huge impact on quality of life. A full assessment of the causes of this is important and treatment may include strengthening the pelvic floor muscles.

How can you activate the pelvic floor muscles?

Try squeezing the back passage and lifting the pelvic floor muscles up inside and then relax.

There are 2 types of exercises:

1. Slow exercises, meaning you hold the muscles for as long as you can. The aim is to be able to hold for 10 seconds, relax and repeat 10 times.
2. Fast exercises. Squeeze, relax and repeat – try to do 3 sets of 10.

If you notice that you're holding your breath or feel only your gluteals working (the muscles around your hips) you aren't doing these exercises correctly. Try squeezing the muscles as you breath out. Isolate the pelvic floor muscles without over squeezing the gluteal muscles. It shouldn't be obvious to anyone watching that you're even doing them!

Try the exercises lying down if your muscles initially feel weak, as they strengthen you can try sitting or standing.

If you leak when you cough or sneeze- try 'the knack'; squeeze the pelvic floor muscles just before you cough or sneeze – this will often reduce the leak or stop it all together.

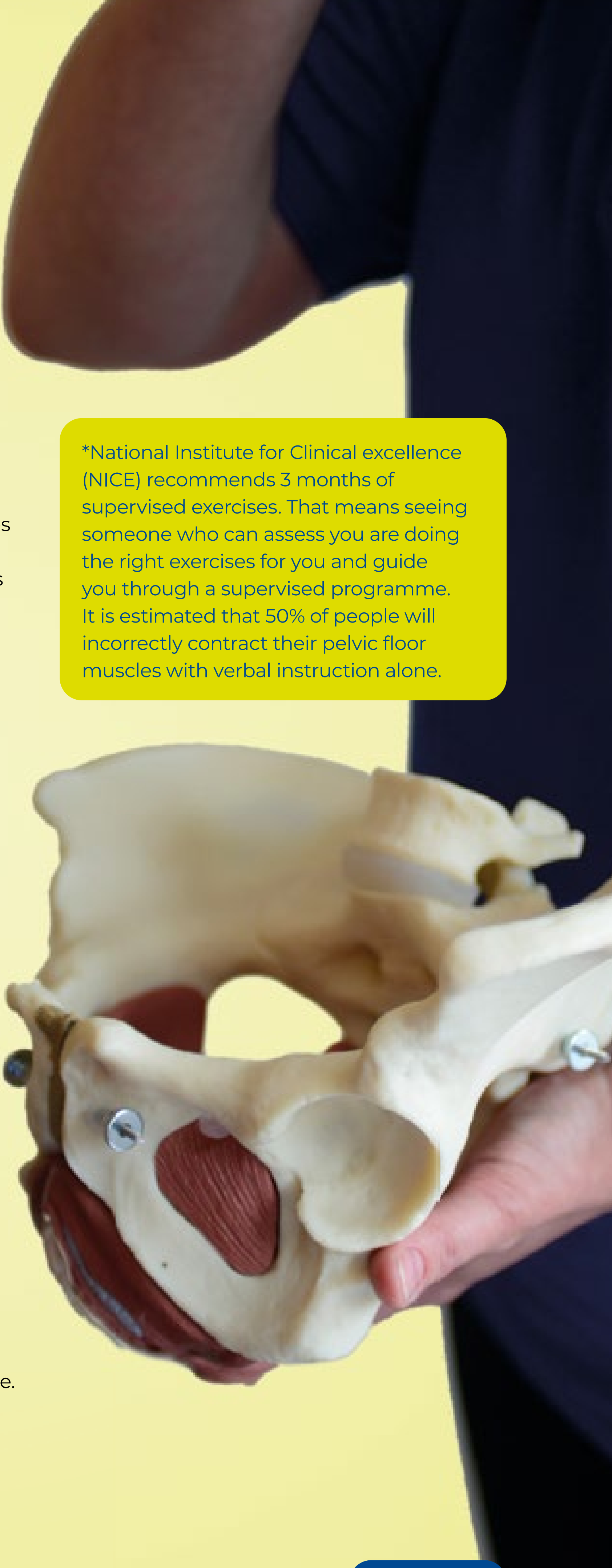
What should you do if you suffer from any of the symptoms discussed?

- Don't ignore it
- Seek help, talk to your GP and ask for a referral to a specialist Physiotherapist or Continence Nurse
- Pelvic floor exercises daily are recommended*
- If you are overweight, loosing weight will help
- If you smoke, gain help to cease smoking

There are other treatments and advice a Specialist Physiotherapist might advise you to do dependent on your symptoms and general health, so seeing a specialist is always advisable.

Incontinence is common but very treatable – always seek help."

*National Institute for Clinical excellence (NICE) recommends 3 months of supervised exercises. That means seeing someone who can assess you are doing the right exercises for you and guide you through a supervised programme. It is estimated that 50% of people will incorrectly contract their pelvic floor muscles with verbal instruction alone.



The right pouch for the right

If you have a stoma, you will know that living with one can have its challenges. It's important that the products you use make you feel comfortable and secure. After surgery your Stoma Care Nurse will seek to find the best product(s) to suit your individual needs. Every person is different and some products might work better for others; there are so many factors to consider including the size and shape of your stoma, but also your lifestyle and personal preferences.

Finding the right products for you can have a huge effect on your confidence and therefore your ability to go about your daily routine with no inhibitions. Feeling happy with your stoma will help you to adjust to your body image after surgery.

There are many different products available to you, so if you're struggling with complications such as leaking, sore skin or lack of security, there are lots of options that you can try. Many brands and manufacturers are more than happy to provide product samples. Plus, if you receive your supplies through SecuriCare's home delivery service, you will also have the benefit of our product sampling service, which gives you the option to try out a product in the comfort of your own home, as part of your normal routine with your usual clothes and other products.

If you are a keen researcher, you will know that there are many stoma product manufacturers in the UK and the range of products is incredibly diverse. When finding the right pouch, it is important to consider what is most important to you. Security is often a common consideration and each manufacturer's flange offers something different. Some contain added ingredients such as CliniMed's Aura range which contains medical grade Manuka honey, you might find that this may help to promote healthy skin around your stoma, which is important to help your pouch stay stuck throughout the day.

