

The Secure Start Program: Making a Difference in the Continuum of Care

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Overview

The Hollister Secure Start Program is a comprehensive and collaborative program focused on helping improve patient outcomes throughout the continuum of care. The Secure Start Program provides a lifetime of support and personalized services that help patients adjust to the many changes that follow ostomy surgery. Over the past five and a half years, the Secure Start Program has helped thousands of patients overcome the many challenges they faced during the difficult transition period from hospital, to home, and then into the community.

Caring and knowledgeable Secure Start Ostomy Specialists work closely with clinicians to help ensure that each patient receives the appropriate product samples, support, and education. Whether it's helping a patient find an in-network supplier based on their insurance, or simply answering the on-going, ostomy-related questions that patients have after their surgery, the Secure Start Program is a resource clinicians can count on to help ensure positive outcomes for their patients.

Measuring the Success of the Secure Start Program

In a recent study, the Secure Start Program was assessed by new ostomates participating in the program. The objective of the study was to investigate the effectiveness and success of the Secure Start Program with regard to providing new ostomates with the support required to facilitate the adjustment to life with a stoma.

The study looked at all phases of the program; from the support provided by the Secure Start Ostomy Specialists, to issues related to quality of life. The study, a random survey of participants that had two or more contacts with a Secure Start Ostomy Specialist (n = 661), found that 88% of all respondents stated that the Secure Start Program performed a valuable service in helping them adapt to their life with a stoma.

The Secure Start Program is able to do this by providing the new ostomate with customized services, and their very own Ostomy Specialist to help them move forward in life.



Attention to Detail. Attention to Life.

How successful is this?

- 94% of all ostomates stated the Secure Start Ostomy Specialist was someone that they could count on to understand their product needs
- 80% stated the Secure Start Ostomy Specialist was someone to turn to for suggestions about how to adjust to life with a stoma
- 90% stated the Secure Start Ostomy Specialist was someone whose assistance they really valued
- 91% stated the Secure Start Ostomy Specialist helped them understand the product ordering process
- 88% stated that the Secure Start Program helped them find a pouching system that was right for them

The Secure Start Program offers more than just product samples. Secure Start Ostomy Specialists provide a wide variety of services ranging from help with insurance information and ostomy education, to help with product ordering. 39% of all respondents took advantage of the help offered with insurance information. 75% required help in the product ordering process provided by the Secure Start Program. 70% required help in understanding the need and use of product options, and 26% turned to the Secure Start Program for additional ostomy education.

But more importantly the Secure Start Program provides the new ostomate with the knowledge that someone is there to help, and the ability to ask questions (two attributes of the program rated very highly by the ostomates). New ostomates often present varied emotional states such as anger, anxiety, or depression. Knowing that someone was there, and having had the ability to ask questions, resulted in one of every five respondents stating that the Secure Start Ostomy Specialist helped them with needed emotional support. Accordingly, personalized service was rated highly by the respondents.

The Secure Start Program was welcomed by those responding to the survey. Approximately 97% of all respondents stated they appreciated getting a call from the Secure Start Ostomy Specialist after they got home from the hospital. Furthermore 98% stated they were glad their nurse enrolled them in the program. Why is this important? In part, because one of every five respondents did not have access to a Home Health Care Nurse. Thus, the Secure Start Program has the ability to step in and provide the support that is necessary during this very traumatic time. To this end, and as important, is the fact that 99% felt that the Secure Start Program was respectful of their privacy.

So, what do the services and support provided by the Secure Start Program mean to the ostomate? When quality of life issues for the Secure Start Program participants were compared to a comparable sample (n = 185) from the Hollister Ostomy Comprehensive Health and Life Assessment (HOCHLA), it was found that the Secure Start Program participants fared significantly better in the categories of Social Life, Family Life, Leisure Time, Financial Situation, and Overall Contentment.

Table 1: Those expressing satisfaction (very satisfied or satisfied, very content or content) with...

Issue	Secure Start	HOCHLA	p-value
Social life	74.8%	60.2%	<0.0001
Family life	88.6%	81.7%	0.0126
Leisure time	79.3%	64.4%	<0.0001
Financial situation	58.1%	48.7%	0.0218
Overall contentment	74.3%	64.9%	0.0114

However, the Secure Start Program is not alone in the endeavor to ease the ostomate's transition to their new life; their new normal. Integral to this is the support the ostomate gets from their family, and from the hospital nurse. It is not surprising that family is rated highest among those that helped in adjusting to life with a stoma, followed closely by the Secure Start Program and the hospital nurse. The Secure Start Program is a highly valued and strategically positioned partner with both family and health professionals to meet the needs of the new ostomate.

Conclusion

The data is conclusive: the Secure Start Program is shown to effectively assist new ostomates in their adjustment to life with a stoma. The Secure Start Program is an integral partner with those helping the new ostomate transition through this phase of their life.

The Secure Start Program assists people with ostomies on many levels. The Secure Start Ostomy Specialists are shown to successfully demonstrate an understanding of the product needs of the ostomate; to be someone the ostomate can turn to for suggestions about how to adjust to life with a stoma; to be someone whose assistance the ostomate values; to be someone that helps them understand the product ordering process.

When the survey asked the respondents to rate which of several services they considered most important, they replied 'being able to ask questions,' followed closely by 'receiving product samples.' This may explain why approximately 88% of all respondents stated that the Secure Start Program was instrumental in helping them find a pouching system that works for them. Additionally, 80% also said that the Secure Start Program performed a valuable service in helping them adjust to life with a stoma, and 98% stated they were glad their nurse enrolled them in the program. **Note:** The Secure Start Program is closely associated with the hospital ostomy nurse in a list of those helping the respondent adjust to life with a stoma; family being rated most important.

With regard to those helping the ostomate adjust to life with a stoma, 19% stated they were not visited by a Home Health Care Nurse. This may further emphasize the need for the Secure Start Program as a mechanism to fill a void.

In general, the participants in the program were shown to exhibit satisfaction with quality of life associated issues. When the responses to these issues were compared to those found in the Ostomy Comprehensive Health and Life Assessment, the Secure Start Program respondents were indicated as having a higher percentage of respondents in the “satisfied” categories; specifically in the social life, leisure time, and overall contentment issues.

Quotes From Research Participants about the Secure Start Ostomy Specialists

“Without them, I would have been lost.”

“The Secure Start program was key in our adjustment to a new ileostomy in the family. Our representative, Jennifer, was extremely understanding, caring, and patient with us as we traveled the road we had to go down. She was always there to answer questions, send us product samples so that we could determine our needs, and even give us suggestions on dealing with what was ahead. I don't think we could have gotten through this experience without her help. Knowing that I had someone to call with the odd and unique questions that came up with this long, strange trip we have been on, was an absolute necessity during this change in our lives.”

“If it had not been for you people I would have given up.”

“Your service has made life worth living.”



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