

"So you've been told you need a stoma"

– inspired by teenagers

I was recently shown this booklet by the Salts representative. There are many books/booklets on stomas and stoma care available from companies supplying stoma products, ostomy associations and various hospitals and most are aimed at adults. There are also booklets for parents of babies and young children. I have only seen one other booklet for adolescents which was in cartoon format and not easy to obtain in Australia. Since receiving copies of this booklet I have given it to some adolescents and their comments regarding its usefulness have been positive so I thought I would let readers know about it.

It is written specifically for adolescents/teenagers. There are lots of colourful pictures and simple diagrams with explanations that are easy to follow. Many sections deal basically with commonly asked questions and explanations e.g.

How will I react to my new stoma?

What will it feel like?

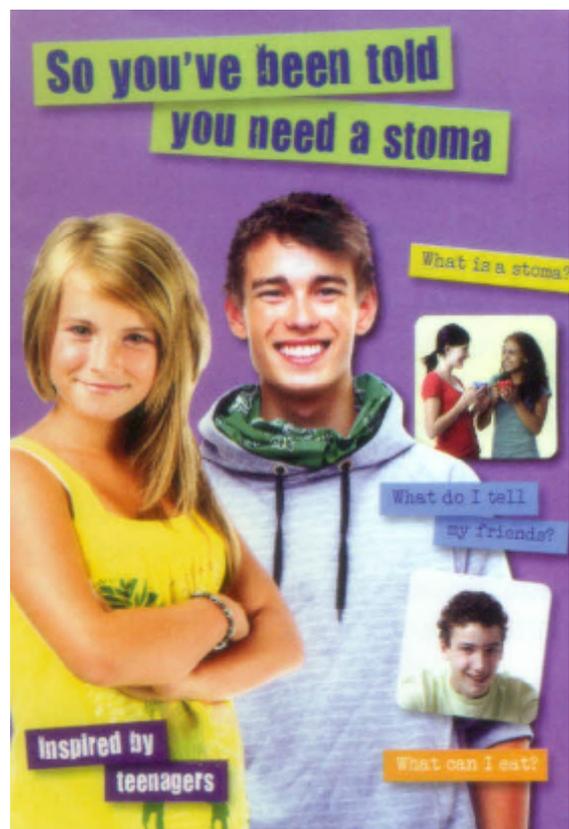
What do I tell my friends?

Where will the wind go?

The patient's experiences of coming to terms with feelings and how to cope down the track are dealt with quite well in sections about what to tell friends, returning to school, social activities, restrictions, sounds, noises, travel, holidays, emergency kit, salt replacement, rectal discharge and transition to adult services which is often not done very well.

The last section which is aimed at parents and carers and talks about the importance of listening and making time to talk, the issue of bullying and what to do about it, as well as alcohol and how it effects output etc. Overall I thought the booklet was a great adjunct to stoma education given in the hospital and some interesting and relevant topics not routinely covered are raised. From my perspective it is good to be able to hand out a booklet to a teenager without having to say, "Don't read that section, it is not relevant to you." The useful Resources and Contacts at the back are not relevant to Australia but there are similar resources available in Australia.

Copies of the booklet are available free of charge from Salts Healthcare Ltd. Telephone: 1300 784 737



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