



UROSTOMY

What should I expect before I leave hospital?

Once your urostomy has been fashioned, you have recovered sufficiently and you feel confident managing your stoma, you will be discharged from hospital.

Before you leave hospital, please ensure that you have:

- All the information booklets you require;
- Your prescription exemption certificate (if applicable);
- Stoma bags & equipment;
- Prescription details & instructions;
- A contact number for your Stoma Nurse & Clinic;
- A discharge booklet; and

What happens after I leave hospital?

We normally follow you up in the Stoma Clinic approximately two weeks after your discharge from hospital. After that, we continue to review you for as long as we all feel it necessary. If you have problems between clinic appointments, you can always contact the Stoma Clinic to arrange an earlier review.

Please note: if you live outside the area where your surgery took place, you will normally be referred to your local Stoma Clinic for ongoing support and follow up.

How do I get my appliances & equipment?

Your stoma products are all available on prescription.

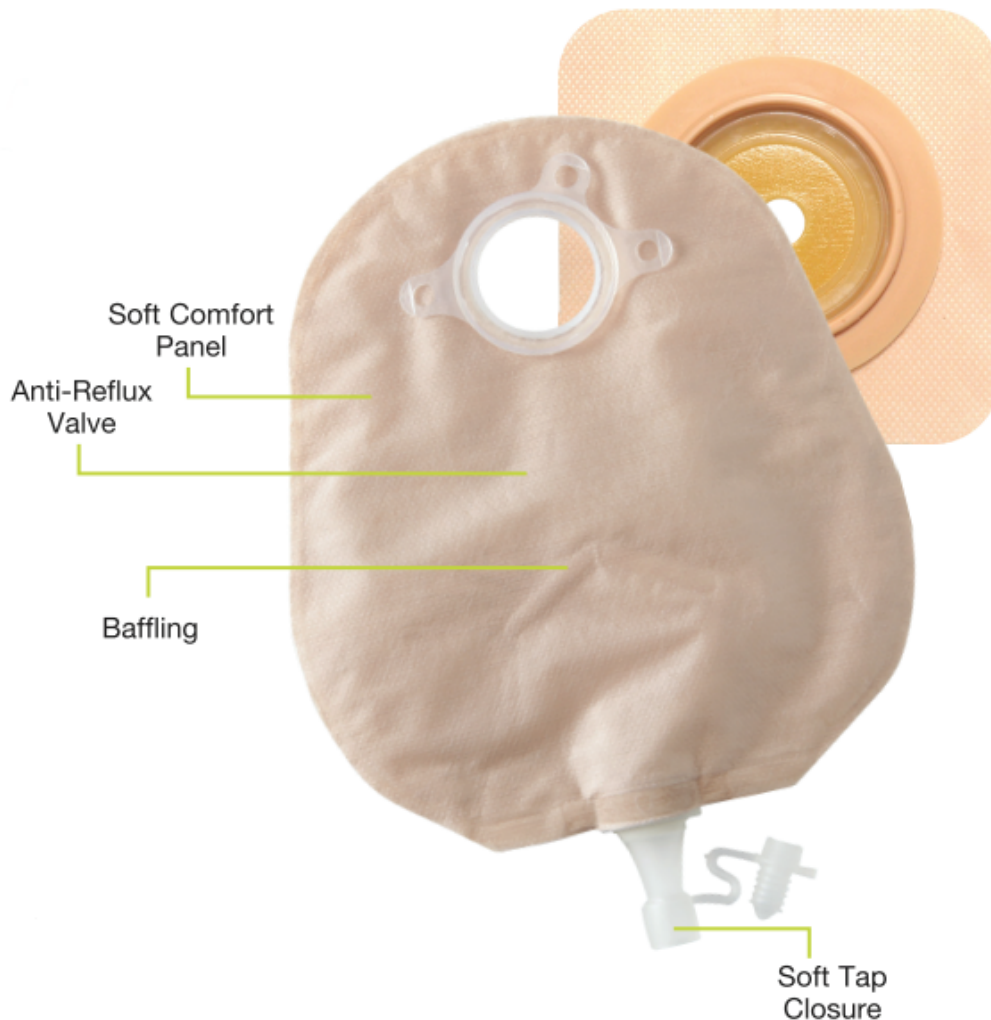
Before you are discharged, we will give you a card with the prescription code(s) for your stoma equipment. This is your personal record, and you should show it to your GP to get a prescription. The card may need to be altered by us at some stage, so do not let your GP keep it.

