

PPOA Meeting Notes
June 30, 2020
Meeting via ZOOM

Guest Speaker

Cassandra Bursma, Dietitian and Shield Representative
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“Your gut is a garden.”

The discussion tonight centered around fiber, the GI tract, and how to maintain healthy flora in the whole gut, especially when parts of the colon and intestines are gone. The colon’s job is to absorb water and electrolytes for the body to use elsewhere. Ostomates have the unique problem of missing parts of the digestive tract, so we need to monitor fluid intake in order to be healthy. Also, if we take nutritional supplements, we can look for those in liquid form. For example, liquid vitamins are designed to be absorbed in the small intestine, so they might be a better choice.

Bursma discussed the importance of probiotics for stimulating healthy bacteria in our bodies. Yogurt and other fermented foods can be eaten to accomplish this, or people can take probiotic supplements. Probiotics can help fight infections, but since this is a newer science, it’s not yet clear exactly how this occurs. Some options include freeze-dried products that can be reactivated. Yogurt is another option, but it’s a good idea to check the date on it, as the bacteria does lessen in quality over time. There are dairy-free yogurts as well, including the brands Oui and Forager.

GoLive is a brand name that Bursma recommends. Their products can be bought in stores or from their website, or on Amazon. Elevation Hydration is an IV product that provides hydration with vitamins. They have a location in Colorado Springs.

GoLive can be found here: <https://golivebewell.com/>
Elevation Hydration is here: <https://www.hydratetoelevate.com/>

Bursma is a Shield Healthcare representative, and she talked about educational services through her company, helping people understand nutrition. Shield’s website offers information tailored to meet the needs of healthcare professionals and ostomates. They host webinars and post videos to help people with mental health issues, physical health issues, lifestyle questions, attire, and dating. Some of their representatives are ostomates themselves, so they have first-hand experience to back up their information.

Bursma says that typical adults need 25 – 35 grams of fiber per day, but ostomates need 20 – 25 grams. In answer to a question about how diet can affect the development of polyps in the

colon, she says that it's important to be getting enough fiber while staying hydrated. On the other hand, it's possible for ostomates to get too much fiber, which can lead to problems. She recommends cooking some of the foods that others are eating raw. For example, rather than eating raw apples, we can make applesauce, which will be easier for our digestive tract. Likewise, cooking vegetables makes them more palatable for ostomates.

In answer to a question about sodium, Bursma said that ostomates tend to be low in sodium, because it is eliminated faster than in typical people. If that is the case for you, it might be a good idea to add a little salt to our meals.

In answer to a question about juicing, Bursma agrees that too much juice puts us in danger of ingesting too much sugar. In moderation, juice is great, she says. If you're doing it in a limited way, it is a way to readily absorb nutrition. Ensure has protein, vitamins, and minerals, so it's a good product if we're unable to eat. She recommends drinking 64 ounces of water per day, especially when we have hot weather. With a healthy diet and plenty of water, the body does a good job of detoxing itself, so we don't need to fall for the fads which advertise various ways to detox.

If anyone is looking for one-on-one nutritional consultations, you can find help from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. They can help you find a nutritionist you can meet with. Unfortunately, many insurance plans don't cover this type of treatment, even though nutrition is closely linked with health.

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website: <https://www.eatright.org/>