



GENERAL INFORMATION

Gas formation can be decreased by avoiding gas producing foods (beans, peas, onions, cabbage) and chewing food well. It is advisable to trial small portions of food at home. Pouches with gas filters are recommended. Some people experience excess gas, if this is a problem there are also deodorants and gas suppressants available in tablet and liquid form, which you may want to trial.

Lighting a match in a room where faecal gas has been released from your pouch helps to eliminate odour - it is a cheap and effective air freshener.

Eat well balanced meals to create a regular bowel pattern. It is a good idea to initially keep a diary of food eaten to monitor foods that may thicken output, cause gas or loosen output.

If travelling cater for a possible tummy upset by taking along drainable pouches and a recommended thickening agent. Include medications such as Imodium, Lomotil and codeine as advised by your stomal therapy nurse or doctor.

Know where your nearest stomal therapy nurse is based. **Always ring for an appointment prior to attending the hospital.** Otherwise you may have to wait until he/she is available.



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SURGICAL UNIT

Management hints for patients with a stoma

CARE OF YOUR STOMA

This brochure is to assist you in caring for your stoma. Whilst initially this task may seem daunting it will become easier as routines are established.

You can bath or shower with your pouch (bag) **on** or **off**. If you shower without the bag there is no guarantee that your stoma will not function, but once a pattern is established, you will find a satisfactory time of day or evening when it will be safest to bath with the pouch off.

Avoid the use of bath oils or creams as they may interfere with the adhesion of the pouch. Your stoma is not sterile. Wash the stoma and surrounding skin with water, then dry just as you do the rest of your body.

Expect slight bleeding from your stoma when you handle it. However, the bleeding should never be extensive.

Keep hairs around the stoma trimmed or shaved. Hold tissue paper over the stoma whilst shaving to protect it.

Your stoma may move or wiggle at times. This is due to the normal peristaltic action of your bowel.

If you notice any unusual irritation, itching or uncomfortable feeling around stoma. This could be the first signs of a skin problem, seek medical advice.

Your stoma will decrease in size for about 6-8 weeks after surgery. Measure your stoma periodically during this time to ensure that your appliance fits properly.

TYPES OF POUCHING

You will be shown various pouches by the stomal therapy nurse and together a decision will be made about the most suitable pouch for you.

There are three main types of pouching:

- (i) **One Piece Closed End Pouch**
 - ideal for a firm stool
 - requires changing 1-3 times a day
- (ii) **Two Piece Base (wafer) & Pouch Set**
 - base may remain on the skin for several days
 - pouch can be removed as often as required without damaging the skin
- (iii) **Drainable Pouch**
 - ideal for looser stools
 - allows emptying via clamp at the bottom of the pouch
 - can remain in place for several days before it needs changing

CHANGING YOUR POUCH

When you first arrive home from hospital, put all your supplies in one area or container and tape the procedure for changing your appliance to it.

Always keep a minimum of two weeks supply on hand in case of delays.

Closed end pouches are best changed when half full. Remove the pouch, place in disposable bag, seal, wrap in newspaper and discard into rubbish bin. **DO NOT FLUSH THE POUCH DOWN THE TOILET** as it will cause a blockage.

Drainable pouches do not require rinsing out, but if you should want to do so, use a plastic sauce bottle to flush with water via the drainable end. Always use warm water in the sauce bottle as this will clean the pouch quickly. Do not use too much water as this may loosen the adhesive and cause leakage and odour.

Establish a regular routine for changing your appliance at a time when your bowel is least active i.e. prior to breakfast. Never wait for leakage before changing your appliance.

Do not let your appliance become too full before emptying it - one third to half full is a good guideline.

Initially consider taking the phone off the hook while you change your appliance so that there are no unnecessary interruptions.

Clothes pegs (wooden) are ideal for holding clothes away from your stoma whilst you are changing your pouch appliance.

Remember that the opening on the wafer appliance should be no more than 2mm from your stoma. Too large an opening can cause skin irritation and leakage under wafer appliance.

POUCH - GENERAL INFORMATION

Always take your supplies with you especially when you go to hospital. As there is a very large range available, the stomal therapy nurse may not have your type on hand.

Have an emergency kit with you at all times. Include a spare pouch, wipes and plastic bag. "Nappy sacks", a scented disposable bag, are ideal for disposing of pouches if in a public toilet. These can be purchased from supermarkets.

When travelling, keep your supplies in your hand luggage in case your luggage is lost.

If you feel you need extra security in holding on to your appliance, you may try taping around the edges of your wafer with micropore tape or wearing an appliance belt.

You might find it helps to add a few drops of vegetable or paraffin oil in the pouch to make it easier for solid stool to slide down.