

A Summer Weather Problem

Many readers will no doubt be enjoying summer weather, but some may be experiencing problems with their stoma, which may be continually discharging pellets of faeces, even though they irrigate. My own graphical description of the effect is that the stoma thinks it's a rabbit, albeit that the pellets are somewhat larger. I used to suffer from this problem when I went on holiday to somewhere warm, like Tunisia or the Canary Islands, and I used to blame it on the change of food. This excuse was demolished when I experienced a hot summer in England. I couldn't blame it on the food, which hadn't changed, and I realized that it was the change of temperature that was causing the problem. I had not increased my water intake, and I was becoming dehydrated. One function of the colon is to recycle water which would otherwise be expelled as faeces, and this results in there being more solid matter in the colon, which is expelled by the normal peristaltic action.

The solution to the problem is to drink more water. When the temperature reaches 30°C, the classic recommendation of 2 litres a day is no longer adequate if you are at all active, and your target should probably be more like 3 litres. However tempted you may be, iced water is not the best solution, because it is not absorbed as rapidly as water at room temperature. If you can't bear the taste of ordinary water, add a little lemon juice, PLJ in the U.K., or Pulco Citron Vert in France, for example. Again, do not try to quaff a whole glass at a time, because that will effectively reduce your intake. My own recommendation is for four gulps at a time, which will not leave you feeling full, and reluctant to drink any more. Enjoy the summer!