

# Why is My Pee Purple?!?

[00:00:00] Have you ever looked down at your pouch and thought, "Well, that's not a color I was expecting today"?

[00:00:06] Welcome to Leaks, Laughs, and Life with a Urostomy. I'm Dawn, and before we dive in, I want to say I'm not a medical professional. I am simply sharing my experiences and also some of my husband's experiences with a neobladder, and things we've learned along the way, and information I've gathered through this past year of living with a urostomy.

[00:00:26] I want to remind you to always consult your healthcare provider for any medical advice.

[00:00:33] Okay, now that we've gotten that out of the way, let's talk about pee.

[00:00:39] Yes, pee.

[00:00:40] About six years ago, when I was doing functional nutrition counseling, one of the questions I would ask my clients was, "What is the color of your urine?"

[00:00:49] The looks I got were priceless.

[00:00:52] "My urine?"

[00:00:54] Yes, your urine, because your body is constantly sending messages, and one of the easiest ways to [00:01:00] monitor what's going on is by paying attention to what comes out of it.

[00:01:04] Most people don't think about their urine until something looks unusual.

[00:01:09] Urostomates, on the other hand, get a front row seat every single day. We don't have the luxury of pretending it doesn't exist. It's right there in the pouch saying, "Good morning. Here's today's health report." And believe it or not, the color of your urine can tell you quite a bit about hydration, nutrition, medications, infections, and sometimes bigger health concerns that shouldn't be ignored.

[00:01:32] There are many colors of urine, and each one tells a story.

[00:01:37] A long time ago, in a land far, far away...

[00:01:41] okay, maybe not that kind of story.

[00:01:44] So let's start with the clear urine. Many people assume crystal clear urine is the gold standard. Sometimes it simply means you're very well-hydrated.

[00:01:55] But if your urine is consistently water clear all day long, every day,  
[00:02:00] you might be overdoing your fluid intake and potentially diluting necessary electrolytes.

[00:02:06] Generally speaking, men need around, um, 124 ounces of water a day and women around 96 ounces of water a day.

[00:02:16] Although individual needs will vary based on body size, activity level, climate, and your overall health.

[00:02:25] Now, I'm talking water. I am not talking tea, coffee, soda, or juice. I'm talking water. Plain, pure water, and the reason is that caffeine depletes our water intake. So for every cup of coffee or tea that you drink, you need to drink two glasses of water in order to rehydrate those cells.

[00:02:52] Our body needs water in order to regenerate cells and to also help clear the toxins out of our body. A small suggestion, [00:03:00] if you don't like drinking water, maybe try adding a slice of cucumber or a small amount of lemon or lime juice or mint to it. Those all help with detoxification.

[00:03:12] Let's move into yellow.

[00:03:14] A light yellow, the color of lemonade, is generally the sweet spot. That's what we're aiming for, so try to maintain that color all of the time.

[00:03:25] If you happen to see a bright yellow, it can be caused by certain vitamins, supplements, and medications. And if you've ever taken a B complex vitamin and then suddenly saw your urine in your pouch and began to wonder why it resembles the color of a yellow highlighter, you're not alone. B's will do that because we pee out what our body does not need.

[00:03:49] When you see dark yellow or orange urine, you're in the beginning stages of dehydration.

[00:03:55] Your body is concentrating the urine because it needs more fluids. Drink [00:04:00] more water. This will help dilute your urine, and your body will thank you for it.

[00:04:06] If your urine is getting very dark, almost tea colored or brown, that's something to pay attention to. Severe dehydration can cause this, but also so can old blood coming down from farther upstream in the urinary tract. That's not something you want to ignore.

[00:04:23] And then we get the red urine, which is one of those colors that immediately gets everyone's attention.

[00:04:29] But before you panic, ask yourself, what have you eaten lately? Did you eat red beets, blackberries, or any foods with a strong red food coloring? Because these can absolutely create some interesting surprises in your pouch.

[00:04:46] If you haven't eaten anything of that nature, red urine can also indicate blood coming from the kidneys or urinary tract. It can sometimes signal kidney stones, kidney or bladder tumors, [00:05:00] lesions, infections, or other conditions that deserve immediate medical attention.

[00:05:05] And then we move on to the white or cloudy urine, and this sometimes can be related to diet, but it also can be a sign of infection. So if you're seeing cloudy urine and there's a strong odor or fever and chills or feeling unwell, it's time to call your healthcare provider or your doctor.

[00:05:28] Now let's talk about the colors that make people do a double take: black urine.

[00:05:33] Most people never expect to see black urine, but it can happen. Certain foods, including large amounts of rhubarb, aloe, and some nuts, have been associated with darkening urine. Certain medications, genetic conditions, metabolic disorders, and chemical exposures can also cause urine to appear very dark or black.

[00:05:56] And then we arrive at today's star of the show, purple [00:06:00] pee, because if you've never heard of purple urine bag syndrome, it sounds completely made up. It's kind of like something your grandchild would create with markers, but it's real.

[00:06:11] Purple urine bag syndrome, often called PUBS, occurs when compounds from foods containing tryptophan, things like turkey, egg whites, milk, soybeans, these interact with a certain bacteria in the urinary tract.

[00:06:27] Those compounds can react with the plastics and the materials in a leg bag or nighttime drainage bag, and then they create a lilac or deep purple discoloration.

[00:06:38] The first time someone sees it, it can be startling. I personally have not had it happen to me, but someone in my urostomy support group did, and it shocked me when I saw the pictures.

[00:06:50] I thought she was joking at first, but nope, it's a real thing. The important thing to understand is that the color itself isn't usually the problem. It's [00:07:00] the reason why this color is happening is what gets our attention. Purple urine bag syndrome is often associated with urinary tract infections, and in some cases, it can be connected to a more serious infection if left untreated.

[00:07:15] So if you ever look at your nighttime bag and think, "Why does my urine look like grape Kool-Aid?" Please don't ignore it.

[00:07:22] Change your nighttime bag to a new bag, and then change your pouching system, all of it. Your doctor may want to see the pouches, so you can either put them in a sealed-up Ziploc bag or take pictures, and then immediately contact your healthcare provider or your doctor.

[00:07:39] If you are experiencing fever, chills, weaknesses, confusion, or other signs of infection, please head to the ER immediately. Do not wait to talk to a doctor.

[00:07:50] Even if you are not experiencing any of these symptoms, please still call your doctor to make sure they don't need to see you.

[00:07:57] You can have sepsis with no [00:08:00] symptoms, and around here we have a saying, "Better safe than septic."

[00:08:04] Your urine is one of the easiest health reports you'll ever receive. Paying attention to changes in color won't diagnose everything, but it can give you valuable clues about what your body is trying to tell you.

[00:08:17] Sometimes your body whispers, and sometimes it shouts, and sometimes it apparently chooses the color purple.

[00:08:25] Thank you for listening to Leaks, Laughs, and Life with a Urostomy. I appreciate you listening, and if you have other questions or would like other resources, you can go to my website at [leakslaughslife.com](http://leakslaughslife.com) where I have previous podcast episodes listed, links to my books, and a blog.

[00:08:43] So until next time, take care of yourself. Share this with someone else who might need to know these things, and thank you for listening. It means more than you know. Bye for now!