Other products might offer alternatives to a flat flange ('flange' is the part of the pouch that sticks to your tummy). If you have a peristomal hernia, a pouch that can mould around your hernia may offer you more security. Or if you have a poorly-sited, recessed or retracted stoma, you might benefit from trying a pouch with a convex flange. These pouches are specially designed to place pressure around the stoma and help it to protrude into the bag and prevent leakage.

A recent article was published in the British Journal of Nursing that investigated the option of 'Selecting convexity to improve and maintain peristomal skin integrity'[1] - 'peristomal skin' being the skin around your stoma. Your peristomal skin should look the same as the rest of the skin on your body. If you have any redness, soreness, itchiness or other discomforts this might affect your pouch's ability to stick to your skin and could cause leakages. This loss in skin integrity can affect your quality of life and body image, so it's important to seek guidance and contact your Stoma Care Nurse if you're experiencing problems.

The study determined whether a Manuka honey convex flange can provide better results than a convex flange without Manuka honey. Independent Stoma Care Nurses identified 31 people who were already using a soft or moderate convex flange without Manuka honey who were experiencing peristomal skin complications.

you

These patients were switched to a pouch with a Manuka honey convex flange and the outcomes reported were:

- 83% of people experienced fewer leakages
- 87.5% of people reported improvement in their peristomal skin within 7 days
- 93% of people reported an overall improvement following the use of the Manuka honey convex flange

It is important to remember that different pouches work for different needs and that there are lots of options for you to try. If you would like to try a sample of a pouch containing medical grade Manuka honey you can simply request a sample with your next order. Or if you are unsure which product is right for you, our Careline team are here to help, call 0800 318 965.

If you are currently not using a convex pouch but would like to try one, we advise that you speak with your Stoma Care Nurse.

*Independent Stoma Care Nurse
1. Evans M & White P. Selecting convexity to improve and maintain peristomal skin integrity. British Journal of Nursing. 2020, 29 (16)

9 steps to a more positi

Body image is a challenge for many people and regardless of age, gender, weight, height, ethnicity, disability or a number of other factors; it can be difficult to feel body positive all of the time. However, it is important to strive for body positivity as this can help you maintain a positive sense of wellbeing.

When you find yourself feeling negative about your body image, try to adjust the way you think. Small changes can build over time and alter the way you see yourself. You should embrace all that makes you who you are and love your body as a whole.

If you are finding it difficult to overcome negativity, you can try using the tips in this article to help you make a small change.

Do

✓ Appreciate what your body can do

Every day, you take around 20,000 breaths and your heart pumps 100,000 times – all without any conscious effort from you. Your body has been through its own set of challenges, however, it is powerful.

✓ Write a list about things you like about yourself

Whether you chose to write 2 or 10 things down, hold onto your list and look back at it if you need to.

✓ Channel the energy you might spend worrying into something productive

Challenge yourself to start something new or finish something old. Focussing on one activity can quieten any negative thoughts for a moment and help you to feel in control.

✓ Surround yourself with positive people

Support is something that everybody needs and it comes in many forms – friends, family or even online communities.

✓ Do something nice for yourself

Set time aside to look after your body and reward yourself occasionally.

re body image

Don't

Don't be your harshest critic

Try not to compare yourself to others or set unrealistic expectations for yourself.

Don't take what you see on social media to heart

It is difficult to break free of social media when it feels all consuming, however, it is important to remember that the things you see online might not be as real as you think. It is known that photos and words can be edited, so try not to take everything at face value.

Don't focus on one thing, look at yourself as a person

The person who spends the most time with you is you – meaning that you have the ability to see yourself in the most amount of detail. Try not to fixate on one area of yourself that you are conscious about.

Don't be afraid to ask for and accept help

If you are struggling with your body image, there are lots of things that can help. Different options work for different individuals but you may want to try contacting a charity that can support you. On the back page of this edition of Hand in Hand you will find the numbers of support services that are here for you.

You may also wish to seek help from your Stoma Care Nurse or Healthcare Practitioner, or call the SecuriCare Careline on **0800 318 965**.

Talking taboos

As the world spins and time moves forward, trends and topics of interest change with the seasons and time-periods. In the same way that we do not talk about putting woolly socks on during summertime, we also no longer worry of the concerns that the cavemen once had – when was the last time you walked round barefoot foraging for berries and sharpening sticks?

However, sometimes there is a delay between time and trends, and they can take a while to catch up with each other. Unfortunately, this is where some taboo topics get left behind. Something is deemed taboo when it is forbidden or disapproved of, and is placed under a social ban, meaning that it is frowned upon to speak about it in day to day conversations.

Some topics that remain taboo include mental health, periods, poo and wee – just to name a few. These are things that are common within society and that many people experience. In fact, a quarter of people will experience a mental health problem at some point in life. That means that if you have not had a mental health issue yourself, you almost certainly know someone who has.

