

Wellness Education

Pregnancy with an Ostomy

People of all ages can have ostomy surgery — including women of childbearing age. If you fall into this category, you may wonder if pregnancy is even possible for someone with a stoma. It is. In fact, about 1 in 20,000 women with an ostomy give birth each year*.

If you are thinking about becoming pregnant, the first step is to consult with your doctor about the medical condition that led to your ostomy. The two of you can discuss any topics you need to think about before conceiving.

What health questions should I be thinking about?

Here are some questions you may want to discuss with your doctor:

- Would my health affect a pregnancy in any way?
- Could a pregnancy affect my overall health?
- Would my current medications have any impact on a pregnancy?
- Would you advise any changes in my diet or nutrition during pregnancy?
- Are there risk factors I should consider when making my decision?

You are probably familiar with the common symptoms associated with pregnancy: nausea, morning sickness, fatigue and food cravings. However, your doctor can tell you whether you might have other symptoms, based on your health condition.

How long after surgery should I wait before conceiving?

It is generally recommended that you wait at least one year after your surgery before trying to conceive. This allows for abdominal scars to heal fully.

Adequate healing is essential since the abdominal wall is stretched during pregnancy.

If you do conceive, continue to work with your health care team during your entire pregnancy.

Would pregnancy affect my stoma?

As your abdomen increases in size, your stoma size may also increase. With each pouch change, measure your stoma to ensure that you're cutting the barrier to the size appropriate for your stoma. You should also look for any changes in the stoma as well as the skin surrounding it.

In some cases, you might notice other changes in the stoma as your pregnancy progresses. You might develop a parastomal hernia for example – a parastomal hernia is a weakness in the abdominal wall that can create a bulge, from the bowel being pushed forward. Or you might develop a stoma prolapse – a stoma prolapse occurs when a small part of the bowel protrudes through the stoma opening. Be sure to consult with your doctor if you notice these or any other changes in your abdomen or stoma.

As your pregnancy progresses, you may have some difficulty seeing your stoma if it is low on your abdomen. When changing your pouch, a mirror can be helpful for examining your stoma and surrounding skin.

Consult with your Wound, Ostomy, Continence (WOC) Nurse to help you with any pouching modifications you may need due to stoma size changes or skin issues.

What type of delivery could I have?

Many women with ostomies have successful pregnancies with vaginal deliveries. In fact, a vaginal delivery is preferred to a Caesarean section. Because of your ostomy surgery, you may already have adhesions (bands of tissue that form between body organs) or scar tissue in your abdomen. Having a Caesarean section could possibly cause more adhesions or scar tissue. Talk to your healthcare team about your situation and what you can expect during delivery.

Some final comments

Life can return to normal after having ostomy surgery. A successful pregnancy and birth surely exemplifies that. If you choose to conceive, be in contact with your healthcare team about any questions you have.

Coloplast does not practice medicine. Contact your healthcare professional for personal medical advice or diagnosis. IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, CALL 911.



Tips for a Healthy Pregnancy

General Tips:

- Talk to your doctor about the weight goal for your pregnancy.
- Eat three healthy meals a day—and watch your fat and sugar content.

- Discuss with your doctor the use of supplemental vitamins.
- Plan, with your doctor, a moderate exercise program.
- Call your doctor with any symptoms or issues that concern you.

Specific Ostomy Tips:

- Drink plenty of water to keep hydrated, and to help avoid kidney stones.
- Check with your surgeon or WOC Nurse about whether you need to make changes in your diet, or whether you need to change your medications.
- As you observe changes in your stoma's size and shape, make sure to use a cut-to-fit barrier and cut the barrier to the size of your stoma.
- Call your WOC Nurse with any questions or concerns about changes in caring for your ostomy during your pregnancy.



Coloplast Care is a support program designed to encourage and inspire people to lead a fulfilled life with an ostomy. We provide straightforward advice, tips for your routine and inspiration for daily life. Whether you are facing an operation or have been living with an ostomy for years, having ostomy-related questions, especially as your situation changes, is perfectly normal - and we're here to help.

Coloplast Care Highlights

Coloplast Care Advisor - Your dedicated Advisor is ready to answer questions and provide individualized support and product access coordination.

Educational Tools - A dedicated website and emails gives you access to tips, instructional guides and videos, and articles about topics like travel, intimate relationships, and much more.

Self-Assessments - Keep track of your ostomy health with regular self-assessments online with Ostomy Check. This helps you identify issues and gives you positive feedback when you're on the right track.

Coloplast Care Kits - Once enrolled you'll receive a customized care kit complete with educational references, ostomy product samples and a travel bag.

Get started today!

ostomy.coloplastcare.us
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