Some Health Issues Are Not Easy To Talk About...

Do you suffer with:

- Painful, non-healing wounds or bedsores?
- Frequent urination, loss of bladder and/or bowel control?
- Problems with your ostomy, such as skin irritation, leaking and other "unmentionable" concerns?

Place Your Care in the Hands of an Expert

and find the specialized treatment and support essential to successfully manage your condition
What is a Wound, Ostomy, Continence (WOC) Nurse?
They are specialists. WOC nurses are lifesavers for patients with wounds, ostomy and continence conditions. Why? Their advanced education equips these nurses to treat special conditions and provide counseling and emotional support.

We live in a highly specialized society. You wouldn't expect an English teacher to tutor a student in science. You wouldn't expect an eye doctor to treat a toothache. And you shouldn't expect just any health care provider to oversee your wound, ostomy and continence care.

Did you know that WOC nurses achieve better results with their patients than the results obtained when care is delivered without the involvement of a nurse specialist?

When a WOC nurse is part of your health team, you can expect more effective care and better outcomes.

How Do I Find a WOC Nurse?
ASK! Ask your doctor, ask hospital administrators, ask a nursing supervisor. If a WOC nurse is not available through the institution or agency providing your care, we encourage you to go to the www.wocn.org website and print and sign a copy of the letter requesting that more WOC nurses be available. You can deliver this to the person in charge of the institution and the letter may be considered in future staffing decisions.

The WOCN Society website (www.wocn.org) also has an online WOC Nurse Referral search tool. To locate a WOC nurse, click on Patients: Care and Information at the bottom of the screen. Click Search for a WOC Nurse In Your Area and enter your state. Scan the list for cities close by and click on the name to see contact information.

What Services Does a WOC Nurse Provide?
• Education to families and patients
• Preventive care
• Specialized therapies
• Counseling
• Care in a variety of settings
Okay, I’ve Found a WOC Nurse, What Do the Different Credentials Mean?

Certification is a voluntary process. Nurses are certified by the Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing Certification Board (WOCNCB). Certification shows that a nurse has a personal commitment to education and professional growth, ensuring quality patient care. A nurse who is not board certified may possess basic entry-level skills. Board certification indicates a nurse is knowledgeable and qualified to provide the best care available.

To become certified by the WOCNCB, the person must be a registered nurse (RN) with a bachelor’s degree (BA, BS or BSN). Certificants must pass an intensive exam to prove his or her knowledge in caring for patients with wound, ostomy, continence or foot health issues.

Here is a List of the Certifications Offered by the WOCNCB:

- CWOCN® - Certified Wound, Ostomy, Continence Nurse
- CWCN® - Certified Wound Care Nurse
- COCN® - Certified Ostomy Care Nurse
- CCCNsm - Certified Continence Care Nurse
- CWONsm - Certified Wound Ostomy Nurse
- CFCN® - Certified Foot Care Nurse

You can find out if your wound, ostomy, continence or foot care nurse is certified by using an online tool at www.wocncb.org/credential-verification.
The Wound Ostomy & Continence Nurses (WOCN) Society, A Great Resource for Patients, Families and Caregivers

The WOCN Society is a professional nursing society that promotes educational, clinical and research opportunities to advance the practice and guide the delivery of expert health care to individuals with wounds, ostomies and incontinence. Membership includes more than 4,600 highly-qualified health care professionals. Information can be found at www.wocn.org.

Place Your Care in the Hands of a Wound Nurse...

if you suffer from:

- Bedsores (now known as pressure ulcers)
- Chronic or non-healing wounds
- Wounds of the legs and feet
- Venous disease causing swollen legs and non-healing wounds
- Diabetes mellitus with foot deformities, which can cause calluses and open wounds
- Surgical wounds that fail to heal

DID YOU KNOW?

Studies document that wounds heal faster when a Wound nurse is involved in patient care.

DID YOU KNOW?