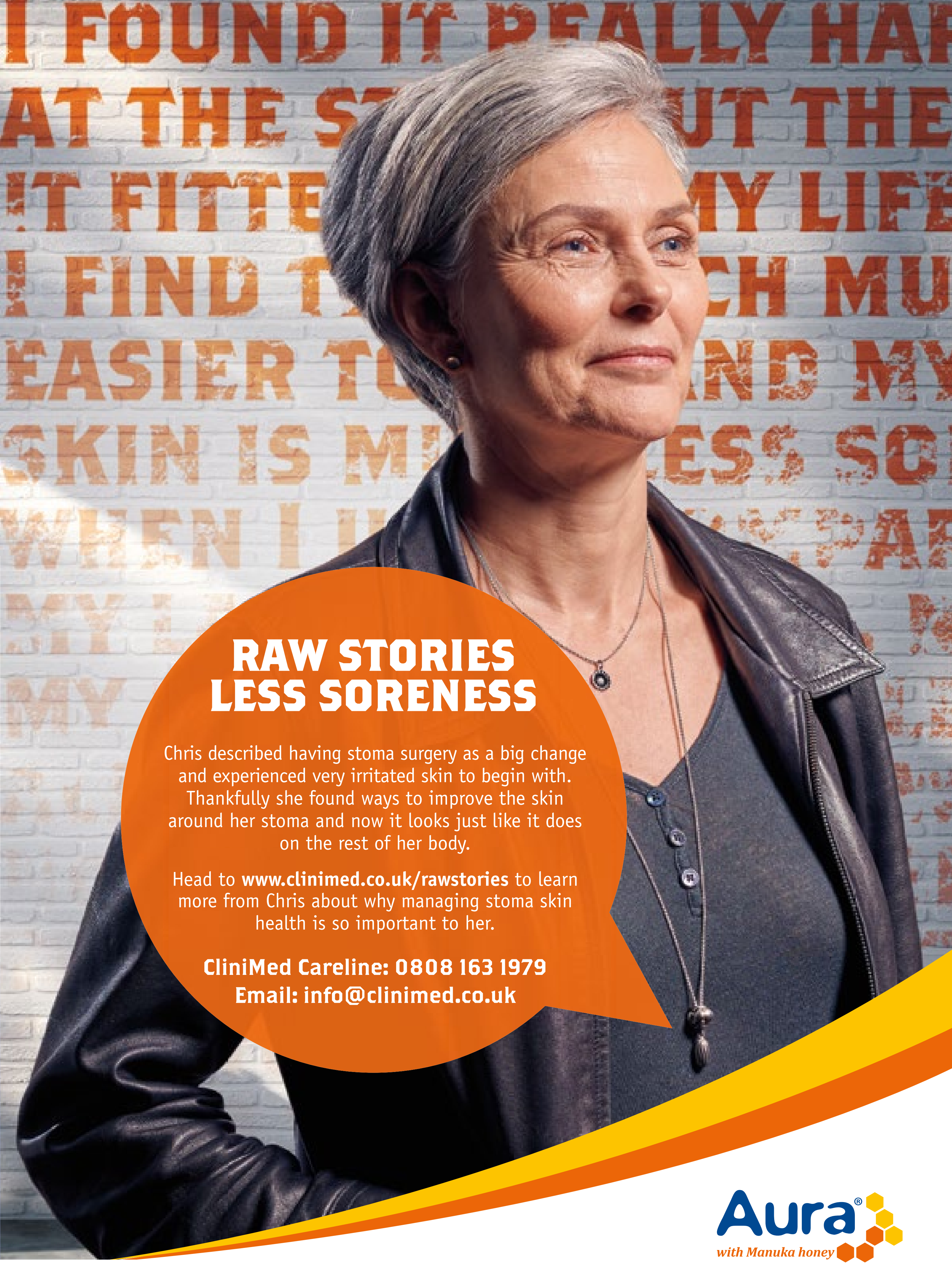
The problem is that there are some subjects that have stayed within the taboo category when they should not have. People often are fearful of the unknown, however, the easiest way to rid them of this fear is to educate.

Education is important to ensure that people feel confident to seek help and not suffer in silence if they are experiencing a health problem. To efficiently educate and encourage proactive behaviour the stigma must be dissolved. You can help by doing one thing... talking.

Talking is the most simple and effective way to break down any possible stigma associated with a taboo subject. If you are hesitant to speak yourself, there are many resources available online and offline that you can share with others to help spread the message and break down the taboo.

There is considered to be a stigma surrounding stomas and incontinence. Charities such as Colostomy UK, Ileostomy Association, Urostomy Association, GetYourBellyOut and Crohn's & Colitis UK – to name only a few – are doing an excellent job of raising awareness of these topics to help break the stigma.

> *To efficiently educate and encourage proactive behaviour the stigma must be dissolved. You can help by doing one thing... talking.*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Food for the

Your body is your most precious possession and you should handle it with love and care, and that includes choosing the right things to nourish it with. It is no secret that eating a well-balanced diet is the key to leading a healthy lifestyle, along with regular exercise and getting enough sleep. This trinity are also at the crux of maintaining your mental and physical wellbeing – a positive body image too.

Society puts a lot of guilt on enjoying food. The words 'cheat day' and 'I'll have to walk that off' are muttered all too often when talking about the foods people want to eat. The secret, as it always has been, is 'everything in moderation'. But what exactly does this mean?

In order to eat a healthy balanced diet each person should consume a certain amount of each food group per day. The Eatwell Guide shows that to have a healthy diet people should:

- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day
- Base meals on foods that are high in fibre and starch (potatoes, bread, rice or pasta)
- Have some dairy or dairy alternatives
- Consume protein foods such as beans, pulses, fish, eggs or meat
- Choose and consume unsaturated fats in small amounts

By consuming a variety of different foods across the 5 main food groups you can easily consume a wide range of nutrients. A balanced diet feeds the brain and is proven to improve mental wellbeing. Providing your body with the correct nutrients will help to support a positive mood and optimal brain function.

It is not just about what you eat, it is about how you eat it too! On top of these important nutrients, by eating your meals regularly, you will keep your blood sugar levels consistent. Low blood sugar can make you to feel lots of things including tiredness, irritability and other mood disorders. You can help support your blood sugar levels by consuming 3 meals a day or eating every 3 – 4 hours. This will help you feel positive.

Drinking plenty of fluids is important to staying well hydrated, which will help you to think clearly and focus. Plus, if you have a urostomy or are a continence care product user, you should aim to drink even more water. It is recommended that you consume around 2 – 3 litres of fluids per day if you have a urostomy. This is because drinking plentiful fluids can also help to avoid the risk of urinary tract infections (UTIs). Eating foods that are high in Vitamin C and drinking cranberry juice (unless contraindicated) can be helpful for avoiding UTIs too.

It is important to nourish your body with the correct foods to make sure you're feeling your best. Some foods might cause your stoma output to change consistency if you have a colostomy or ileostomy. Many people with a stoma find that their body reacts certain ways to certain foods. Rather than 'banning' foods,

soul

it is worth experimenting a few times before excluding them from your diet – especially if you have had your surgery recently, you may well find that you can eat them in a few months time after your body has adjusted to the new situation.

Having a stoma may require you to make some adaptions to your life, including your diet. Some cultural and religious practices relating to diet may also need to be considered, as well as personal preferences, such as being vegetarian or vegan, and intolerances and allergies. In all instances, you may need to experiment a little to find what works best for you. If you're unsure or need further information, talk to your Stoma Care Nurse or GP.

Whether you have a stoma or not, it is not an old wives' tale that you need to chew your food well, this will help to avoid excess wind and support consistent bowel movements. As well as chewing, eating regular balanced meals with low fat and moderate fibre, meeting your recommended fluid intake and gentle exercise will also help to maintain regular bowel movements.

Eating a healthy diet is an important part of maintaining good health and can help you feel your best. Plus, trying new foods and recipes can be great fun!

