

Going home after Stoma surgery

Contact details:

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On discharge your local Stoma Care Nurse will be informed of your contact details, the surgery you have had, the appliances you are using, and generally how you are managing the stoma. You will be informed of her contact details as well. However, I will continue to support and advise you once you have been discharged home.

Follow up

An Outpatient appointment will be made for you to see your Colorectal Surgeon following discharge usually held in the Consulting Suites at Priory Hospital on a Monday or Friday.

Stoma Care Clinic appointments are available to offer:

- Ongoing support to all Ostomists
- Practical help and advice
- Support Group information and networking

Ongoing Support

Many people find it useful to join a Stoma Patients Association after their operation and as they get back to a normal life.

These associations are generally run by people who have been through the same process as you and they can be a useful source of help and advice.

Patients Associations

Ileostomy Association
Peverill House
1 – 5 Mill Road
Ballyclare
County Antrim
BT39 99DR

Telephone Number 0800 0184 724
Website : www.iasupport.org

Colostomy Association

2 London Court
East Street
Reading
RG1 4QL

Telephone Number 0800 328 4257

Website: www.colostomyassociation.org.uk

A useful reminder of how to change your bag

One you are home, you may feel anxious about changing your bag for the first time without any assistance, this anxiety is normal and expected.

Before you start check you have the following:

- Stoma bag- cut to correct size
- Dry wipes and warm tap water OR wet wipes
- Disposal bag
- Remember to wash your hands before and after changing your stoma bag

1. Collect everything you need to change your bag
2. Gently peel your bag away from your skin, starting at the top, support your skin with your free hand
3. Place the used stoma bag in the disposal bag
4. Clean your stoma
5. Gently dry around your stoma
6. Peel off backing from your new stoma bag and apply ensuring the bag is comfortable and secure with no creases

Getting supplies of equipment

You will be sent home with a supply of equipment that you need to look after your stoma. Further supplies can be obtained by getting a prescription from your GP and taking it to your local chemist.

Alternatively you can ask your Stoma Care Nurse to set you up on a home delivery service of which there are many available.

If you are under 60 years old you may not have to pay prescription charges, you can complete the form FP92A exemption form (available from chemists or Post Offices).

Diet

Generally dietary guidelines include:

- Eat regularly – you may find it helpful to eat smaller portions and more often to allow your digestive system to recover from the operation and to better digest and absorb your food.
- Chew your food well
- Drink plenty of fluids (6- 8 glasses each day)

Foods that may thicken output:

- Bananas
- Bread
- Pasta
- Porridge
- Potatoes
- Rice

Foods that may loosen output:

- Alcohol (beer, wines and spirits)
- Chocolate
- Coffee
- Spicy foods

Foods which can cause wind:

- Beans
- Beer/ lager
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Onions
- Fizzy drinks

Exercise

Generally patients should be advised to avoid strenuous exercise and lifting for six weeks after their operation to allow the wound to fully heal, but during this time walking is a good and a safe form of exercise.

There is a risk of incisional hernia following any abdominal surgery and it is therefore important that you do not do any form of strenuous exercise until after your 6-8 week follow-up.

Clothes

Loose fitting clothing and track suits may be preferable to wear after your operation and when you return home, as your abdomen may feel swollen. As you recover you can return to wearing your usual clothes, although you may need to adjust your waistband.

Driving

During the first 6-8 weeks you should avoid driving. You may find the seat belt uncomfortable across your stoma. If this is the case, try fitting a seat belt adjuster- these are usually available from most high street car accessory stores or on the internet.

Insurance

Clearly, having a stoma is a “health-event”. You may need to notify your insurance company. Some companies may charge extra. If you do not want to pay this the Patient Associations should be able to advise you of which companies do not make this charge.

Rectal Loss

Patients who have not had their back passage (rectum) removed will get the urge to go to the toilet in the normal way. It is quite normal to pass mucus from the back passage. It is also normal to pass faeces if you went to the operating theatre as an emergency and were unable to have laxatives.

Bleeding

When cleaning the stoma, you may experience some blood loss on the wipe. This is quite normal and should not cause for alarm.

Coping strategies

People cope with stressful events in different ways. Having a stoma is no different and there is no easy quick fix solution that will work every time for everyone. You may find there are times when you feel angry and unhappy about the consequences of your illness and surgery, but these feelings will come and go- you will have good days as well as bad.

It's good to talk

Talk to someone about how you are feeling, especially immediately after circumstances have changed your life. This could be a friend, relative or healthcare professional, or you may prefer to talk to someone you do not know through the Patients Association.

Work

Return to work when you feel ready and your GP says you are fit enough. In the early period you may tire easily, so it is important to gradually increase your activity before going back. You may also be able to negotiate returning to work part-time first if your employer agrees.

PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT ME SHOULD YOU REQUIRE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION.

Birmingham Bowel Clinic 2011