

This information will help you on your journey as you learn to successfully care for your colostomy.

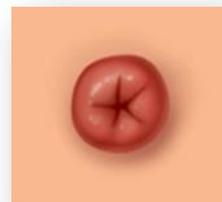
What is a colostomy? A colostomy is a surgical opening in the abdominal (belly) wall. This opening is where the large intestine (colon or bowel) is brought out to make a “stoma.” Stoma is the Greek word for “mouth” or “opening.” A colostomy is made to bypass disease or injury in the bowel, making a new way to pass stool (bowel movements) when the bowel is injured or blocked.



When you have a colostomy, stool does not pass through your anus, but goes through the stoma. Unlike the anus, you have no control over the stoma. You will wear a pouch under your clothes to collect the stool. Your ostomy nurse will help teach you how to empty and change your pouch and care for your stoma.

Your stoma

- After surgery, your stoma may be swollen. It will shrink for the first six to eight weeks after surgery to a permanent size.
- A healthy stoma is pinkish red in color. A change in color, especially darkening should be reported to your doctor.
- Your stoma has no feelings so it will not hurt to touch it.
- Your stoma may bleed a little when it is cleaned. This is normal and the bleeding should stop quickly. If the bleeding continues let your doctor know.



Your colostomy output

- The stool from your colostomy may be liquid right after surgery but may become soft to formed depending on your surgery.
- Stool will look different depending on what you eat.
- You must wear a pouch at all times to collect the stool.
- Your pouch will normally need to be emptied 2-6 times a day.

Bathing and Showering

Your pouch is waterproof so you may bathe, shower or swim with your pouch. You may choose to bathe or shower without your pouch. Soap and water will not hurt your stoma. There are swimsuits and board shorts you can buy to support and hide the ostomy pouch.



Clothing

You should be able to wear the same types of clothes you wore before your surgery except for tight belts that can stop the flow of stool in your pouch. If you wear a belt, you may need to loosen it or consider suspenders. The pouch is worn inside or outside of your underwear. You may choose to wear special ostomy underwear. Your ostomy nurse can give you more information about clothing.



Getting back to Normal Activities, Work and Traveling

As with any surgery, you will need time to rest and recover. Your doctor will let you know when you can return to normal activities and work. Once you have recovered, your ileostomy should not stop you from having an active life. Always carry extra pouches with you in case of leaks. When you travel, it is a good idea to pack more supplies than you think you will need. When flying, pack your ostomy supplies in your carry-on bag, as sometimes luggage gets lost.



Relationships, Love, Sex and Helpful Tips



Because colostomy surgery changes the body, some people worry about how this change will affect relationships and sexual activity. Having an ostomy does not change who you are as a caring and loving person. Talk with your partner and let them know sexual activity will not hurt your stoma. After recovery, it is still possible for most woman to have children and many men become fathers. If you have questions or concerns about sex after surgery, it may be helpful to arrange an appointment for you and your partner to talk with your doctor or ostomy nurse.

- Empty your pouch before sexual activity.
- Wearing a beige pouch will hide the pouch contents.
- You may want to wear a small beige closed pouch.
- A cummerbund or intimate underwear can help hide the pouch.
- Never use the stoma for sex.

Things to Remember About Your Pouch

- Change your pouch 2 times a week and for leaks.
- Pouches removed too often can cause skin irritation.
- Anytime your pouch leaks change it!
- Do not rinse your pouch out. Rinsing may cause your skin barrier to loosen and leak.
- Burning or stinging under your pouch may be a sign of skin irritation and the pouch needs to be changed.
- Empty your pouch when it is 1/2 full of stool. A pouch that is too full of stool may leak.
- Look out for skin redness or irritation around your stoma and call your ostomy nurse or UCLA Ostomy Clinic if you are not sure how to manage it.
- Do not use creams or ointments under your ostomy pouch. These will stop your pouch from sticking.



When to Call Your Doctor or Health Care Professional

- Feeling sick to your stomach (nausea), throwing up (vomiting) or have no stool in your pouch for 24 hours.
- Dark colored urine or little urine.
- Feeling very thirsty.
- Muscle cramps
- Increasing belly pain and bloating.
- Weakness, lightheadedness and feeling tired.
- Stool output is greater than 1000ml (1 liter) a day.
- Blood in your stool
- Changes in the color of your stoma such as a dark or black color.
- Changes in the look or length of your stoma.
- Pouch does not keep sealed.
- Rash or wound on your skin around your stoma that does not heal after 1 to 2 pouch changes.



Helpful Diet Tips

For the first 6 to 8 weeks after surgery, your doctor may want you to follow a diet that is low in fiber (without raw vegetables, corn, beans, nuts) to give your bowel time to heal. After a recovery time most patients can eat a normal diet.