Visit www.securicaremedical.co.uk for more dietary advice in our 'Advice And Support' section. Or if you have a stoma and would like more information, request a copy of our free 'Nutritional advice after bowel surgery' booklet with your next order.

Learning to love yourself

Your body image is the picture your mind paints of your physical features. Not only does this include how you see yourself when you look in the mirror, but also how you think other people see you. This can have an impact on your actions, choices and ultimately your quality of life and is why it is important to maintain a positivity body image.

It is not always easy to maintain a positive body image when surrounded by a society that has chosen to define beauty through magazines, television and film. Although you may feel pressured to try to live up to unrealistic expectations, it is important to remind yourself that all bodies are beautiful, including yours.

To feel good about yourself you need to feel comfortable with your body and not just how you look when you're fully dressed. Carrying around negative self-perceptions can cause a negative impact on your relationships with yourself and others. Whether with friends, family or loved ones, maintaining a positive body image can help to promote happy and fulfilling relationships.

Everyone has a right to love and be loved, regardless of your gender, sexual orientation or other factors. Plus, it is natural to feel concerned about how your surgery or condition might affect pre-existing or future relationships.

If you have a stoma, it may take some time to adjust to your body image after surgery and this can take different lengths of time for different people. It is important to remember that there is no rush – take your time and let your feelings guide you. Or if you are a continence care product user, you may also wish to

take your time to figure out who you'd like to talk to or be intimate with.

Every relationship is different and it is entirely your decision who you talk to, whether you're having a chat about the football results or feel like you would like to discuss your health. When it comes down to discussing your health, mentally or physically, you may find that planning what to say and who to say it to will give you a feeling of being in control. If you're nervous about approaching a big topic, you could try rehearsing it with another friend and/or your nurse.

You might find that you wish to share different levels of details with different people. Some you may just want to tell that you are okay, some might benefit from knowing more practical details including diet, exercise or even about your products in case you require some help. For those closest to you, you might want to talk about not only the practicalities of your health condition but also your feelings.

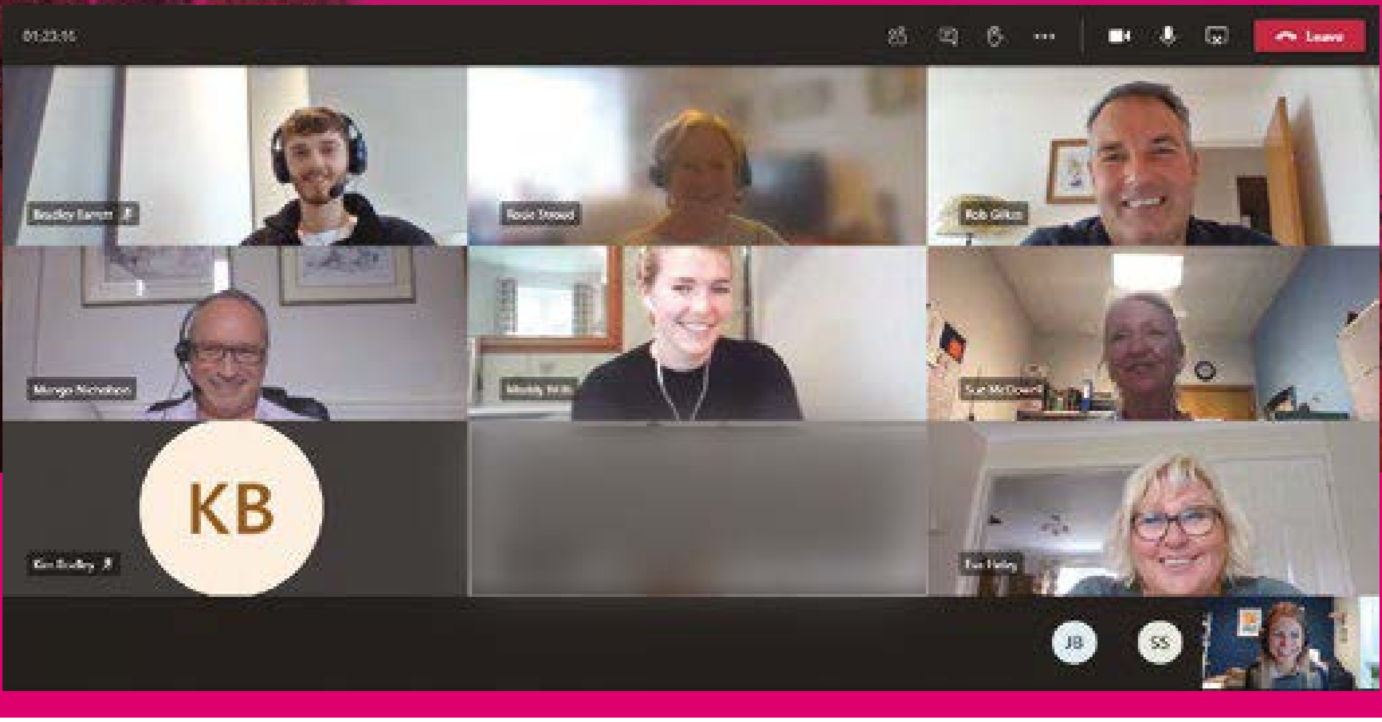
Managing people's response can be challenging. As much as you may feel that you want to be in control, you cannot always predict people's reactions. Some people may be very supportive from the offset and others may be unsure about how to react. Allowing time and speaking openly and honestly can be helpful.

Expressing your honest feelings to someone can be hard but it is important to share your worries. This is especially true if you are in a close intimate relationship with someone. Giving others a chance to be aware of your feelings, whether associated to body image or not, can provide you with a big sense of relief. Your partner may even be able to help with aspects that you might be struggling with and will help you through tough times.

Whatever your body image, your relationships are yours to control. There are no guidelines to relationships and you can decide whether or not you wish to be intimate with someone else. Intimacy can be a difficult subject to approach and your body image can affect your confidence and self-esteem. Understanding how you feel about your body image may help you to gradually change it. A positive body image is about acceptance. By appreciating your body, how it can change, adapt and heal, you can start to build your sense of self-confidence and worth.

Everyone is an individual who needs and wants different things from relationships. Don't let fear or embarrassment prevent you from seeking support and advice if you need it – the first step is to tell someone. If you would like some additional help, request a copy of SecuriCare's 'My body, my relationship' booklet with your next order by calling 0800 318 965.

