

Living with an Ostomy

During your stay in hospital, your surgeon created an ostomy to help your body function properly. If you have a colostomy or an ileostomy, you will need to wear an ostomy pouching system to collect stool from your stoma.

Pouching Systems

There are various types of ostomy appliance available to meet your needs: single- or two-piece systems, drainable or closed pouches in different sizes, shapes and materials.

During your hospital stay, you will be provided with Hollister products. Your care team will help you choose the pouching system that best meets your needs.

Good to know

- The pouches are designed to contain odours, even when full.
- It is discreet and cannot be seen under clothing.
- Once you have recovered from your surgery, you will be able to resume your normal activities.
- It is normal to try several different types of pouching system before finding the one that suits you best.



Adapting to life with an ostomy takes time. However, with the right support and equipment, most people are able to resume their daily activities and return to their usual way of life.

Clean the skin around the ostomy (peristomal skin)

- Clean with lukewarm water and a soft cloth.
- Do not use soap, alcohol or wipes, as these products can irritate the skin and affect the pouch adhesion.

Shower and Bath

After your post-operative recovery, and as advised by your surgeon, you may shower or take a bath with or without your pouching system.

- Hot water can stimulate bowel activity.
- Hot water may also shorten the wear time of the skin barrier.
- Bath or shower water will not loosen the pouching system.
- The pouching system will not fall off if it gets wet.
- You do not need to cover the pouching system with plastic.

After bathing, rinse away all soap residue and dry the skin well using a towel or a hair dryer on a cool or low setting.

Adapting to everyday life

- Discuss any questions or concerns you may have about returning to your daily life after ostomy surgery with your healthcare team.
 - Your healthcare providers can help you adapt and manage your stoma as you go about your normal activities.

Resources for patients living with an ostomy

Before you leave the hospital, you will learn how to

- Care for your ostomy
- Open and close the clip or spout on the pouch
- Empty the pouch and know when to do so

Skills to practise after discharge (with the support of home care)

- Measure your ostomy
- Remove and apply ostomy equipment
- Get support to choose the most appropriate ostomy equipment for you

Your care team and home care nurse will support you in the learning process, at your own pace, to help you gain confidence in managing your ostomy.

Supplies upon discharge

- Before you leave the hospital, your nurse will give you a bag of supplies containing Hollister products.
- You will receive at least three pouch and three skin barriers, the same products used during your hospital stay, as well as appropriate accessories to ensure the equipment is properly sealed.
- These supplies are intended to meet your immediate needs until home care services can provide follow-up, support and supplies.
- A Hollister starter kit will also be provided to you during your admission.

References and Resources

All companies offer educational resources and support to ostomy patients. This support includes advice on ostomy products, daily care and general well-being. You can access these support services even if you do not purchase products from that specific company.

In addition, the Canadian Ostomy Society offers peer support, support groups, webinars and educational resources to help individuals and families adjust to life with an ostomy.

Support and information organisations

- Canadian Ostomy Association
 - Educational resources, support groups, webinars and information on reimbursement for ostomy supplies
 - <https://www.ostomycanada.ca>
- Canadian Cancer Society
 - General information on cancer, treatments, surgery and support for patients and their loved ones.
 - <https://cancer.ca>

Ostomy product manufacturers

- Hollister – Educational resources and support for people living with an ostomy
 - <https://www.hollister.ca>
- Coloplast – Information, patient support and guidance
 - <https://www.coloplast.ca>
- ConvaTec – Support programmes and educational resources for ostomates
 - <https://www.convatec.com>

Clothing

- Pouching systems are designed to be flat and discreet. This usually means you can wear the same clothes as you did before the surgery.
- + You can also choose clothing specially designed for people with ostomies, such as underwear and swimwear.

Physical Activity

- Avoid lifting heavy loads for the first three months following surgery to ensure optimal healing of the abdominal muscles and surgical incision.
- A physiotherapist can help you strengthen your abdominal muscles gradually and safely to help you resume your usual activities.

Work

- You can usually return to work once the recovery period is over.
- However, some people may not be able to lift heavy loads.

Talk to your healthcare team if you have any questions or concerns about returning to work after your surgery.

Travel

- It is recommended that you take twice as much equipment as usual and keep your ostomy supplies in your hand luggage.

Sexual Activity and Intimacy

- It is possible to maintain intimate relationships after ostomy surgery.
- Many people find it helpful to:
 - Take a shower and empty the ostomy pouch (or change) before intimacy.
 - Wear an ostomy belt to limit movement.
 - Choose comfortable positions.
 - Communicate openly with their partner.
- If you or your partner have any questions or concerns about intimacy or sexuality, discuss them with your healthcare team or a professional.



Mental Health

- People living with an ostomy must learn to cope with physical and emotional changes.
- It can be difficult to talk about it, and you may feel as though you are on your own.
- **You are not alone.** There are many people living with an ostomy in Canada, and for many, you cannot see it.
- Check out shared resources if you need to talk about your surgery or your new reality.



Please contact the healthcare team if you have any questions or concerns about returning to normal life after ostomy surgery : 613-632-1111, ext. 52113

If this is an emergency, promptly dial 9-1-1 or go to the nearest Emergency Room.

Several manufacturers offer ostomy products in Canada, including **Hollister**, **Coloplast** and **ConvaTec**. Choosing the right product depends on individual needs and a clinical assessment.

They all offer educational resources and support (advice on products, daily care and general well-being) accessible via these QR codes.

You do not need to purchase their products to access them.

HOLLISTER CANADA

Digital Resources
www.hollister.ca



COLOPLAST CARE

Supporting Resources
www.coloplastcare.com



CONVATEC

me+ Support Programme
www.convatec.com



OSTOMY CANADA SOCIETY

Find answers to your questions
www.ostomycanada.ca



REIMBURSEMENT GUIDE

PATIENT
of Ontario and Québec
www.ostomycanada.ca/



COLOPLAST
Reimbursement for ostomy care
www.coloplast.ca

