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MEETINGS

Meetings and gatherings are held at the hall at Community of Christ Church on Arthur and 8th. Throughout the year we will have a combination of face to face and ZOOM or a hybrid of both for our get togethers. We look forward to meeting you.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

December 6 - Christmas Celebration
11:00– 2:00 at Western Pizza (9th Ave N.)

January - NO meeting

February - date TBA - Chat Room



NOV / DEC
2025

Fears, Faux Pas and Fulfillment

via UOAA E-News June 2025 and UOAA Blog Post, Ostomy Outlook; North Central Oklahoma, June 2025

My Ostomy Story

Hello! My name is Marcia Benedict. I have a urostomy due to bladder cancer.

Facing an ostomy and what life would be after surgery can be overwhelming and I found myself repeating, "I never expected this." I was dumbfounded, speechless; and at first, all I could do was cry. I hope my story will give you the strength, support, and desire to thrive beyond expectations.



My Journey

After retiring to Tucson, AZ in 2019, I remembered hearing, "if you ever find yourself in need of medical attention and don't know who or where to turn, search for the nearest teaching hospital." I sought medical attention at Banner University Medical Center. The support from doctors and their care team, my Ostomy nurse (CWOCN) and our local Ostomy Support Group has been invaluable.

Despite the initial fear and challenges, I adapted to my new normal by being my own best advocate. I needed to speak up, be determined and resilient. Through it all: Urogram, cystoscopy, cytology, TURBT (transurethral resection of bladder tumor). Diagnosis: T2/T3 tumor of the bladder invading the vaginal wall. Treatment: chemotherapy, radical cystectomy and hysterectomy. Recovery: one day at a time. Time for emotional and physical healing, following doctors' orders, being kind and patient with myself. I survived each step, repeating each as needed along the way, and so can you!

Be Prepared - a Few Hints and Hacks

As I was living alone and my cat was not proficient in nursing duties, I requested skilled nursing rehab (SKF) upon hospital discharge. Though my surgeon recommended recovery with home health, he understood my dilemma and helped make those arrangements through his nurse navigator and case manager, followed by home health services (visiting nurse, PT/OT, nutritionist) when I returned home.

Support was such a lifeline in helping me better understand and cope.

Before surgery, I ensured I had a waterproof mattress pad, chux (puppy pads) for my bed and bathroom. Upon discharge from SKF and home health therapy, I preordered my ostomy supplies

Cont'd on page 3

"Greetings from Patty"



Hello Friends!

When was the last time you took a look at the Ostomy Canada website? I recently spent some time on the website and found many interesting stories. Here are a couple of suggestions for you: Start by going to Get Involved – Youth Camp – Ostomy Canada Youth Camp (two great videos made by campers) and Gallery (pictures from the 2025 camp). For those of you who supported kids going to camp, it will fill your heart with joy.

Another interesting article was under Blogs – Ostomy Funding in Canada. Many of you may be surprised by the coverage provided by other provinces. The funding allotments for Saskatchewan have been discussed with the possibility of setting up a committee to petition the government to increase the 50% reimbursement. If this is something that you would be interested in helping out with, please reach out to Deb or myself.

We are planning our second zoom “Chat Room” in February. Our first zoom chat had great discussion by some “veteran” people as well as someone who was preparing for surgery. How great it was to have this variety of people on zoom to offer support with personal stories.

Many thanks to Deb, who has completed her term as the Western Canada Director for Ostomy Canada which she has served over the past 10 years. Her tireless work on many committees includes revamping the Visitor Training Program as well as creating the on-line training. She is a great support to many people across Canada by responding to their questions and providing them with positive support. In 2023 she was awarded the Ostomy Canada Chair’s Award. We are so grateful to have Deb as part of Ostomy Saskatchewan and the work she does on our newsletter and many, many other things. A round of applause for Deb!

Another round of applause to all of those who “Stepped Up” for ostomies at the national fundraising awareness event where we raised \$2590. We are so appreciative to you. With these donations we are able to access brochures, which we send out to every person who has ostomy surgery in the province. EVERY person. Imagine not knowing there is support if you are struggling or that you can apply for the Disability Tax Credit. We also apply for funding to Ostomy Canada when doing Education Seminars or visiting people all around the province. That is where your money is going.