- Take small bites of food and chew all foods very well until food is soft like pudding.
- Make time for meals. Eat at the same times and do not rush when you eat.
- Try eating small frequent meals instead of large meals.
- Have your biggest meal in the middle of the day to reduce stool output at night.
- Drink fluids between meals.
- If you have pain, swelling of your belly, or diarrhea after eating a new food, avoid it and try it again in a few weeks



Preventing food blockage

Surgery on the intestines may cause swelling. Large pieces of food could become stuck causing a blockage especially right after surgery. Remember to chew your food well.



Signs of a blockage

- Little or no stool in your pouch.
- Stool is watery with a bad smell.
- Belly cramps.
- Swelling of your belly.
- Let your doctor know if you have signs of a blockage.

Limit or avoid these foods that may cause a blockage	Raw celery, raw cabbage, coleslaw, lettuce, Brussels sprouts, corn, popcorn, oranges, pineapples, grapefruit, dried fruit, coconut pieces, nuts, seeds, meats in casings such as hot dogs, fruit and vegetable skins and peels, berries, dried fruit, legumes.
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Preventing loose stool (diarrhea)

Some foods are more likely to cause diarrhea. You can try these foods one at a time and in small amounts to see how you do

Foods that may cause diarrhea	Raw vegetables, fruit juices, caffeinated drinks, fried food, ice cream, and some spicy foods.
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Foods that may help thicken stool	Applesauce, bananas, cheese, yogurt, pasta, rice, tapioca, bread, bagels, crackers, pretzels, potato (without skin), creamy peanut butter, and
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	marshmallows.
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Preventing constipation

At times, some patients may become constipated just as they were before surgery. Some tips to prevent constipation are:

- Drink more water and fruit juices, 8-10 glasses of fluid a day unless your doctor tells you otherwise.
- Eat more high fiber foods such as bran cereal, vegetables and fruits.
- Walk and exercise if your doctor allows.
- Call you doctor if constipation becomes a problem.



Preventing gas

As your bowel begins to work again after surgery you may notice gas in your pouch. Gas can be caused by swallowing air, chewing gum, and some foods. Most pouches today have a filter that lets gas out but not the odor. Ask your ostomy nurse for more information about pouches with filters.

Foods that may cause gas	Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, spinach, peas, corn, mushrooms, cucumbers, beans, dairy products, fried and fatty foods, foods with high sugar content,
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	carbonated soda, and beer.
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Preventing odor

Today’s ostomy pouches are made with odor-barrier films so odor is contained inside the pouch. You should only notice odor when you are emptying the pouch. If you notice odor at any other time, check the pouch for leakage.

- Empty your pouch when 1/2 full of stool. Changing and emptying your pouch regularly can help stop odor and leaks.
- You can buy deodorant drops to place in your pouch. Drops can be purchased where you buy your ostomy supplies. Ask your ostomy nurse for more information about deodorant drops.
- Diet can affect the odor of your stool.

Foods that can increase odor	Asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, beans, eggs, fish, some spices, beer, and alcohol
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Foods that can decrease odor	Buttermilk, yogurt, parsley, and cranberry juice (in small amounts).
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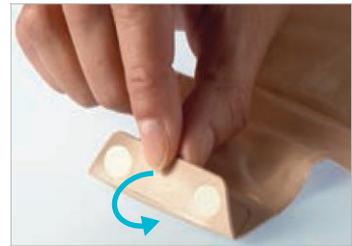


How to Empty Coloplast Pouches with a Velcro Closure

1.) Open the Velcro tabs and unfold the closure flap.



2.) Connect the white dots with the tan dots on the back of the closure flap.



3.) Squeeze edges to empty. Clean the inside edge of closure with toilet paper.



4.) Separate the white and tan dots on the back of the closure flap.



5.) Starting with the released closure flap, fold up and close the Velcro tabs.



UCLA Health

Ronald Reagan

Outpatient Ostomy Clinic

Pfleger Liver & General Surgery Clinic

200 Medical Plaza, Suite 214

Los Angeles, CA 90095

310-794-7788

Open Monday and Wednesday mornings

9:00 am-12:00 pm

By appointment only

Please call to schedule an appointment and ask for a

“Ostomy Nurse Appointment”

When visiting the clinic remember to bring extra ostomy supplies with you,
as the supplies you are using may not be available

Support Organizations

- United Ostomy Association of America, www.uoa.org 800-826-0826
- Ostomy Association of L.A., www.oa-la.com 818-337-8416
- Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America, www.cdfa.org 888-224-9626
- American Cancer Society, www.cancer.org 800-227-2345
- Wound, Ostomy and www.wocn.org 888- Continance Nurses Society,
224-9626

