

How do I talk about sex and intimacy?

SITUATION:

You recently met someone who you are interested in. You think that you may need to tell them about your ostomy soon before you feel comfortable having sex with them, but you do not know how to tell them. What do you say?

Suggestion:

“I have really enjoyed getting to know you. Before we continue this relationship, I need to tell you about a surgery that I had. I have an ostomy, so I have an ostomy bag on my stomach. Everything is fine and I feel so much better now, but there may be positions that are more comfortable for me than others. Do you have any questions?”

Testimonies:

“How you approach things and how you say it, not like you’re dropping a bomb, but just saying it casually, really helps. I think it helps to put your partner at ease as well. You’re just saying this is not a big deal. It’s like you’re not saying ‘I love you’ on the first date.”

Ostomates acknowledged that it can be nerve racking to have sex with a new partner when you have an ostomy. “When you’re having sex, it’s a very present thing. As long as you stay present, it’s a lot easier to not think about what’s going on with you. Or also, your partner is not thinking about what’s going on with you, because you’re connected.”

Helpful tip: Some people are not sure when or how to tell a romantic partner about their ostomy. There is no right or wrong time. Some people may choose to tell someone immediately, while other people might wait to tell the person until they know the person better. Your comfort is what is most important.