A standing ovation to the retailers for their ongoing financial support – Tim and Yvonne from Jolly’s and Ruth and Walter from Medical 1. Without their financial support we would be unable to do the things we do.

The Regina Christmas get together will be on Saturday, December 6 from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at Western Pizza on 9th Avenue. Please see the poster in the newsletter for details how to RSVP. Pull out those Ugly Christmas Sweaters!

One of the real joys of the holiday season is the opportunity to say thank you and to wish you the very best in the New Year. So from Deb and I – Thank you and Merry Christmas to you all!

Membership Reminder

MEMBERSHIPS & DONATIONS

For the 2026 year please remit a minimum \$30 payment. This will maintain your relationship with our local ostomy group and Ostomy Canada with all the great benefits. Income tax receipts will be issued.



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Get The Support You Need!

OSTOMY VISITOR PROGRAM

Speak to a Certified Ostomy Visitor for personal support with your ileostomy, colostomy, urostomy or j-pouch. Visits are available at the hospital, in-person, phone & virtually. It could be either pre-operative or post-operative or both. At times you may just have a few questions or at other times you may be ‘working’ your way through something and it’s good to talk to someone who can relate to your situation personally. All you have to do is ask.

A visit may be arranged by calling the Visiting Coordinator, Ruth Suderman at 306-450-4690 or emailing sudermanruth@gmail.com



Article continued from front page

with the help of my WOC nurse. Over time, I became efficient in changing my pouching system, reducing the time from over an hour to now 15 minutes. Practice makes perfect (most of the time). Despite initial challenges, I adapted with determination. I set alarms on my phone to remind me to empty my pouch and avert potential leaks. Just in case, I always carry a puppy pad under the front seat of my car. To this day, I have repeat calendar schedules to change my pouch. Once, driving on the Interstate, I improvised with an empty water bottle as a makeshift urinal when restrooms were closed during the pandemic. I also keep an empty disposable water bottle (with the cap) in my car and a complete pouch change packet in my purse or backpack. These experiences taught me valuable lessons and have helped me manage with confidence.

You Are Not Alone

Two days before my surgery at the suggestion of my WOC nurse, I went to an Ostomy Support Group, a local affiliate of UOAA. To my surprise, I walked into a roomful of ostomates of all types. They were welcoming. In a roundtable setting, they talked about the facts, the foibles and the freedom of living with an ostomy. They gave me strength to face what was coming and faith that there was life after ostomy surgery.

That first meeting led me to fulfill one of my retirement goals:... to give back by helping others facing similar journeys. Recovering during the pandemic, in-person meetings were cancelled. Support was such a lifeline in helping me better understand and cope, I signed up as a phone contact. The Local Group initiated monthly Zoom meetings; and when restrictions were lifted, in-person monthly meetings reconvened.

I'm excited to be attending for the first time this year's UOAA National Conference in Orlando. I've heard from previous attendees the information is educational, inspiring and a good time is had by all. I look forward to meeting some of the wonderful UOAA personnel who have helped me along my journey. Enough can't be said about their resources: tips, educational publications, particularly the "Living with a Urostomy" guide online, supportive Ostomy Academy discussions and video sessions. If you haven't tapped into the website www.ostomy.org or the UOAA Facebook page, I encourage you to check it out.

The Future

Initially, everything was daunting, but my expectations for retirement and recovery have exceeded my dreams. I'm healthy, happy and fearless.

Despite the initial fear and challenges, I adapted to my new normal by being my own best advocate.

Surrounded by family and friends, I'm active. I play golf, swim, and dance again. I travel by car, plane, and train in

the U.S and internationally. Supplies and all, I braved a 26-day cruise. I even rode a camel!

Wherever I go, my "Bathroom Access Card" is in my wallet, and translated in 2 foreign languages on my phone. In recovery, I found the time and strength to redesign and renovate my kitchen. Made time to socialize. I recently attended my oldest granddaughter's college graduation and all the festivities. I'm looking forward to it all over again with my second granddaughter who is studying medicine. Since my surgery, I feel blessed indeed, going on 6 years NED (no evidence of disease).

And I'm no longer single! I have a wonderful relationship with a man who adores me for who I am, including my ostomy. There is little to keep me from a fulfilling life, and you shouldn't let a pouch stop you either.

You've Got This!