> *Giving others a chance to be aware of your feelings, whether associated to body image or not, can provide you with a big sense of relief.*



A day *in the life of…*

In March 2020, the UK experienced a big change as it went into its first lockdown. This transformed many of our day-to-day lives, including those of our Field Sales team who were redeployed across SecuriCare. As always, our team were enthusiastic and embraced the new challenge. Here's what they had to say…

> *"…our service users were so kind, I felt as though I was speaking to a member of my family – a very warm, cuddly, fuzzy feeling."*

"I felt privileged to be given the opportunity to support the Patient Services team when I was redeployed during lockdown. Our service users' gratitude was overwhelming and for those who lived alone or were shielding, I think they were thankful for a friendly voice at the end of the phone. Although it was challenging at first, our service users were so kind, I felt as though I was speaking to a member of my family – a very warm, cuddly, fuzzy feeling." **Jill Bailey, Product Specialist – Stoma & Wound Care**

"I joined the team on the morning of 23rd March 2020 and that evening it was announced that the UK was to go into lockdown. I've therefore had to rely on a mixture of 'old fashioned' (telephone), 'newer' (email) and 'new' (video conferencing) to build relationships with everyone. Like many people, I've tried to balance this new experience of working from home full time with things to support positive mental wellbeing so I incorporated a daily nature watch walk into my routine. I videoed the daily progression of a set of swans and geese nesting and the positive comments on Facebook from friends and family who are unable to access nature spaces spurred me on to continue." **Sandy Sullivan, Product Specialist – Stoma & Wound Care**

Images from Sandy's nature watch walks

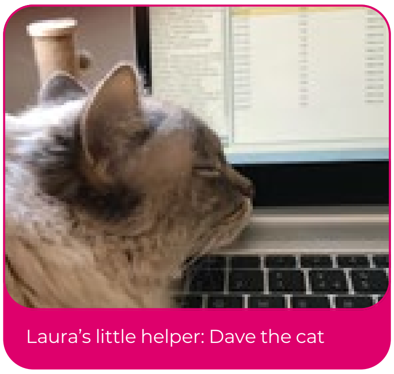
"I was very glad to be redeployed as I was left feeling a bit bewildered when we went into lockdown. Helping with processing SecuriCare orders was a rewarding experience, I felt that my efforts were well received by our service users, especially as many people were self-isolating and didn't have much contact with the outside world. I had many conversations with people who felt lonely and I felt lucky to be able to support them. My knowledge as a Product Specialist was helpful to some customers who were having issues with their skin health and/products too." **Eva Heley, Product Specialist – Stoma & Wound Care**

"How would I describe my lockdown experience? Challenging, I think is the word I would use. For the past 35 years I have been used to face-to-face meetings with Healthcare Professionals and customers. What it has highlighted though is how, in times of adversity, everyone pulls together to ensure the most vulnerable are looked after as best as possible. SecuriCare and sister company, CliniMed, have maintained a high level of contact with customers through various initiatives and I'm proud to have been a part of that." **Mike Ferrier, Product Specialist – Urology and Continence**

"I admire the work and effort of the SecuriCare team. We all go about our daily work and 'things just happen'; we don't often get time to fully understand the background of work that goes on behind the scenes to ensure that every order is processed and delivered perfectly. It was so lovely to hear the feedback from our service users about the support they receive and how wonderful they thought the staff were.

I have attached a picture of my little helper Dave the cat, who was helping me whilst I was taking calls." **Laura Savage, Product Specialist – Urology & Continence**

"I spent a few weeks redeployed with Patient Services during the lockdown period. Everyday was busy and most of my days were spent making calls to GP surgeries throughout the UK to request new and repeat prescriptions on behalf of our service users. I also spent time checking prescription requests and answering queries about items and quantities to ensure that our service users got the supplies they needed. The surgery staff were lovely and very helpful, despite having to deal with lots of requests and demands in the middle of the lockdown period. I have a huge respect for both the surgery staff and our Patient Services team, they deal with a large number of requests each and every day and they managed to ensure all orders were sent out during what must have been a very difficult time for the majority of our service users." **Theresa Monks, Product Specialist – Urology & Continence**



Laura's little helper: Dave the cat

Supporting support groups

In previous editions of Hand in Hand we've featured a number of stories from individuals who have benefited from attending a support group. Following a big change, it is common to want to seek support and advice from others who have been through a similar experience. It is also normal to want to find a group of like-minded individuals to share your experiences with.

Looking after your wellbeing, both physically and mentally is important to living a healthy and happy life. The idea of sharing might seem daunting at first, however, it is important not to bottle things up. You will often find that a problem shared is a problem halved.

In the back of every edition of Hand in Hand, you will find a list of support groups that are available to you. Many of these groups are still functioning and able to offer support to you, even during the pandemic.

Reaching out is the first step.

If you have hosted or attended a support group during the COVID-19 pandemic, in person or online, we'd love hear from you. Get in touch by emailing editor@securicaremedical.co.uk to share your experience in a future edition of Hand in Hand.

One less mess
to think about

Curan® Man, for intermittent self-catheterisation, is designed with patients in mind. Lubricated with a mess-free gel to ensure smooth insertion and removal, Curan Man is easy to use. Clean and hygienic, the single-use catheter has a soft guide to aid no-touch application and can be fully resealed after use for convenient disposal. Foldable in a pocket sized sleeve for discreet, compact carrying away from home, Curan Man fits in to your patients' lives perfectly. Curan Man is also 19% less expensive than the market leader, making it a cost-effective alternative.[1]

For more information or a free sample, call the CliniMed Careline on 0808 163 1979

1. Health Data Analytics, September 2019. Drug Tariff, January 2020.

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CliniMed®

curan® man

Stoma *questions* answered

In this edition of 'Stoma questions answered' our SecuriCare Stoma Care Nurse Manager, Emma Vernon, has answered some frequently asked questions about parastomal hernias...

Q ***Can the risk of a hernia forming behind a stoma increase during pregnancy? How can the risk of developing a hernia during pregnancy be reduced?***

A There's not necessarily an increased risk of developing a parastomal hernia during pregnancy, however, excessive vomiting during pregnancy can put a strain on the abdominal muscles. Try to hold a pillow to your abdomen during sickness episodes to support your abdominal wall and reduce intra-abdominal pressure as this can cause a hernia to develop. There are also belts specifically designed for pregnancy called 'bump support belts' which could help reduce the risk of developing a parastomal hernia. A belt should support the entire abdominal area, not just your bump.

