

# **Intimacy, Sexuality, and an Ostomy**

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## Imperfect Beauty

*The rift in the chest of a mountain,  
The twist in the trunk of a tree,  
The water-cut cave in the hollow,  
The rough, rocky rim of the sea –*

*Each one has a scar of distortion,  
Yet each has this sermon to sing,  
“The presence of what would deface me,  
Has made me a beautiful thing.”*

Frank H. Keith

Despite all our differences and regardless of race, creed, or culture, every person on this planet has one thing in common. We are all sexual beings -- whether we are young or old, beautiful or not, male or female, gay or straight, single or married, tall or short, black, white, yellow, religious or not, sexually active or not, *or whether we have a stoma*. Not only can sex continue to be or actually *begin to be* fun and pleasurable, it's important to our overall emotional and physical sense of feeling OK. It makes us feel “whole” and “normal,” desirable and loveable.

***“You are at the center of all your relationships, therefore you are responsible for your self-esteem, growth, happiness, and fulfillment. Don't expect the other person to bring you these things. You must live as if you are alone and others are the gifts offered to help you enrich your life.”***

*Leo Buscaglia*

Many of the sexual problems we experience after ostomy surgery are based on misinformation. The following is a list of some of the more common myths and truths.

### Sex and Stomas: Myths and Truths

<b>MYTHS</b>	<b>THE TRUTH</b>
<i>“And they lived happily ever-after.”</i>	This is a fairy tale. Relationships are like the tides, sometimes they're up and sometimes they're down. A good relationship adjusts to change and keeps the joy of sex alive. Sex alone doesn't secure a relationship.
<i>“Penis-in-vagina sex is the only sex worth having.”</i>	Giving and receiving pleasure can be expressed in many ways; through gentle caresses, kissing, hugging, cuddling, and even just holding hands or sleeping in the same bed as your partner. Other ways to express yourself sexually include masturbation, oral sex, or stimulation with the hands.

