

Ostomy pouching systems



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How do you decide which type of ostomy pouch is right for you? It usually depends on three factors: your lifestyle, the type of stoma you have, and the shape of your abdomen.

[Know your options](#)

The pouching system you used in the hospital may not be your long term solution. Your abdomen and stoma will change in shape as swelling decreases following surgery. As you heal you will be able to be more active, and your pouching needs may change.

It's a good idea to know what your options are. It's also helpful to talk to your Wound, Ostomy, Continence (WOC) Nurse, who can assess the look and feel of your abdomen. She or he can offer one-on-one advice based on your situation. But ultimately it's your choice, based on what works best for you.

[Pouching systems](#)

When choosing a pouching system, one of your first choices will be whether you want a one-piece or a two-piece pouch system.

In [one-piece systems](#), the skin barrier and the pouch are a single unit. Since it is all one unit, there are fewer steps in putting it on. This makes one-piece systems easier for those with limited eyesight. They may also be easier to use for those with arthritis, since minimal

hand strength and dexterity are needed. One-piece systems are very flexible, and they will lay flatter against the body, making it less noticeable under clothing.

In **two-piece systems**, the skin barrier and the pouch are separate pieces. There are two options for coupling, or connecting the two pieces together.

- **Mechanical coupling** – The pouch and barrier are connected similar to the way a lid can be used snugly onto a plastic container. Some hand strength and dexterity are needed to attach the pouch to the skin barrier. The skin barrier is easy to apply because you can see the stoma as you center it in the barrier. However, the mechanical coupling barrier is somewhat rigid compared to one-piece or adhesive coupling options. With a two-piece system you can easily change your pouch size for activities such as swimming or intimate times



- **Adhesive coupling** – The pouch and barrier are connected using an adhesive, similar to tape. Some dexterity – but little hand strength – is needed to attach the pouch to the skin barrier. The skin barrier is easy to apply because you can see the stoma as you center the barrier. The adhesive design allows this two-piece pouching system to be very flexible. With a two-piece pouching system you can easily change your pouch size for activities such as swimming or intimate times. The adhesive coupling system lays flat against the body, which makes it less noticeable under your clothes



Barrier options

The barrier is the most important part of the pouching system because it protects your skin from stoma drainage and keeps your pouch in place. Be aware that your skin might take a few days or up to a few weeks to get used to the adhesive on your barrier.

There are two types of barriers:

- **Standard wear barriers** are designed for more solid stool. They absorb moisture quickly, so they are able to handle perspiration and still stay bonded to the skin. If they are exposed to moisture for



long periods of time, however, these barriers may begin to erode or break down. Keep this in mind if you have a bout of diarrhea. In that case you may need to change the barrier more often

- **Extended wear barriers** are designed to manage loose stools or liquid drainage from the stoma. They are commonly used with an ileostomy or urostomy. They resist absorbing moisture and maintain their shape longer than the standard wear barrier. If you have an ileostomy, the extended wear barrier isn't likely to erode, so you may be able to wear it longer than a standard wear barrier

Helpful tips:

- **Cut the barrier opening to the size of your stoma without leaving skin exposed**
- **Apply the barrier directly to clean, dry skin**
- **Do not use moisturizers around the stoma**
- **Ensure no skin is showing between the barrier and stoma to prevent skin irritation and leakage**
- **Apply gentle pressure to barrier for at least 2-3 minutes for the best adhesion**

There are also different barrier shapes:

Barriers come in different shapes including Flat, Convex or Convex Flip. Most people will use a flat barrier right after surgery. As the swelling from surgery decreases you may find you need a convex or Convex Flip barrier.

Convex barriers are designed to gently push against the skin around your stoma. This helps prevent leakage by creating a secure seal. Your WOC Nurse may suggest that you wear a convex barrier if any of the following apply to you:

- Your stoma is flush with the skin or below skin level
- The skin around your stoma is not flat
- Your abdomen is very soft around your stoma
- If you often have leakage – even if your stoma protrudes (sticks out) from your skin

Make sure you discuss convex barriers with your WOC Nurse before trying them on your own.

Convex Flip pouching systems are designed specially for curves, bulges and hernias. The curved, star-shaped barrier conforms to curves to provide a secure fit and increase the contact area between the skin and the adhesive barrier to minimize creasing and folding.

Convex Flip pouching systems are best suited for people who have a stoma that protrudes - so check with your WOC Nurse or Care Advisor to confirm whether this product might make sense for your situation.

High Output pouches can be a good option if your output is very liquid, or if you don't have dexterity to roll up the integrated closure. Spout options will allow the liquid to empty quickly and can also attach to a night drain system. This may allow you to sleep through the night and not have to get up to empty.

Some spouts can accommodate a large external connection, while others will have an internal connection, such as this leg bag option. If your output is liquid stool, an external connection may be best.

Contact your Coloplast® Care Advisor for more information on high output pouches.



Applying your pouching system – the basics

- Gently wash the skin around your stoma with warm water and pat dry. If you must use soap, use unscented soap and do not use soaps with scents or oils, which may irritate the skin and interfere with adhesion
- Cut the barrier to the size of your stoma. Measure your stoma and use an opening that doesn't expose any skin between the barrier and the stoma. If your stoma is round, consider wearing a pre-cut barrier
- Apply the barrier directly to clean, dry skin. This should give you the best adhesion
- Remember that the adhesive on the barrier is pressure sensitive. The barrier takes both time and pressure to adhere to your skin. Apply gentle pressure to the barrier once it is on your skin to ensure complete contact. You will know that the barrier is bonded well when the edges no longer lift away from your skin. Applying gentle pressure may help ensure longer wear time

You have options

Even after you make your first selection, you are not locked into that choice. People often try out different pouching systems and supplies over a period of days, weeks or months. Trying out different options can help you know what works best for your lifestyle and your body type. There is no right or wrong choice, just the choice that works best for you.

Call your healthcare provider if you have any medical concerns about managing your ostomy. You may also contact your Coloplast Care Advisor for product usage and availability questions at [1-877-858-2656](tel:1-877-858-2656).

