



The ileostomy & internal pouch

Support Group

Registered Charity

Pouch Surgery Experiences – Steven Phillips

Hopefully anyone reading this might not feel all doom and gloom, honestly there is light at the end of the tunnel.

I had never heard of UC until June 2004, when I started to feel unwell. I was, until that point, a fit 44 year old, who enjoyed the good life and managed to fit in the odd marathon. I had never had a day's illness until then. At this point in June, I weighed in at 14 stone 7 - by September 6th, the day I was admitted to Frimley Park Hospital, I weighed 10 stone 7. I was pumped full of drugs, to no effect, and was then given the news that I would need to have an ileostomy. I was so ill at this point that it all just went over my head and I can only just remember the stoma nurse drawing on my stomach.

When I came round from the operation, I was confronted by the stoma, which funnily enough didn't bother me at all, in fact, I know it sounds odd, but I hadn't felt that good for several months - no pain or constant running to the toilet, so what if I had to put up with a stoma, at least I could leave the house without the fear of having to turn straight back round and dashing to the loo.

The stoma nurses were great, lots of advice and encouragement and soon I was home, then the first set back - I had an infection and was rushed back in with all lights flashing. All sorts of things went through my mind - would it always be like this? - I'd heard all the horror stories and started to wonder if I was going to be the next statistic. Luckily for me I wasn't.

I decided not to listen to the doom and gloom and concentrate on the positive. I got myself home and started to get fit again. I took things easy at first, eat sensibly and felt really good in myself with no stoma related problems. Then on a routine visit to see my surgeon at Frimley, he started to talk about the possibility of having a pouch. My world was upside down again - should I, or shouldn't I? - what a decision for anyone to make. I had no problems with the stoma, so should I go ahead? Not knowing which way to turn, I approached IA, who put me in contact with a couple of guys, similar to myself - this was a great help, being able to talk openly with people who had already gone through this.

I had the operation on the 25th January to create the pouch and the closure on the 6th May 2005. I'm back at work and have had only minor teething problems. I'm at a stage now where on average I only need to empty my pouch 3 times in a 24-hour period, this includes once at night and occasionally now I go right through the night. My confidence levels are very high and I'm just about to start a new job as Business Development Manager for a landscape company, which will involve spending most of my time behind the wheel of a car, which a few months ago I would not have dreamed possible. I know everybody differs, but in my experience it pays to remain positive, as I said at the top, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

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