MISSION STATEMENT

Ostomy Saskatchewan is a mutual support group for the benefit of people who have had, or are about to have intestinal or urinary diversion surgery.

Our purpose is:

- To help people with intestinal and/or urinary diversions to lead full and productive lives and to provide information and emotional support to their families and caregivers.
- To educate the public about intestinal and urinary diversion surgery.
- To provide trained visitors to someone who has undergone intestinal and/or urinary diversions, including preoperative and postoperative visits or phone calls, at the request of the individual, an ostomy nurse (NSWOC) or physician





Step Up for Ostomy World Ostomy Day



The October 4th, Step Up for Ostomy 2025 events in both Regina and Saskatoon were greeted with beautiful fall weather, perfect for getting out for a stroll.

In Saskatoon we had a number of new faces over two days, at NorDon's Friday 'open house' and then the Sportsplex for Step Up on Saturday. Good to see everyone.

Regina took their signs to the streets and made the traditional walk around the Lieutenant Governor's house and met back at the hall for a visit and lunch.

Thanks to everyone who came out and participated and those who were able to make a donation.

National sponsors for Step Up for Ostomy 2025 are Hollister, Coloplast, Wellwise, Convatec, and Best Buy Medical. NSWOC Canada was a national charity sponsor and MyOstomy, OstomySale, and Starkmans were industry partners.





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Information For Those Living With An Ostomy
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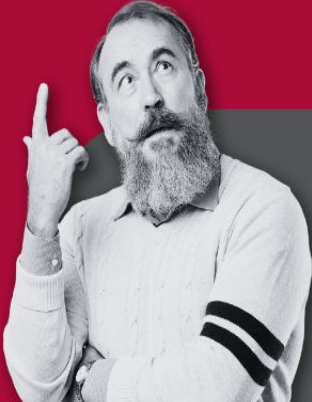
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 Ostomy Canada Society | Société Canadienne des Personnes Stomisées

Christmas Celebration
Saturday, December 6th
Time: 11:00 - 2:00
Where: Western Pizza - 9th Ave North
Please RSVP by Dec 3rd to:
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patty.gianoli@sasktel.net
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Tips & Tricks for Holiday Eating with an Ostomy *(Nov 18, 2022 (Na 'Scent))*

Here are some tips to make the most of the holidays with an ostomy.



Image courtesy of Freepik

Tip #1 – Always Eat Balanced Meals

Maintaining a balanced diet is important, even during the holidays. Too much sugar and fat can cause diarrhoea, which leads to malabsorption of nutrients and feeling tired and irritable. But you can still enjoy holiday treats by choosing wisely. For those with a urostomy, non-citrus foods high in Vitamin C can help reduce the risk of infection. Try cranberries, broccoli, potatoes, strawberries and leafy vegetables.

Tip #2 – Chew Your Food Well

If you have an ileostomy or short bowel, chewing your food a little extra can help your body get the nutrients it needs. By breaking down your food into smaller pieces, your body can better absorb the nutrients it needs to function properly. Additionally, chewing your food thoroughly can help to prevent nausea and vomiting, which are common side effects of having an ileostomy or short bowel.

Tip #3 – Eat Small Meals

Make sure to take breaks and have small meals or snacks throughout the day – eating several small meals is better than waiting for one large one at the end of the day. A bare stomach can also cause gas.

Tip #4 – Put Hydration First

It's easy to get dehydrated during the holidays with all the hustle and bustle. Focus on good hydration by drinking plenty of water and avoiding sugary, caffeinated, and alcoholic drinks. Sports drinks are a good source of electrolytes but should be diluted with water. Drink 8-10 glasses of water daily to avoid fatigue, irritability, and nausea. If you have a urostomy, stay extra hydrated to avoid UTIs.

Tip #5 – Ask About Ingredients

Casseroles, dips, cultural specialties, and cakes can often include ingredients that might cause discomfort or even a dangerous blockage for those with an ileostomy. If not completely ground, corn (which is found in meals like tamales) and dried fruits should also be avoided. Skip over foods that may include any of your trigger foods. Don't worry; it's ok to ask.

Tip #6 -Eat Only Safe Foods

If you want to stay safe this holiday season, stick to foods your body can handle. Keep a food journal to help you remember what works for next year. If you had surgery for a colostomy or ileostomy, avoid these foods, but know that you'll be able to enjoy most of your holiday favourites soon.

