

Living with a Urostomy

A urostomy is a stoma constructed for the urinary system. This is a general guide to help you care for your stoma. For further information and education please contact your Stomal Therapy Nurse (STN).

Changing your bag

- Frequency of changing varies but the pouch may be left for 1-2 days if it is not leaking
- Establish a routine for changing your bag. First thing in the morning prior to a drink is when your stoma may be less active
- Wash your hands before starting and again when finished – good hand hygiene helps prevent urinary infections
- **Prepare your equipment:**
 - Bowl of warm water
 - Washcloth or chux-style cloth, water-based baby wipes are okay for use
 - New urostomy bag
 - If not pre-cut, cut a hole in the pouch base plate that matches your stoma size
 - Plastic bag for rubbish (recycled, freezer or nappy bags)
 - Any accessories you use (remover spray/wipe, extender tapes, seals, barrier wipes)
- Gently remove your old bag (using remover products if provided)
- Clean the stoma and surrounding skin with a damp washcloth and then dry the skin
- Inspect the skin around your stoma – if red, bleeding or sore, you may need to contact your STN
- Check your stoma size regularly and adjust the base plate opening to fit the stoma snugly – the stoma may change in size over time
- Apply the new base plate and attach the bag (two piece) or apply the bag (one piece)

An alternative procedure is to prepare your equipment as above, remove the old bag and shower with the bag off, dry the skin and then put on your new bag (making sure any soaps or moisturiser are removed from the skin surrounding the stoma).

Disposal of your bag

- Empty the contents of the bag into the toilet
- Place the bag and used cloths in the rubbish bag and tie securely
- Dispose as normal household rubbish
- It is **not** recommended that the bag is burnt
- Bags are **never** to be flushed down the toilet

Emptying your bag

- Wash your hands before starting and again when finished
- The bag should be emptied into the toilet when one third to one half full
- You may notice some mucous in the urine – this is normal but watch that it doesn't block the outlet when emptying
- Note the colour of your urine – it should be pale yellow colour to indicate good hydration

Overnight drainage

- Connecting a night drainage bag to your stoma bag may reduce sleep disturbance
- Wash your hands before and after connecting your bag to the night drainage bag
- When the night drainage bag is connected, ensure the stoma bag tap is open (if the bag has tap and not a plug) and the bottom of the drainage bag tap is closed
- Ensure the drainage bag does not pull on the bag when you position it over the side of the bed on a hanger or in a clean bucket on the floor
- A catheter strap (available from the Stoma Association) may be used to help prevent twisting of the tube overnight

Cleaning your overnight drainage bag

- Disconnect your drainage bag from the urinary bag and empty the contents into the toilet
- Rinse the tubing and inside of the bag through with warm soapy water – a 'squirty' bottle is ideal or rinse them in the running shower water
- Rinse out the soapy water with cold water
- You may wish to occasionally disinfect your bag further
 - Pour some cleaning solution e.g. 6 teaspoons of household bleach to 2 cups of water or ½ cup of vinegar to 1½ cups of water into the bag, pour the rest of the solution over the bag and soak for 1 hour
 - Remove night drainage from the solution, empty, and hang up (out of the sun) to dry
- Ideally, change the drainage bag weekly

Signs of Infection

- You can still develop a urinary tract infection after your urostomy surgery
- These infections can happen very quickly and can be very serious
- Signs of infection can include any of the following: cloudy urine, increased mucous in your urine, feeling unwell, back pain to the kidney area, fever, loss of appetite, shivers, nausea and vomiting
- If you develop any of these symptoms attend a hospital emergency department immediately

Ordering supplies

- Always keep a small number of supplies on hand in case there is a delay with your order
- An order form listing your supplies will be given to you prior to discharge from hospital or a supply list will come with your first order
- Order only what you need each month from this list. Do not over-order as appliances are expensive and have a use by date; over time they can deteriorate in warmer conditions and you might need to change supplies if your stoma or abdomen change shape
- Orders may be collected in person from your Stoma Association or posted to your address. An added fee for postage and handling is required. Allow 2 – 3 weeks for delivery

Storing supplies

- When you first arrive home from hospital, put all your supplies and any written instructions for changing your bag in one area
- Store your products in a cool dry place away from direct sunlight (preferably not in the bathroom)
- Rotate your stock to keep them fresh, including the stock in your emergency stoma kit

Being admitted to hospital or attending an outpatient review

- Take your supplies with you, as the bag you are using may not be available

Medication

- Always advise your doctor and pharmacist that you have a stoma. Ask what effects any new medication may have on your stoma

Your Stomal Therapy Nurse (STN)

- Know where your nearest STN is located and how to contact them
- A follow up appointment is usually made prior to your discharge from hospital
- See your STN if you are having problems with your stoma, skin around your stoma or stoma supplies
 - It is advised to phone for an appointment prior to attending the hospital to see the STN
- You can attend a hospital emergency department at any time if you have concerns
- It is recommended to have a follow up with your STN every year

References

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