



Speaking from Experience *Bowel Cancer*

Transcript for chapter 5 of 10: Excess baggage

Debra - The geography of your bowel has been altered, and in fact the bowel is brought out onto the abdominal wall, sort of just below your navel so to speak and on the left hand side in my case. And from then on, I had to wear a bag over that colostomy site.

Peter - We'll be talking and then all of a sudden... I call mine 'Paul' - it goes burp. They say you shouldn't have a pet name for it, but I have a pet name for mine. I say, "Shut up Paul! I'm talking!"

John and Joy - So when I went to see Liliith for the first day, she said to me, "How are you managing?" I said, "Well, not too bad. I've had a few mishaps and hiccups, you know. Like the bag come off, or it got too full and you were nowhere where you could change." And all this sort of thing, you know. And anyhow, she said to me, "Well, what about irrigation?" And I promptly burst into tears.

Debra - Because the rectum is missing, you haven't got a sort of repository, to slow things down in the bowel and to hold onto things. It really is a very muscular sort of area in the body that you can control. Well once that muscular area is gone and you've got the bowel coming out onto the abdomen wall, you've lost that control really. So you have to be careful about foods that speed up the intestinal progress, I suppose. Need to slow things down a bit. So things like bananas and chocolate slow the process of the bowel down a bit, and other foods like hot and spicy foods can tend to speed it up. So I tend to avoid those a bit.

John and Joy - So then I did irrigation. So my day-to-day procedure was every second morning I get up and I irrigate. And to describe irrigation, you put water into your bowel and it extracts the faeces for you. And you're safe for two days. You just put a plug in, and that's it.

Peter - I get up of a morning, and I don't even have to... Sometimes I put a clean bag on before I go to bed. Or sometimes, if I feel as if we're going to be a little bit 'funny funny' in bed, I'll put one of the plugs in. There are so many things that they have today - it's a plug and you sort of block it off. And you put this plug which is like a tampon type of thing, and you can play up all night if you like!