Q ***What are the risk factors of hernia repair surgery? What do I need to discuss with my surgeon before deciding on whether to go ahead with the surgery?***

A The risk factors are general surgical risks such as pain, infection and injury. You can ask your surgeon about different options for hernia repair surgery, hernia repair surgery success rates and hernia recurrence rates after surgery. You might want to consider whether your parastomal hernia is affecting your health and wellbeing enough to consider another operation.

Q ***What causes a hernia to develop and what can be done to stop it getting any worse?***

A During stoma surgery, the surgeon makes an opening through the abdominal wall to pull a piece of bowel through to make the stoma. This opening can be a weakness within the abdominal wall. The opening may enlarge, allowing intestine, fat or other abdominal tissue to bulge through it and develop a hernia.

Some people are prone to hernias because they are born with a genetic inability to produce collagen (protein) to repair and strengthen muscle and they may already have a history of hernias in their body. Some people are born with a normal ability to produce collagen, but lose it due to malnutrition, infection, corticosteroid use or smoking.

The following can help to reduce the risk of developing a hernia and can help to prevent hernias from getting worse:

- Reduce any form of heavy lifting
- Perform light abdominal exercises to strengthen the abdominal wall
- Support the abdominal area with support belts or support garments
- Try to hold a pillow on your abdomen if you need to cough or sneeze. This supports your abdominal wall and reduces intra-abdominal pressure. A support belt/garment will also help
- Prevent constipation by drinking plenty of fluids and practice good nutrition with plenty of fibre and bulk in the diet. You might like to consider taking regular fibre or a bulking agent to maintain a regular soft output from your stoma
- Avoid gaining weight, or try to lose weight if you need to

Q *How long can you live a 'normal life' with a hernia?*

A Although a parastomal hernia may restrict you from doing certain things, you can still live a 'normal life'. Things like gentle exercise, eating and drinking well, a good pouching system and a hernia support belt or garment can help you manage your hernia and live a normal life.

Q *How can you minimise pain from your hernia?*

A A hernia support belt or garment can help minimise pain as they are designed to support your abdominal muscles, especially during movement, coughing and sneezing. The best way to put on your belt is when you are laying down on your back. Your parastomal hernia will naturally fall back into its original space in the body. When you apply your belt or garment, the parastomal hernia should then be supported by the belt to stay in this space and this will help you feel more comfortable.

Q *What are the common problems and complications with a parastomal hernia?*

A Many people who develop a parastomal hernia don't have any problems or complications. Problems include unpredictable stoma functioning where output alternates between constipation and diarrhoea. The swelling under the skin of the stoma can sometimes cause pain or discomfort. Very rarely the intestines can become trapped in the hernia, this is called strangulation. This can cause extreme pain and can require emergency surgery. Sometimes a hernia can make applying your stoma pouch challenging and can lead to problems such as leakage. It's important to find a stoma pouch that moulds around your stoma to create a secure seal to help reduce the risk of leaks.

Our sister company, CliniMed recently hosted a webinar named 'Everything You Want To Know About Parastomal Hernias'. Sam Cleasby, known online as So Bad Ass, has experienced many hernias around her stoma and in this webinar she led a discussion sharing ostomate experiences and expert advice on hernia management along with colostomate Bob Smith, Stoma Care Nurses, a Pilates Instructor and Stoma Product Specialist. To watch, visit https://lead.clinimed.co.uk/aura-profile-webinar

Please speak to your Stoma Care Nurse or Healthcare Practitioner for advice on your stoma care.

Sam Cleasby, Host

Let's talk health!

Our sister company, CliniMed have been working with talkhealth**, one of the UK's leading online health communities, to gather reviews of their range of intermittent self-catheterisation (ISC) Curan catheter range.**

Curan catheters are mess-free, easy to use and discreet. Available in both male and female versions they are sterile, single use and designed for those who carry out ISC. Curan Man and Curan Lady catheters are pre-lubricated with a mess-free hydrogel coating and the soft Blue Grip® featured on the Curan Man catheter allows for non-touch application. The discreet, compact design means both catheter types can be easily stored in a pocket or bag and the grip and twist lid allows quiet and easy opening, even with limited dexterity.

A combination of the hydrogel coating and smooth polished eyelets ensures comfortable insertion and removal and if you're away from home, both the Curan Man and Curan Lady can be resealed in the packaging after use, for disposal at your convenience.

Here's what people have to say about Curan catheters:

"First of all, this catheter is so discreet. It's small enough to fit in your handbag and looks just like a slightly chunky pen. I have trouble with my grip and fine motor control, but I can open the twist off cap really easily. Brilliant to be able to do it without asking someone! The catheter is easy and smooth to use, use doesn't involve any preparation or waiting which is brilliant. It doesn't need any special disposal, just slotting back together again. I think this is a great portable, discreet, easy to use product." – **Anne**

"Very nice and easy to use. The best I've tried and now using them full time. I would recommend them to anyone who needs them." – **Jason**

"The lubrication is excellent. The packets are a little bulky, but only to contain the lubricant - so there's ample liquid here to cover the catheter. Inserting them is very smooth - and the plastic holder means it's very hygienic. It's so lubricated in fact that it's a little slippy, but it does make for very comfortable usage. It makes it a little fiddly to get back into the packet for disposal, but the urination process – and hygiene – is superb as a result." – **Paul**

To find out more about CliniMed's Curan range visit www.clinimed.co.uk.

curan®
Catheters

Continence *questions* answered

In this edition of 'Continence questions answered' we spoke to Sue Hinton who helps people manage their urology and continence care routine as part of her role as a Nurse Advisor for our sister company, CliniMed.

Sue Hinton, Urology & Continence Nurse Advisor

Q *Do you have any tips to reduce the risk of getting an infection from self-catheterisation?*

A Personal hygiene is key. Always start by washing your hands prior to self-catheterisation, gather together all the equipment you will need prior to starting, then wash your hands again.

Make sure that the genital area, vulva/urethra (female) or foreskin/glans/urethra (male) has been washed with warm soapy water, rinsed and dried; alternatively, you can use wet wipes.

After catheterisation, safely dispose of used equipment and wash/sanitise your hands afterwards.