The following conditions put people at greater risk for developing non-healing wounds:

- Incontinence
- Altered mental status that affects self-care abilities
- Immobility
- Peripheral vascular disease
- Diabetes
- Age

What Do Wound Nurses Do?

Wound nurses are trained to:

- Assess and determine the cause of the wound and identify appropriate treatment options
- Coordinate care by working closely with physicians to ensure the most up-to-date, appropriate care is provided
- Introduce techniques to prevent bedsores and other wounds from developing
- Educate families, patients and nursing staff about strategies to optimize wound healing

“Without her support and expertise, I don’t know what I would have done.”
- Patient Testimonial
Place Your Care in the Hands of an Ostomy Nurse...
if you are one of the nearly 750,000 individuals who has a urinary or fecal ostomy.

Why An Ostomy Nurse?
*Patient Safety & Quality Healthcare Magazine* indicates when a WOC nurse is involved with the care of the ostomy patient, the patient, family and overall medical team benefit.

*Did You Know?*
75,000 new fecal and urinary ostomies are created annually.

What are the Benefits Provided by an Ostomy Nurse?
Ostomy nurses are trained to:
- Evaluate and recommend pouching systems that provide containment and security for individual ostomates
- Develop individual rehabilitation plans that help patients return to a productive lifestyle
- Assist in selecting pre-operative stoma sites to ensure post-operative independence
- Offer patients and families education and care
- Consult with patients on a range of issues important to them

Common Questions Answered by Ostomy Nurses:
How often should I change my pouching system? When is a good time to change my pouching system? How do I get my old pouching system off? How do I clean around my stoma? Where should I put my soiled supplies? Can I get my pouching system wet? What are some ways to keep my skin from getting irritated? Will the skin barrier irritate my skin? How can I prevent infection? Is it okay to patch or tape a small leak in my skin barrier? How can I prevent leakage? Should I use a skin sealant? What are ostomy adhesives? What kind of skin barrier is best?

For the answers to these and many other questions, consult an Ostomy nurse.

“Once you have surgery you are cut free from the surgeon and left alone to cope. My only lifeline to knowledge was my WOC nurse.” – Patient Testimonial
Place Your Care in the Hands of a Continence Nurse...
if you suffer from the loss of bladder and/or bowel control.

What is Incontinence?
Incontinence is the loss of bladder and/or bowel control and is a significant health care problem. It can strike at any age, but it increases with age. Loss of bladder control can take the form of frequent urination, dribbling, and feeling like you can't empty your bladder completely. Fecal incontinence is the inability to control the passage of gas and/or liquid or solid stool. Combined urinary and fecal incontinence impacts 25% of adults during their lives.

Did You Know?
Most people are too embarrassed to discuss their bladder health with their doctors.

Did You Know?
Studies show that 80% of people with urinary incontinence can be cured or improved. Muscle and bladder training have been proven to resolve urinary incontinence and may be more effective than some drugs.

Did You Know?
An estimated 5.5 million Americans experience episodes of fecal incontinence.
How a Continence Nurse Can Help:
Continence nurses are trained to:
• Assess physical, psychological and social aspects of incontinence
• Recommend appropriate treatment
• Educate the patient and family
• Monitor results and evaluate outcomes
• Support treatment to restore continence, often without long-term product use or inappropriate institutional care

Remember, incontinence is a stigmatized, under-diagnosed, and under treated condition; however, the condition can be treated and improved. The Continence nurse is an excellent resource and can meet the varied needs of patients with urinary and/or fecal incontinence. For more information, go to www.wocn.org.

The following conditions may contribute to incontinence:
• Diabetes
• Stroke
• Nerve Defects (such as Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease and paralysis)
• Prostate Issues
• Child Birth

“I needed my WOC Nurse for advice and support.” – Patient Testimonial
The WOCN National Office provides administration and management for the WOCN Society. We do not have any medical personnel on staff in the office. We’ll do our best to put you in contact with a WOC nurse in your area who has chosen to be listed on our WOC Nurse Referral listing, or another organization that may be a good resource for you.