To sum it up, it's crucial to remember that everyone is different, and each person experiences food differently. Consult your physician or a registered dietician to know what's best for you. ■

HOW FIBER AFFECTS AN ILEOSTOMY

SOURCE: The Courier, Tucson Ostomy Support Group, Kay L. Peck, Dietitian, Napa Valley, CA. via Live & Learn, St. Louis; Vancouver Ostomy High Life, July/August 2025

Whether or not to include fiber, and to what extent, should be based on the person's tolerance of foods. The small intestine has a remarkable capacity to adapt. Digested food in the small intestine is quite watery, and after it moves into the large intestine, a good portion of the water is reabsorbed into the body. Most fiber is indigestible material from plants that acts like a sponge, soaking up water and increasing the bulk of the intestinal contents as they move through the system more quickly.

In a person with a colon, fiber is essential to preventing constipation and keeping the person "regular." This is the main function of fiber. Another theory about fiber is that it promotes mucosal growth, thus keeping intestines healthier, promoting gut function. Usually a person without a colon, i.e., with an ileostomy, doesn't have a problem with constipation. It is virtually impossible. They may have mostly watery stools.

Again, over time a person may adapt, especially if the last section of the small bowel – the ileum – is still intact. Consuming too much fiber or insoluble fiber may aggravate a person's diarrhea or watery stools. If this is the case for you, **LIMITING** insoluble fiber such as bran, popcorn hulls, seeds, nuts, skin, stringy membrane parts of fruits and vegetables may be helpful. However, another type of fiber – soluble – may be beneficial to someone with an ileostomy. The function of soluble fiber is to make the intestinal contents thicker and can actually prevent diarrhea. This fiber is found in oatmeal, barley, dried beans, peas, Metamucil and in the pulp of some fruits and vegetables.



Just a side note – I worked with a woman years ago who had short bowel syndrome. All of her colon and a significant part of her small bowel had been removed. She found that adding pectin – Certo, which is used to make jam and jelly – to her daily diet helped her minimize diarrhea. She also added a little applesauce every day.



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Image by pikisuperstar
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Now What???

You're home now and it's a little harder because it's all so new and there isn't a nurse to help. At moments it feels a bit overwhelming and confusing. The medical support group you had in hospital will have likely sent you home with a package of information that can help you through these early days. Take a look for that little package.

I think everyone has questions that range many topics. Will people know by looking at me? What will I wear? Do I smell? (because I think we all think we smell in the beginning.) Can I eat normal food? Here are a few questions with some information. We would love to have all of your questions so if you feel there's something that needs to be asked just send me an email. We will carry this special item in every newsletter, changing questions. (carpentier.deb@gmail.com).

How long will it take me to fully recover from my ostomy surgery? There are so many circumstances that impact recovery, i.e. cancer, chemo, radiation, general health pre-surgery, etc. Surgery has a major impact on your body. Be sure to see your physiotherapist or OT as to when you can start exercise and activity. It could be a number of months before you start feeling stronger and perkier.

I've heard about the Disability Tax Credit? What do I need to know?

Individuals who have had an ostomy for a year are eligible for the Disability Tax Credit which is a non-refundable tax credit used to reduce the amount of tax payable on your income. You can learn more about the DTC through the Ostomy Canada website. Here's the link to the Ostomy Canada webinar that was live in January 2025.

<https://www.ostomycanada.ca/events/webinars/ostomy-canada-society-national-webinar-series-2025/disability-tax-credit-gateway-to-service-and-support/>

What's a good time to change my bag / appliance? Ideally, we want to find a time to change our appliance when the bowel is quieter. A lot of people find morning a good time but your experience may be different. There are a couple of 'tricks' people use to thicken the stool or slow down the flow. Many people find eating a few marshmallows slows or thickens the stool. Another trick is to fill a small zip lock with ice cubes and hold it around your stoma for a short period of time which seems to stop the flow as well.

Foods that naturally slow down digestion include: Meat, milk, hard cheese and refined carbohydrates, such as white sugar, white flour and instant oatmeal pass slowly through the digestive tract and can slow peristalsis.

Should I reuse a leg bag? How do you deodorize, clean and store a used leg bag? How many times can you reuse a leg bag?

