

The importance of WOC Care in Post-Op Recovery

Surgery and Post-Surgery Trauma

In November 2010, urologist Joseph Salisz underwent surgery for bladder and prostate removal. With a family history of prostate cancer and increased symptoms, Dr. Salisz sought a surgical attempt at a cure, and an aggressive University of Michigan urologist performed the surgery that resulted in urinary diversion through ureteroileostomy.

Two nights after surgery, Dr. Salisz experienced severe renal colic. The night duty nurse had never taken care of a new ureteroileostomy patient before. Unfamiliar with the ostomy appliance, and frustrated by the severity of his pain, the nurse pulled the stoma appliance off, wafer and all, without using any adhesive remover. Dr. Salisz's colic subsided with irrigation as a blood clot was liberated, but the renal colic pain paled in comparison to the new cutaneous *searing* pain from ripping the stoma appliance off of his fresh wound. All night, Dr. Salisz was soaked and cold from the urine managed by replacing the stack of ABD pads on his stoma.

WOC Nurse Tami Walker to the Rescue

The next day, Tami Walker, BSN, RN, CWOCN, visited Dr. Salisz, armed with ostomy supplies, adhesive remover and a smile. Tami taught Dr. Salisz how to properly remove and reapply the wafer and bag, demystifying an unfamiliar ritual that is now commonplace for Dr. Salisz. Although this process is part of Tami's daily routine, she approached it with flare and ownership of the job underlined by her expertise, which gave Dr. Salisz a new respect and understanding of stoma care.

As an urologist who creates stomas, Dr. Salisz's experience gave him a unique perspective on the psychological and emotional after-effects to surgery. "It takes a special character to become a WOC nurse," said Dr. Salisz. "They are truly unsung heroes, providing much-needed emotional support as they work to help patients past their anxieties."

Care from a WOC Nurse Inspired Patient to Help Others

Equaling Dr. Salisz's feelings of gratitude are Tami's feelings of happiness for helping Dr. Salisz achieve independence as an ostomate. "WOC nurses can see what a big *difference* they can make in the lives of patients and their families," said Tami. "WOC nursing is a great opportunity to learn, make a difference, be on the cutting edge of WOC care and make a personal impact with patients."

Dr. Salisz has truly embraced life as an ostomate and will always be thankful to Tami for her help and support, still referring to her as his "WOC angel." In addition, Dr. Salisz is an active member of the ostomy community and even invented a product called StomaCloak, which is an ostomy bag cover featuring odor capture technology. For more information, please visit www.stomacloak.com.