

## **POSITIVE ATTITUDE**

There are some children and their families who are able to rise above illness, suffering and hardships and respond in a positive manner to what may seem like negative events. They adopt a more positive attitude and belief system. They look at life from a positive perspective and try not to get bogged down in negative thoughts. Basically they get on with things. They resist the idea of blaming what happens in their lives on their disability or the fact that they have a stoma. They have great self-determination and should be greatly admired. The going is often tough and life is certainly not easy. They need supportive friends and families and each new stage in their lives brings with it a whole new set of issues that need to be worked through and dealt with.

The group of kids and young adults who modelled at the fashion show organized by YOU (*Victoria*) on World Ostomy Day all fit into this group just described. They have all got on with their lives, responded positively to their stomas and are making the best of their situations. They were quite happy to share some fashion tips. They are adept at choosing clothes that look good, are comfortable and hide any bulges.

Some of the fashion hints that were noted were:

- All avoided stiff waistbands and belts.
- Quite a few – especially the active boys, use thin stoma belts that attach to the appliance or flange to help distribute the weight of the pouch and give them a bit of extra security when involved in PE or playground games or fighting with siblings for that matter
- Some use stoma belts and/or stoma protectors when involved with contact sports. *(If the belts are too wide or uncomfortable, pantyhose cut to size work well or sports briefs [especially the lycra netball types] or the newly available sport pants for her.)*
- In the younger child a tubular elastic type of dressing is available in several sizes and is perfect for hiding and flattening pouches without obstructing free drainage
- Waist fastenings can be replaced with velcro which help small fingers to manage when learning to empty their own appliances
- At the beach bold patterns or stripes are very useful in disguising appliance outlines. *(There are companies/designers that make swimwear and underwear especially for ostomates but if you shop around you can find great swimwear. Some styles have gathered bits or extra layers or folds of material that are very effective for disguising any bulges)*
- Some styles are not going to be any good and should be avoided for example hipsters and bare midriff style tops
- If you do want to wear a clingy type of fabric wear a loose sheer or lacy type of top over the top
- The Sun Smart all-in-one or two-piece swimwear works very well on younger kids
- Check out the range of continence undies that are available
- Lots of bright colours and flattering, fashionable styles like boxers are now available

All the models were great. It was a really enjoyable day and it was so good to have such a wide range of age groups represented. A special Thank You is extended to the organisers and all who participated in making the day such a huge success.

*Reproduced by kind permission of Ostomy Australia magazine, March 2007, pp37*

*Article by Judy Wells, Stomal Therapist/Continence Consultant, Department of Developmental Medicine, The Royal Children's Hospital, Flemington Road, Parkville 3052*