

What to Wear



In this article:

- Undergarment suggestions
- Men's clothing
- Women's clothing
- Swimwear

Clothing options remain endless after you've had ostomy surgery. When your abdomen has healed, you'll no doubt be able to wear many of the clothes you currently have. However there may be some styles you want to avoid and other styles you find more appealing. It's a good idea to know what your options are, because ultimately it's your choice, based on what works best for you.

Clothing tips

Your ostomy pouch is meant to lie flat against your body, and it will not be obvious to others. Many of today's pouches are designed to be unnoticeable even when you wear the most stylish, form-fitting clothes. It's important to empty your pouch regularly, however, since it may bulge outward when stool or urine collects in the bottom of the pouch. Most Coloplast pouches have a unique tuck-away pocket that holds the end of the pouch with a Velcro closure. By simply folding the rolled-up closure into the tuck-away pocket, you shorten the pouch length. This will make it easier to fit your pouch comfortably under your clothing.

Undergarment suggestions

In general, underwear should be snug, to keep the pouch in place. But it shouldn't be so snug that stool or urine cannot pass to the bottom of the pouch.

Men can wear either boxers or briefs, depending on their preference. However jockey-type briefs usually work best to support the pouch. Boxers offer less support for the pouch. If you prefer boxers, one way you can adapt this style is by sewing a "pocket" into the waistline to carry and support the pouch.

Many women prefer wearing a snug – not tight-fitting – girdle. Cotton knit, spandex or similar types of stretch underpants are also useful. Panty hose, with its snug waistband, is another good option.

Men's clothing

Since many men wear their pants below their natural waistline, their pouching system may be above the beltline. You might see if you like wearing trousers one size larger, since this may allow you to put the belt above the pouching system. Keep in mind too that trousers with a pleated front hide the pouch better than trousers with a flat front.

If your stoma is near your waist, avoid tight trousers or belts. Depending on the location of your stoma you may prefer to wear suspenders, especially if you find belts uncomfortable or restrictive.

Another option is to wear an item of clothing over your trousers. Vests, which come in sporty, casual or business styles, can be used to hide the pouch. Sweaters or jackets are another option in cooler climates, or for more formal occasions.

For active wear, consider biker-style shorts. They can be worn alone or layered under shorts, exercise pants or swim trunks for added security.

Women's clothing

As is often the case for any woman, finding pants that fit your body shape can be a challenge. If your stoma is near your waist, avoid tight pants, skirts or belts. You may feel more comfortable wearing pants or skirts with a higher or looser waistband, or with an elastic waistband. Pants or skirts with pleats near the waistband may hide the pouch better than those with a flat front. Clothing designers have recognized that women come in all shapes and sizes. So you can now find pants with a variety of rises (waistline heights) – allowing you to find a style to fit your body and your needs.

For active wear, consider wearing yoga pants or stretch pants to help support the pouch during exercise. You might also try biker-style shorts since they can be worn alone or layered under shorts, exercise pants or other stretch pants.

Swimwear

Women may want to choose a swimsuit that has a lining to provide a smoother profile. Many suits come with shirring (rows of gathered material) across the abdomen, which can also conceal the pouch.

Men have several options, too. For instance, swim trunks with an elastic waistband and Bermuda-style shorts offer you a variety of waistband positions. If the stoma is above your belt line, consider wearing trunks with a tank shirt.

Additional thoughts

Although there may be some styles of clothing you want to avoid after surgery, you still have many choices open to you. See which styles you like the best, and which you find most comfortable. If you have any questions regarding stoma care or ostomy pouching systems, please contact your Coloplast Consumer Care Advisor at [1-877-858-2656](tel:1-877-858-2656).