

Wellness Education

Frequently asked questions for parents and caregivers

Caring for a child after any surgery can be a learning process. But when children are recovering from surgery and getting used to a pouching system, it can pose more challenges for parents and caregivers.

It often takes adults with an ostomy many months to feel fully comfortable with the change to the body. Depending on age, personality and ability to adapt, the same may be true for your child—and for you as well. In some cases both you and the child may need to adapt to the changes, and practice patience, until living with an ostomy becomes a perfectly natural part of your daily routine.



What should I know about the skin near the stoma?

It's hard to overstate the importance of maintaining the health of skin around the stoma. The skin under the ostomy barrier should look a lot like the skin on the rest of the abdomen. Skin that's healthy is much less likely to become irritated. The pouching system also attaches better to healthy skin.

How do I keep my child's skin healthy?

There are things you can do to prevent stool or urine from coming into contact with skin around the stoma. And even if the skin does become irritated, proper care should return your child's skin to good health.

- When cleaning the skin near the stoma, use water. If there is any adhesive residue on the skin after cleansing, leave it alone.
- Avoid using bath oils, or soaps with moisturizers and perfumes, since they can make it harder for the barrier to adhere to skin. Make sure not to apply lotion to the skin near the stoma, as this can also make the barrier not stick.
- Before applying the barrier, make sure the skin is clean and completely dry.
- Adjust the hole in the barrier so that it fits exactly to the diameter of the stoma. Do not leave any skin exposed.
- Periodically check the size of the stoma. If there are any changes in stoma size, be sure to adjust the hole size of the barrier.
- Ensure tight contact between the skin and the barrier by using your hand to put light pressure over the barrier for two or three minutes.
- Change the barrier as soon as you can if you notice any discomfort, itching or leaking.
- Your child can bathe with or without the pouching system on. Just be sure to use a mild skin cleanser and rinse the skin around the stoma thoroughly with water.

Wellness Education: FAQ for parents and caregivers

- Be aware that as your child gains weight and grows, the type of pouching system may need to be changed. Be sure to talk about this topic with your Wound, Ostomy, Contenance (WOC) Nurse every 6-12 months.

If you notice skin irritation, or if the pouch or barrier doesn't stay attached, it is important to know the cause. Your WOC Nurse or your pediatric nurse can help you find the underlying problem. They can also help you decide if you need to make changes to the pouching routine, or if a different pouching system would be better.

What do I do if the pouch fills with gas?

It's normal for gas to pass into the pouch, and it eventually passes out of the pouch with the aid of a gas filter near the top of the pouch. Coloplast's SenSura[®] Mio pouches have a special "full-circle filter" that neutralizes odor and enables gas to exit the pouch. The circle-shaped "pre-filter" helps trap liquid stool and reduce clogging of the filter. If you notice that the pouch is inflating due to a clogged filter, the pouch can be changed.



Is odor from the pouch noticeable?

Odor while emptying the pouch is of course normal. When closed the pouch is odor-proof, so make sure that the outlet is clean and closed. If odor persists, inspect the seal around the stoma to see if it has leaked.

Another option is to try an ostomy pouch deodorizer. Adding a few drops of deodorizer when changing the pouch, or after emptying it, will neutralize odors.

What do I do if my child pulls the pouch off?

Try to determine why your child is pulling at the pouch, since it may be a sign of discomfort. Make sure that the skin around the stoma is healthy (not irritated), and that the pouch fits appropriately. Depending on your child's age, one-piece outfits, jumpers or overalls may prevent your child from having access to the pouch.

Is it okay for my child to play sports?

In most cases it's fine for children with ostomies to play sports. Always check with your child's physician, however. If the sport involves physical contact, the stoma should be protected from injury.

What travel tips are there for our family vacations?

Plan ahead to have the needed supplies before you go. It's a good idea to bring extra supplies in case you have unexpected delays. If you're flying, always take your child's ostomy supplies, medications and an extra change of clothes in a carry-on bag in case you become separated from your checked luggage.

If you'll be gone for some time, you might want to buy more supplies at your destination. Ask your ostomy product supplier for a similar supplier at that location. You should also take the phone numbers of your regular ostomy supplier and your WOC Nurse. They can help if you have questions on your trip.

Wellness Education: FAQ for parents and caregivers

What do I do if people ask questions about my child's ostomy?

Family and friends can offer wonderful support for you before and after your child's surgery. However you have the right to selectively choose whom you want to tell, and when. Allow your child to do the same as she/he gets older.

If family and friends know about the surgery, they may be concerned and want to know how your child is progressing during recovery. If you feel uncomfortable talking about it soon after the surgery, give yourself time. However, let those close to you know when you're wanting to open up.

What if my other children have questions?

Answer them simply and honestly. Sometimes too much detail can be confusing, especially for younger children. Over time, continue encouraging them to ask questions to increase their comfort level.

Your children will mirror your actions toward your child with an ostomy. If you are accepting of the ostomy, it's more than likely your other children will accept this physical change too.

Which educational tools are available?

Ask your WOC Nurse about "My Child has an Ostomy," an educational guide designed by Coloplast for adult readers. It includes lots of information on other community organizations that can help you get connected with families similarly affected by bladder or bowel issues.

There are also educational tools to introduce siblings or friends to ostomy surgery. If your child is young, s/he may also appreciate a furry friend with a stoma, too - so Coloplast created the SenSura[®] Mio Bunny stuffed animal, and a story book called "Jake Gets a Stoma" written by a mom for her son as he underwent ostomy surgery. (Pediatric nurses, NPs or WOC Nurses can get these for you via their Coloplast rep).

Additional tools are available online on the Coloplast website, including:

- When I Met Tipster - a printable coloring book for kids about living with a stoma
- A resource sheet for parents, teens, and school nurses
- Teen Life with an Ostomy
- Lifestyle support articles at your fingertips, available at ostomy.coloplastcare.us

Some final comments

Be patient with your child as s/he gets used to this physical change. Generally children adapt quickly to changes, including physical changes like a stoma. Over time, living with the ostomy will become second nature to you, your child and other family members.

Coloplast does not practice medicine. The recommendations and information in this material are not medical advice. Contact your healthcare professional for personal medical advice or diagnosis. **IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, CALL 911.**





Coloplast® Care assists patients (or, in this case, their caregivers and parents!) with their intimate healthcare needs. They are available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (CT) at **1-877-858-2656**

About the Team

The Coloplast Care Team can make life easier for both kids with a stoma and their caregivers. The team offers one-on-one assistance, as well as:

Answers questions

Our team can answer questions regarding product lines and educational materials, as well as insurance and reimbursement issues. Coloplast Care will provide the information kids and caregivers need.

Finds the right product solution

After a child returns home from ostomy surgery, Coloplast Care can help locate a medical supplies dealer in their local area to ensure that they have access to the correct products.

Product samples

Coloplast Care Advisors are trained support staff, offering free samples from the complete Coloplast ostomy and continence product lines.

Call the toll free hotline at 1-877-858-2656 or email care-us@coloplast.com to have trial products shipped today.