Once you have the prescription, you can get your supplies in two different ways:

- From a chemist - take your prescription to a chemist, as you would for any other medicines or tablets. Chemists do not normally stock stoma equipment so they will need to order it specially for you. This may take up to a week so order in advance when you are running low on supplies. If your chemist has any difficulty ordering your equipment, please contact your Stoma Nurse for advice; or
- By direct delivery - there are several delivery companies listed at the end of this leaflet. You can register with them on the phone or over the internet. They will send your stoma equipment to you. They will, however, require a prescription which you should get from your GP and send on to them. They will also send you items such as dry wipes and scented disposal bags. If you need to cut your bags to fit your stoma, they will deliver your equipment ready cut provided you send them a template. Please allow six weeks before requesting this service, because your stoma needs to settle in size and shape. If you are interested in this service and require additional



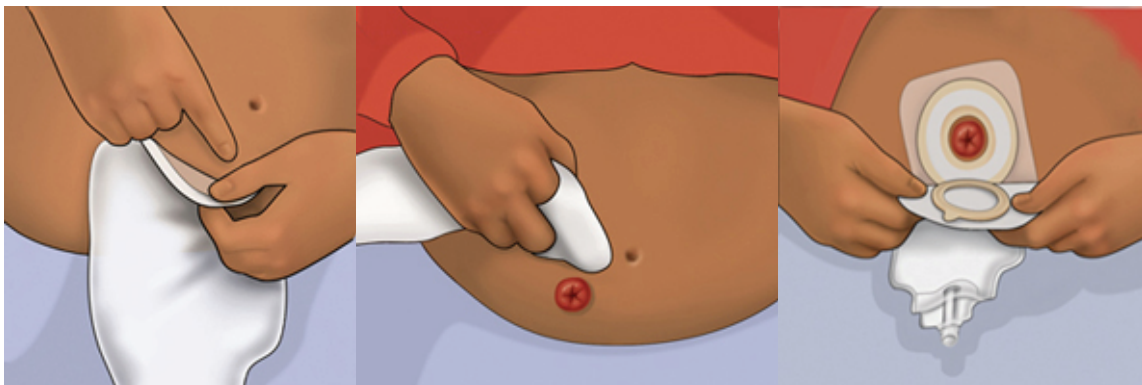
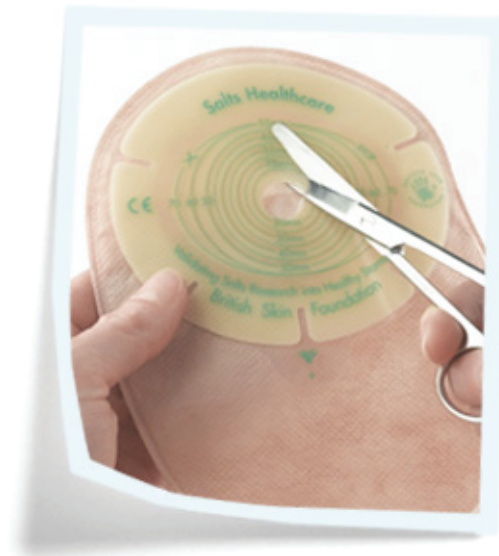
support or advice, contact your Stoma Nurse. Materials used for cleaning around your stoma (i.e. cleaning wipes) are not available on prescription. However, kitchen roll is an excellent substitute and can be bought in most local shops/supermarkets.



How do I change my stoma bag?

Collect all the necessary equipment (new bag, scissors, disposal bag, dry wipe/kitchen roll & warm water) and then:

- Cut the new bag to the required size or shape (if necessary);
- empty the used bag down the toilet and reseal it;
- Remove the soiled bag by peeling it off from the top;
- Place the soiled bag in disposal bag;
- Clean the skin and stoma using warm water and wipes. If you wish to use soap, a mild unperfumed soap is recommended and the skin should be rinsed thoroughly;
- Dry the skin thoroughly by patting dry wipes or kitchen roll; check dryness with your hand;
- Peel off the backing paper from the new bag and position it around your stoma, then press the bag firmly in place; and
- wrap the used wipes and the soiled bag in newspaper and put them in a plastic bag; knot or seal the top and place it with your household rubbish.



How do I use the night drainage system?

It is up to you whether you use the night drainage system (example pictured, right). If you do, there are some points you should remember:

- Always ensure that the bag is lower than the level of the bed;
- When connecting at night, do not empty the bag first; run some urine into the system to eliminate air pockets and help drainage;
- Once disconnected, wash the bag with hot, soapy water (washing-up liquid or liquid soap); do not wash the bag with Milton, bleach or any other disinfectant; and
- Change the night drainage bag and adaptor every week.