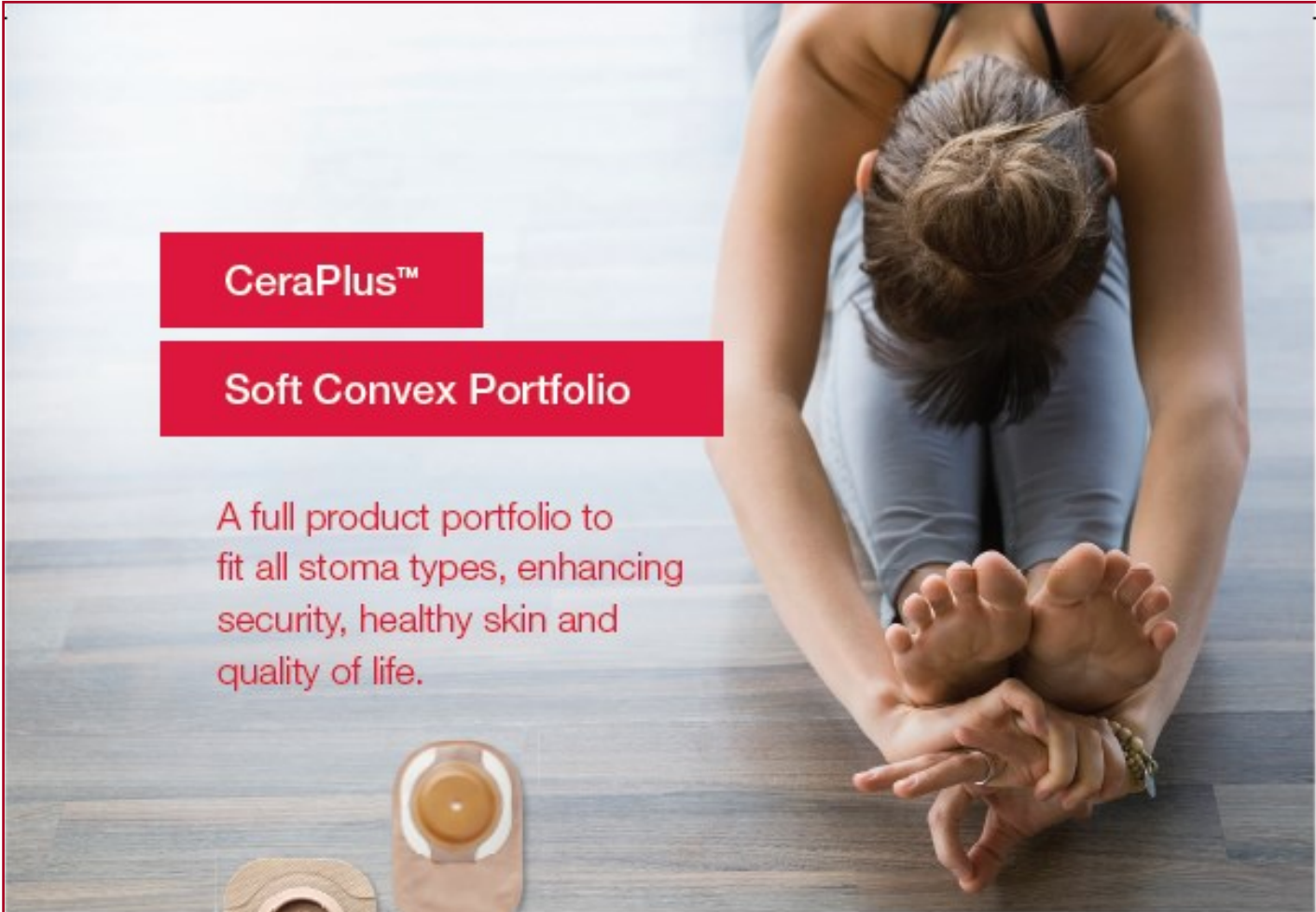
Yes, you can reuse a urostomy leg bag in Canada if it's labeled as reusable by the manufacturer and you follow the manufacturer's instructions. There is a lot of information on the website listed here. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/14832-urine-drainage-bag-and-leg-bag-care>

How do I deodorize, clean and store my night bag (urostomy)?

Night drainage bags can be cleaned and deodorized using a mixture of 1-part vinegar and 2 parts water. Hang it to dry. (SHA Ostomy teaching booklet).