Note: ISC (intermittent self-catheterisation) catheters are for single use and should not be used more than once

Q *Does the coating of the catheter I use make much difference?*

A Gel or hydrophilic catheters have a coating for lubrication and easier insertion. The coating of the catheter doesn't make any difference, it is personal choice which you prefer to use.

Q *I have troubles with dexterity and find it difficult to use a catheter. What can I do?*

A Capacity, dexterity and motivation are key questions that should be evaluated prior to ISC being undertaken. If any of those are lacking, then ISC is not the appropriate solution. Unless there is a partner or carer who is willing and has consent to assist, then other options should be discussed with either the Continence or Urology Nurse Specialist/Urologist.

Depending on the dexterity problem some brands have devices and catheters that may help.

Q *Is it safe to self-catheterise in public toilets?*

A Yes, it is safe to self-catheterise in public toilets, providing all your hygiene needs are met. Running water to wash your hands may not be available/accessible, however, wet wipes and hand sanitisers can be used. ISC catheters can be disposed of in disposal bags and placed in bins provided. If bins are not provided then they can be disposed of at your earliest convenience and place.

CSR's 2020 round-up

Fundraising during 2020 certainly had its challenges, but CliniMed and SecuriCare have done a great job of supporting local charities and our Corporate Charity Partner, Marie Curie. We kicked the year off with a few dress down days, a drive for book donations and a pancake race in aid of our local Shopmobility. In March we took part in the Sport Relief sweepstake, which was accompanied by a dress down day for Marie Curie and collected donations for our local Women's Aid.

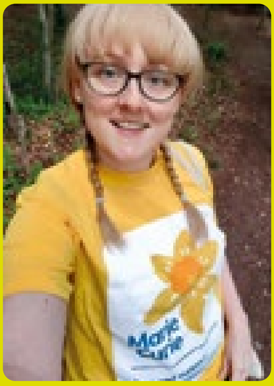
By Easter time, many of us were working from home, but this didn't hold us back. We held an Easter raffle, donated to 3 local charities and wrote to 26 residents and a nearby care home. Colleagues were also asked to donate any spare duvet covers or pillowcases to help out a local volunteer, Jessica, who was busy sewing scrubs for Wycombe and Watford General Hospitals.

In May, we discovered Thomas Hearn, an ostomate from the Wycombe area (local to SecuriCare's Head Office), who was raising money for Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (a charitable cause who fund equipment and research to improve patient care) with his impressive 'One Box to Everest' challenge. We donated to his amazing cause and were so pleased to see his total raised was more than £5,000!

June saw our month-long walk-athon challenge. Our aim was to collectively walk 268 hours - the time it would take to walk from Land's End in Cornwall to John o'Groats in Scotland. We had 18 colleagues take part, who needed to walk at least 8 hours a day to make this happen. By the end of June over 526 walking hours were completed, which equates to walking from Land's End to John o'Groats and back again – over 1,600 miles! Plus, donations saw our total for the year reach £2,467.06. We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who supported us!

Our 2020 fundraising total isn't yet available, but you can follow us on social media to keep up with CSR news and events.

'CSR' stands for 'Corporate Social Responsibility'



Puzzles

CROSSWORD

Across

5 Dinghy, perhaps (7,4)
7 Strong thread (5)
8 Disfigure (4)
9 Chafe (3)
10 Drunkard (3)
11 Consumed (3)
12 For each (3)
14 Indifferent (2-2)
15 Tanker (5)
16 Possessing four right angles (11)

Down

1 Patron saint of tanners (11)
2 Natural talent (5)
3 Subterranean (11)
4 Born in early December, for example (11)
6 Explosive weapon (4)
12 Bard (4)
13 Not under one's breath (5)

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SUDOKU

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		5				8	9	

HARD

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6				5		3	9	
						5		
		6	8			9		1
2				1				
	5							
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		1		3				

Answers

CROSSWORD

Across:
5 Sailing boat
7 Twine
8 Maim
9 Rub
10 Sot
11 Ate
12 Per
14 So-so
15 Oiler
16 Rectangular.

Down:
1 Bartholomew
2 Flair
3 Underground
4 Sagittarian
6 Bomb
12 Poet,
13 Aloud.

■	1 B	■	2 F	■	3 U	■	■	■	4 S	■
5 S	A	I	L	I	N	G	6 B	O	A	T
■	R	■	A	■	D	■	O	■	G	■
■	7 T	W	I	N	E	■	8 M	A	I	M
■	H	■	R	■	9 R	U	B	■	T	■
10 S	O	T	■	■	G	■	■	11 A	T	E
■	L	■	12 P	E	R	■	13 A	■	A	■
14 S	O	S	O	■	15 O	I	L	E	R	■
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16 R	E	C	T	A	N	G	U	L	A	R
■	W	■	■	■	D	■	D	■	N	■

SUDOKU

EASY

5	1	7	2	4	9	3	6	8
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8	9	2	3	6	7	4	1	5
2	4	1	5	9	6	7	8	3
9	5	8	7	1	3	2	4	6
7	3	6	4	8	2	1	5	9
1	7	9	8	3	5	6	2	4
6	8	4	9	2	1	5	3	7
3	2	5	6	7	4	8	9	1

HARD

3	2	8	4	7	9	6	1	5
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9	5	2	6	4	8	1	3	7
8	7	3	1	9	5	2	4	6
4	6	1	7	3	2	8	5	9

Feature Friday

Are you a creative? Do you have a business or a hobby developed during your wellness journey that you'd like to share with the SecuriCare community?

We're looking for ostomates to feature on our social media accounts and would love to hear from you if you've got something to share. Maybe you opened an Etsy store during a hospital stay, or you started customising stoma pouches after your surgery... maybe you're a talented illustrator who developed artistic skills whilst ill and want to share your artwork with the world. Whatever it is, you can submit your details to us by email and we'll aim to share your work on one of our Feature Fridays! Drop us a line at web.enquiries@clinimed.co.uk.

Jessica Mary Logan was our first Feature Friday back in October 2020. Jessica went through stoma surgery in 2017 and told us it was a, "complete shock" to her system. "I was suicidal for the first 6 months, but since accepting it for saving my life, I have helped others. My journey has been a roller coaster, but running these projects has helped me overcome many issues." One of the projects Jessica talks about is her fight to raise awareness of hidden illnesses and disabilities after she was discriminated against for using a disabled toilet. This project also aims to raise funds for charity - visit www.makingtheinvisiblevisible.org.uk to find out more.

