

# The Successful Journey Back to Health: Implementing Routine Follow-Up Care for Ostomy Patients

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## Overview:

The impact of a stoma on quality of life can include physical, psychological, social, and spiritual issues.<sup>1</sup> Follow-up with a WOC nurse after surgery can help with some of these issues. The literature suggests that a large percentage of persons who have ostomies will experience some form of peristomal complication.<sup>2</sup> Although preoperative visits and home health services were routinely provided for our ostomy patients, follow-up in an outpatient clinic was not. Instead patients were being seen for leakage problems and in “crisis”. Patients with a stoma are almost three times more likely to be readmitted within 30 days than other colorectal surgery patients.<sup>3</sup> Many of these re-admissions may be due to the need for reminders, reinforcement of information, and simple interventions like telephone follow-up.<sup>4</sup> We wanted to improve the quality of our services by making changes to our ostomy program.

## Process:

We enhanced our follow-up program for ostomy patients over the course of a year (Table 1). We developed an Ostomy Care Plan (Table 2) to be used with every ostomy patient. In addition, we implemented the following:

- Outpatient appointments were scheduled before the patient was discharged
- Follow-up phone calls were made within 2 weeks after discharge
- A reference sheet listing support groups, a local DME, and WOC nurse contact information was given to every patient

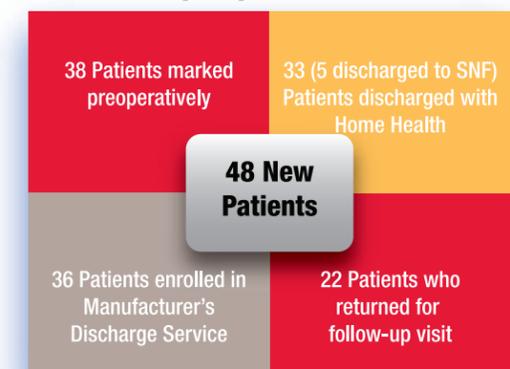
TABLE 2 – CARE PLAN



We continued to provide elements of the program that had already been in place including preoperative counseling and stoma marking, inpatient teaching, home health referrals, and patient enrollment in an ostomy manufacturer's transition service. By the patient enrolling in an ostomy manufacturer's transition service they have access to additional education, a coordinator to answer product and lifestyle questions, assistance in ordering supplies from a supplier of their choice, and troubleshooting should any complications arise (Table 3).

TABLE 4 – PATIENT DATA

## Follow-up Implementation Data



## Outcome and Discussion:

Development and implementation of an Ostomy Care Plan helped increase continuity in care provided by the WOC team in the hospital and increased the number of outpatient appointments scheduled prior to discharge (Table 4). Since the implementation of this program we have really emphasized how important follow-up is for the ostomy patient. This has resulted in increased collaboration with other members of the healthcare team who are ensuring that ostomy patients have a scheduled follow-up appointment prior to discharge.

## References:

1. Ratliff C, Haugen R. Selecting a tool for assessing health-related quality of life in ostomates. *J Wound Ostomy Continence Nurs.* 2013; 40(5): 462-467.
2. Ratliff, Catherine, R. Early peristomal skin complications reported by WOC nurses. *J Wound Ostomy Continence Nurs.* 2010; 37(5): 505-510.
3. Wick E, Shore A, Hirose K, Ibrahim A, Gearhart S, Efron J, Makary M. Re-admission rates and cost following colorectal surgery. *Diseases of the Colon and Rectum.* 2011; 54(12): 1475-1479.
4. Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. (2011). Hospital re-admissions after colon surgery common, costly and preventable [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://www.newswise.com/articles/hospital-re-admissions-after-colon-surgery-common-costly-and-preventable>

TABLE 1 – TIMELINE

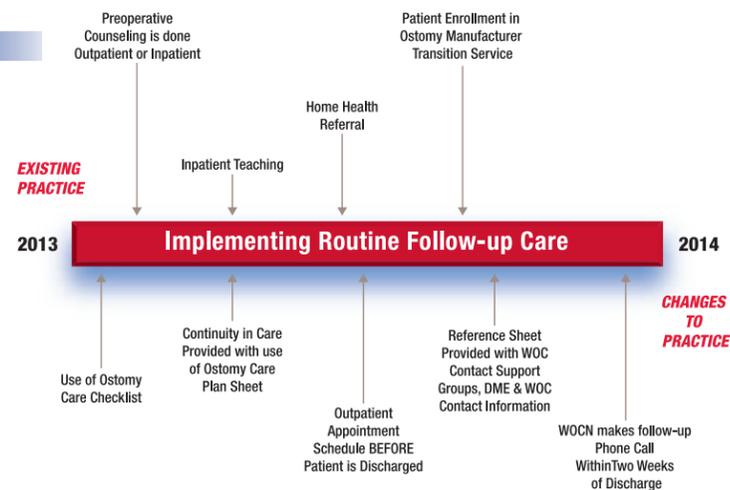


TABLE 3 – BENEFITS OF A MANUFACTURER'S TRANSITION SERVICE

## Benefits of a Manufacturer's Transition Service

- Education/Literature/DVDs
- Patient Coordinator
- Assistance in Ordering Supplies and Product Samples
- Support