HOLIDAY EATING We just got through Thanksgiving with all the food that comes with that, along with snacks and drinks we probably don't always eat too much of. Maybe you experienced a noisy stoma, more gas filling that bag, more pooping. Here's an article you might like to read to ready for Christmas and the next holiday season. **6 Tips for Holiday Eating (Ostomy Canada Society Oct 2023)** https://www.ostomycanada.ca/blog/2023/ostomy_holidays/

OUTPUT RUNNY? You can take up to 16 mg of imodium daily. 1 or 2 tabs half an hour before a meal will help (1 tab = 2 mg). Costco sells generic imodium at the pharmacy in a big package at a much better price.



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Co-facilitator	Deb Carpentier	306-536-3319
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Partner & Family Support	Bob Fearnside	306-924-5993

Letters to the Editor . . .

Dear Readers, our aim is to provide you with articles that inform and entertain. Every personal story has an impact for others. Please consider writing your story, I'd be happy to assist. Here are some ways to contact me or connect with a larger on-line group.

Deb Carpentier

carpentier.deb@gmail.com

Phone: 306-536-3319

<https://ostomysaskatchewan.ca>

<https://www.ostomycanada.ca>

Facebook coordinates:

Ostomy Saskatchewan group

Ostomy Canada Society group

Ostomy Canada Parents' group

Young Ostomates support YOS+FG



Ostomy Saskatchewan Membership and Donations/Bequests

Membership is open to all persons interested in supporting people living with an ostomy and their circles of support. As a member supporter you can enjoy the benefits of being part of Ostomy Saskatchewan as well as Ostomy Canada. You'll receive newsletters, opportunities for webinars, a magazine and the support of people here and across the country. You will be supporting an organization that is striving to be the voice for people living with an ostomy in Canada.

A minimum \$30 "supporter" donation will give you all the benefits of membership. \$25 will go to Ostomy Canada and any amount above \$25 will be for Ostomy Saskatchewan, which allows us to continue to support our group with support and advocacy. No donation is too small or too big. You will receive a tax receipt for your entire donation. Memberships are for a calendar year so we will remind you it's time to renew late fall and early in the new year.

Your financial contribution supports many initiatives including the youth camp, an education fund for ostomy nurses, the visitor's program, educational seminars, outreach and training programs. We have regular get togethers and updates will be listed in the newsletter and/or on the website (<https://ostomysaskatchewan.ca>).

ONLINE, e-TRANSFER or CHEQUE - Income tax receipts will be issued for entire donation.

Cheque: Make your cheque out to Ostomy Canada Society Inc. *WRITE SASKATCHEWAN on the notation space at bottom of cheque.* MAIL TO: OSTOMY CANADA 5800 Ambler Dr., Suite 210 Mississauga, ON L4W 4J4 and email ostomysask@gmail.com with name, address, email and phone number.

Debit/Credit: Go to the DONATE NOW page on the Ostomy Canada website. Fill in the details. Choose "Saskatchewan" under "Fund Area". Mark yourself as a "Supporter". <https://www.ostomycanada.ca/donation/>

E-transfer: Be sure to state Saskatchewan in the comments section. etransfer@ostomycanada.ca and email ostomysask@gmail.com with name, address, email and phone number.

**PRODUCTS MENTIONED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE
NOT NECESSARILY ENDORSED BY THE
SASKATCHEWAN & DISTRICT OSTOMY CHAPTER.
SEE YOUR DOCTOR FIRST BEFORE TAKING ANY OF
THEM!**

Colorectal Cancer Canada is the nation's non-profit colorectal cancer patient organization. They are dedicated to colorectal cancer awareness and education, supporting patients and caregivers, and advocating on their behalf. Their goal is to reduce the incidence and mortality of colorectal cancer in Canada and to improve the quality of life for patients, their families and caregivers.

Email: info@colorectalcancercanada.com Website:
<https://www.colorectalcancercanada.com>

LEST WE FORGET



As grandma was getting ready to leave the house on Christmas Eve, Olivia looked at her with concern. "Make sure to be really careful on your way home. Santa is delivering presents."

Her grandmother smiled at her. "I don't think I have to worry about Santa."

Olivia looked at her incredulously, jaw on the floor, "Haven't you heard? He's already run one grandmother over!"

