Patients with new ostomies resulting from treatment for a cancer diagnosis have special needs. Patients must adjust not only to the cancer diagnosis but also to a colostomy or urostomy (Brogna, 1985; Grant, Padilla, Presant, Lipsett, & Runa, 1983; Haas, 1999; Jenkins, Morin, & Tomaselli, 1997; Kleinpell-Nowell & Weiner, 1999; Reilly, 1994). Patient education outcomes include the ability to perform self-care, the return to previous activities performed prior to surgery, and support for emotional adjustment. New psychomotor skills also must be learned so that patients are able to care for the ostomy. In addition, patients express anxiety and stress caused by a changed body image perception and are concerned about acceptance by their family, friends, and society.

In the changing healthcare environment, patients with new ostomies are being discharged earlier after their initial surgery. Patients with cancer with new ostomies have special needs that should be met.

Once patients are discharged from the hospital, gaps can occur in the continuum of care.

Telenursing is one program that provides clinical nurse specialist care via telecommunications to patients in the home.