Jessica Mary Logan, our first Feature Friday star

Stoma support groups near you

Ayrshire & Arran Stoma Support Group

First Saturday of every other month (October, December, February...) 2pm – 4pm. Ferguson Day Unit, Biggart Hospital, Biggart Road, Prestwick KA9 2HQ.

For further information contact Jim on 01292 220945 or 07729 771350 or email jimkraz@virginmedia.com

We request a small donation to the tea/coffee/ biscuits fund, a newsletter is sent out prior to each meeting for the price of five stamps or free if by email.

Bishop Auckland Stoma Care Group

Every other Thursday at 1pm. St Mary's Church, Vart Road, Woodhouse Close Estate, Bishop Auckland DL14 6PQ.

For further information contact Betty 01388 814535 or Maureen 01388 818267

Carlisle

Every 2 months (October, December, February...) 11am – 12.30pm. Harraby Community Centre, Edgehill Road, Carlisle CA1 3SN

Cumbrian Bellies

Search 'Cumbrian Bellies' on Facebook and Instagram!

For information about the next meet-up please email Nicola on rowson.nicola@yahoo.co.uk

Darlington Stoma Support Group

3rd Wednesday of the month between 6pm – 7.30pm. Harrowgate Club and Institute, Salters Lane North, Darlington DL1 3DT.

For further information contact 0191 3332184

Dartford Ostomy Support Group (DOGS)

3rd Wednesday of the month. St Anselms Parish Centre, West Hill, Dartford DA1 2HJ.

For further information please contact Susan Norris on 0794 8974 350

Durham and Wearside Crohn's & Colitis Support Group

Every 3 months (June, October...) 2pm – 4pm. Chester le Street Cricket Club, Ropery Lane, DH3 3PF.

For further information please email dw@groups.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk

Durham Stoma Support Group

First Monday of every month between 4pm – 6pm. Old Trust Headquarters, University Hospital of North Durham, North Road, Durham DH1 5TW.

For further information contact Sister Katie Sewell on 0191 3332184

High Wycombe Stoma Support Group

12th July, 13th September, 8th November 2019 10.30am – 12.30pm. Wrights Meadow Centre Wrights Meadow Road, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 1SQ.

For further information call 0800 318965

Horden Stoma Support Group

First Monday of every month between 10am – 12pm. Horden Youth & Community Centre, Eden Street, Horden Peterlee, Co. Durham SR8 4LH.

For further information contact Claire on 0191 5863520

Kirby Ostomy Support Group

3rd Saturday of the month, 10.30am – 12.30pm. The Clinical Education Centre, Glenfield Hospital, Groby Road, Leicester LE3 9QP.

For further details please contact Janet on kosg2013@btinternet.com or 07464 957982

Nuneaton Stoma Support Group

3rd Wednesday, every other month, (September, November, January...) 7 – 9pm. Manor Court Baptist Church, Manor Court Road, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV11 5HU.

For further information contact Bob Burrell on 07564 680803 or email nuneatonstoma@aol.com

Penrith

Every 3 months (April, July, October...) 11am – 12pm. Temple Sowerby Medical Practice, Linden Park, Temple Sowerby, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 1RW.

For further information, contact one of the Stoma Care Nurses: Jill Coulthard, Gillian Harker, Emma Ludi, Nikki Armstrong, Ruth Hetherington on 01228 814179

S.O.S Solent Ostomates Support

Last Wednesday of the month (excluding December) 2 – 4pm.
Kings Community Church, Upper Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton SO3 4BB.

For further information call 07527 707069 or email solentostomates@hotmail.co.uk

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Workington

Every 2 months (October, December, February...) 2 – 4pm.
Workington Infirmary, Park Lane, Workington CA14 2RW.

You are not alone, Chesham Support Group

Last Monday of the month, 10.30am – 12.30pm.
The Kings Church Chesham Offices, Unit 11 Chess Business Park, Moor Road, Chesham, Buckinghamshire HP5 1SD.

For further details please contact Carla Wright 07846 354918 carla_wright@sky.com

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New listings!

Mercia Inside Out Support Group, South Derbyshire/ East Staffordshire

Bimonthly afternoon and evening meetings.
Emmanuel Church, 31 Church Street, Swadlincote DE11 8LF.

For information email merciassgroup@gmail.com

Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

2 – 4pm.
Stanground Community Centre, Whittlesey Road, Peterborough PE2 8QS.

For information contact Pat on 01733 247135/07721189813, Maria on 01778 702237 or Allan on 01354 653290/07836 661102

Stevenage Ostomistics

Last Saturday morning of each month 10.30am – 1pm.
Oval Community Centre, Vardon Road, Stevenage SG1 5RD.

For information contact Judy Colston on 01438 354018 or email neilcolston@btinternet.com (each session is ended with chair yoga!)

Wing Stoma Support Group

Every 2 months, 11am – 12.30pm.
Wing Hall, 71 Leighton Road, Wing, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 0NN.

For information call 0800 036011

Inside Out Stoma Support Group

Every 2 weeks. Zoom meetings every Wednesday.
St. Mark's Hospital, Watford Road, Harrow HA1 3UJ.

For further information please email Diane Owen at diane_owen@hotmail.co.uk or call 07772 310999

If you'd like to share dates of your upcoming events and support group meetings, please contact editor@securicaremedical.co.uk

Calling all support groups!

Ostomates and continence patients often call our Careline asking for advice and support.

So, whether you're a stoma or continence support group, we'd love to share your details.

If you'd like to share the details of a group, so we can include in our Careline directory, please call **0800 585 125** or email **info@securicaremedical.co.uk**

Useful telephone numbers

SecuriCare Careline	0800 585 125
SecuriCare Orderline	0800 318 965
Age UK	0800 169 2081
Colostomy UK	0800 328 4257
Urostomy Association	01889 563 191
Ileostomy Association	0800 018 4724
Junior Ostomy Support Helpline	0800 328 4257
Samaritans	116 123
Bladder & Bowel Foundation	01926 357 220
Multiple Sclerosis Society	0808 800 8000
Bladder and Bowel UK (PromoCon)	0161 607 8219
Spinal Injuries Association	0800 980 0501
Back Up	020 8875 1805

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