What questions do other patients ask?

Inevitably, patients and their families may have many questions about having a urostomy. Below are some of the commoner questions asked:



Will my friends and family be able to see that I am wearing a bag?

No.

Do I need to tell my friends and family?

It is entirely up to you. No-one need know unless you wish them to.

Will I get depressed?

All patients, men and women, can feel "down in the dumps" after any form of surgery. This is very common and your Stoma Nurse will help you through any difficulties you may have.

Do I need to eat a special diet?

Generally, no, although a well-balanced diet is recommended. You may have a poor appetite at first, so we recommend small, frequent meals until your appetite returns. You should drink plenty of fluids (at least 2 litres per day).

Can I drink alcohol?

Yes.

Will I smell unpleasant?

No. All the bags are odour-proof. If you do smell urine (other than when you are emptying or changing your bag), it usually means there is something wrong with the stoma bag: either it has not been cleaned sufficiently or there is a leak somewhere. You should change the bag if this occurs.

Will I have to wear the bag all the time?

Yes, but you can remove it for bathing or showering.

Will I need to carry a lot of equipment with me?

No. But you should carry a spare bag, a disposal bag and dry/wet wipes in case you need to change your bag.

Where should I store my bags?

In a cool, dry place, out of direct sunlight.

Will I be able to work?

Yes, once you have recovered sufficiently and your GP is happy with your progress.



Will I need to change my job?

Not normally.

Will my partner reject me?

If you had a good, stable relationship before the surgery, there should not be any problems. Your Stoma Nurse can talk to you & your partner about this, either together or separately.

Will I be able to have sex?

Yes. Your Stoma Nurse can discuss this with you.

Can I travel and go on holiday?

Yes

Can I travel by air?

Yes. Your Stoma Nurse can give you some travel tips & advice.

Will I be able to bathe and swim?

Yes. Some companies provide special clothes for ostomates (e.g. high-waisted trousers). Your Stoma Nurse can provide you with more information.

Can I play sport?

Yes, usually 2-3 months after your surgery For high-impact sports such as squash or rugby, you should consider wearing a stoma shield.

When can I drive?

Not for at least 6 weeks after your surgery. You should not drive until you can perform an emergency stop comfortably.

Can I wear a seatbelt?

Yes. You can buy a device from most car accessory shops which relaxes the seatbelt without affecting its safety mechanism.

Will I get sore skin?

Not normally, especially if you look after your stoma carefully. If the skin does get sore, contact your Stoma Nurse.



Will my bag leak?

Not normally, but you may occasionally get faulty bags which leak. It can also occur if the shape and size of your stoma changes, or if you let the bag get too full. If you keep getting leakages, please contact your Stoma Nurse; if you ignore them, you may lose confidence and your skin could get very sore. Stoma Nurse.

Will I be able to have children?

If your bladder has been removed, you will not be able to have children (in men, the prostate and sperm-carrying channels are removed with the bladder; in women, the womb & ovaries are usually removed). If your urostomy was constructed without your bladder being removed, you may still be able to father children or get pregnant. Your Stoma Nurse can advise you about this.

How can I find out about new products and developments?

Most Stoma Clinics hold "open days" where companies bring along the latest products for you to see; your Stoma Nurse will invite you to attend these. If you join the Urostomy Association, you will receive a regular newsletter with information about the latest products.

Are there any other important points?

- **Bleeding from the stoma:** your stoma has a very good blood supply, and it may bleed slightly when you clean it. This is nothing to worry about. It may also bleed if your appliance is either too tight or causes rubbing/irritation. If you experience repeated bleeding, you should contact your Stoma Nurse.
- **Mucus plugs:** the bowel from which your urostomy is constructed inevitably continues to produce mucus. You may see this as a white, sticky deposit in the drainage tube or when you empty your bag. If a lot of mucus is produced, it can block the drainage valve or the night drainage tubing. "Milking" the tubing gently normally dislodges any plugs of mucus. Taking Vitamin C supplements has been shown to reduce the amount of mucus production by your stoma.
- **Certain foods:** these may give your urine an unusual smell (e.g. asparagus, fish, onions, garlic & some spices);
- **Drink cranberry juice:** 200 ml each day can keep your urine free from infection. However, if you take regular Warfarin, please check with your GP before drinking cranberry juice;
- **Beetroot,** as well as red fruit and some fruit drinks can turn your urine red; and
- **Some drugs** can change the smell and colour of your urine.