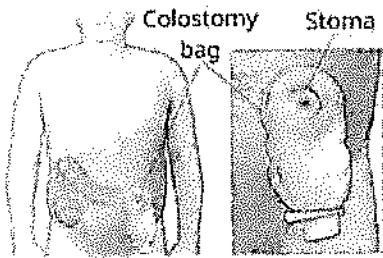


# Colostomy Surgery, Adult, Care After



This sheet gives you information about how to care for yourself after your procedure. Your health care provider may also give you more specific instructions. If you have problems or questions, contact your health care provider.

## What can I expect after the procedure?

After the procedure, it is common to have:

- Swelling at the opening that was created during the procedure (*stoma*).
- Slight bleeding around the stoma.
- Redness around the stoma.

## Follow these instructions at home:

### Activity

- Rest as needed while the stoma area heals.
- Return to your normal activities as told by your health care provider. Ask your health care provider what activities are safe for you.
- Avoid strenuous activity and abdominal exercises for 3 weeks or for as long as told by your health care provider.
- **Do not** lift anything that is heavier than 10 lb (4.5 kg), or the limit that you are told, until your health care provider says that it is safe.

### Incision care

- Follow instructions from your health care provider about how to take care of your incision. Make sure you:
  - Wash your hands with soap and water before you change your bandage (*dressing*). If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
  - Change your dressing as told by your health care provider.
  - Leave stitches (*sutures*), skin glue, or adhesive strips in place. These skin closures may need to stay in place for 2 weeks or longer. If adhesive strip edges start to loosen and curl up, you may trim the loose edges. **Do not** remove adhesive strips completely unless your health care provider tells you to do that.

### Stoma care

- Keep the stoma area clean.
- Clean and dry the skin around the stoma each time you change the colostomy bag. To clean the stoma area:
  - Use warm water and only use cleansers that are recommended by your health care provider.
  - Rinse the stoma area with plain water.
  - Dry the area well.
- Use stoma powder or skin barrier film on your skin only as told by your health care provider. **Do not** use any

other powders, gels, wipes, or creams on the skin around the stoma.

- Check the stoma area every day for signs of infection. Check for:
  - More redness, swelling, or pain.
  - More fluid or blood.
  - Pus or warmth.
- Measure the stoma opening regularly and record the size. Watch for changes. Share this information with your health care provider.

## **Bathing**

- **Do not** take baths, swim, or use a hot tub until your health care provider approves. Ask your health care provider if you may take showers. You may be able to shower with or without the colostomy bag in place. If you bathe with the bag on, dry the bag afterward.
- Avoid using harsh or oily soaps when you bathe.

## **Colostomy bag care**

- Follow instructions from your health care provider about how to empty or change the colostomy bag.
- Keep colostomy supplies with you at all times.
- Store all supplies in a cool, dry place.
- Empty the colostomy bag:
  - Whenever it is one-third to one-half full.
  - At bedtime.
- Replace the bag every 3–4 days for the first 6 weeks, then every 4–7 days.

## **Driving**

- Follow driving restrictions as told by your health care provider.
- **Do not** drive or use heavy machinery while taking prescription pain medicine.

## **General instructions**

- Follow instructions from your health care provider about eating or drinking restrictions.
- Take over-the-counter and prescription medicines only as told by your health care provider.
- Avoid wearing clothes that are tight directly over your stoma area.
- **Do not** use any products that contain nicotine or tobacco, such as cigarettes and e-cigarettes. If you need help quitting, ask your health care provider.
- If you are a woman, ask your health care provider about becoming pregnant and about using birth control. Medicines may not be absorbed normally after the procedure.
- Keep all follow-up visits as told by your health care provider. This is important.

## **Contact a health care provider if you have:**

- Trouble caring for your stoma or changing the colostomy bag.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- A fever.
- More redness, swelling, or pain at the site of your stoma or around your anus.
- More fluid or blood coming from your stoma or your anus.
- Warmth around your stoma area.
- Pus coming from your stoma.

- A change in the size or appearance of the stoma.
- Abdominal pain, bloating, pressure, or cramping.
- Stool more often or less often than your health care provider tells you to expect.
- Very little urine production. This may be a sign of dehydration.

### **Get help right away if you have:**

- Abdominal pain that does not go away or becomes severe.
- Frequent vomiting.
- No stool draining through the stoma.
- Chest pain or an irregular heartbeat.

### **Summary**

- Follow instructions from your health care provider about how to take care of your incision and stoma.
- Contact a health care provider if you have trouble caring for your stoma or changing the colostomy bag.
- Get help right away if you have abdominal pain that does not go away or becomes severe or if you have no stool draining through the stoma.
- Keep all follow-up visits as told by your health care provider. This is important.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your healthcare provider.