



ConvaTec

Living

with a colostomy



Instruction guide

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Introduction

Your stoma care nurse will already have talked through this pack with you. This pack has been given to you because you are soon to have an operation on your bowel, which could lead to you having a colostomy (stoma).

What is a colostomy?

A colostomy is when an opening is made on your tummy (abdomen). A piece of your large bowel (colon) is brought through this opening and stitched to your tummy to form a new exit for the waste product from your bowel. You wear a bag (also known as pouch or appliance) over a colostomy to collect waste from your bowel. Naturally, you may have a lot of concerns and questions about the colostomy such as the following.

- ▶ What will it look like?
- ▶ How big will it be?
- ▶ Where will it be on my stomach?

We have created this pack for you so that before your operation you can experience:

- ▶ what a colostomy may 'feel like' when wearing a bag;
- ▶ where a colostomy may be placed (sited) on your tummy;
- ▶ what a bag looks and feels like; and
- ▶ how to change a bag.

The accompanying booklet 'Living with a colostomy – before surgery and during your hospital stay' will give you much more information on the procedure itself and your time in hospital.

In the pack you will find an imitation stoma which has been especially created for you. (Your stoma will not look exactly like this as they all vary in size and shape.) You will also find the adhesive rings which help you apply the imitation stoma to your skin, together with the actual bags (for you to experience putting them on, taking them off and emptying them).



Stoma bag (appliance)



Closed bag



Drainable bag

We have included an example of the type of bag that you may be wearing when you wake-up after your operation. It is called a drainable bag as it has something called an 'integral closure' which can be rolled up to close securely.

When your colostomy starts to work, waste product is released into the bag. When this type of bag is half full you will need to empty it. The stoma care nurse and ward nurses will show you how to do this.

What is the waste matter like?

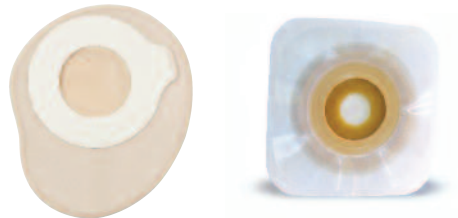
After your operation your colostomy may take a day or two before waste matter comes out of it. You may experience your bag filling up with wind or loose (runny) watery waste. As you recover from your operation, the waste matter coming out of your colostomy will change to a more formed bowel movement.

When it is more formed, you will not be able to empty the waste matter out of your drainable bag. When this happens you will need to change to using a closed bag. The closed bag is designed to be changed every time the bag is half full.

There are different types of stoma bags available. The examples shown here (and included with this pack) are called one-piece bags in which the adhesive skin barrier and collecting pouch are joined together in one bag.

When you change this type of bag, you remove the whole bag and clean your colostomy before putting on a new bag.

It is also possible to get a two-piece stoma bag in which the bag can be disconnected from the skin barrier and adhesive. With this type of appliance the bag can be removed without disturbing the skin adhesive.



Two-piece stoma bag

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Some of the bags included in this pack have already been cut to size and others will need to be cut to fit the imitation stoma provided. You will need to ask your stoma care nurse how to cut it to the correct size.

Following surgery you will be taught how to monitor the size and shape of your stoma so that you can cut the adhesive to the correct size for a good fit. Don't worry about this for now as there is lots of help available to you in terms of sizing and cutting.

For example, Amcare™, the company that can provide you with all the products and other supplies you need, offer a free cutting service. See page 9 for more details.

Or, you can talk to your stoma care nurse about a special mouldable skin barrier, ConvaTec Mouldable Technology™. This barrier does not need cutting to size and protects the skin around your stoma (peristomal skin).



Don't worry too much at this stage about the different types of bags, as your stoma care nurse will discuss the different options available to you and train you on how to use them.

Applying the imitation stoma

Your stoma care nurse may have put a mark on your stomach where your stoma may be. It is important that you do not remove this mark. If you have not yet had that discussion with your nurse, draw an imaginary line from your hip bone to your navel and position the stoma about half way along it.

The imitation stoma has two sides - one is shaped and textured and the other flat and smooth.

The adhesive ring also has two sides. The front of the ring is clear plastic and the back of the ring, which sticks to your skin, has removable paper.



- 1 Place the stoma smooth-side down on a flat surface.



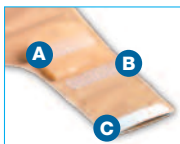
- 2 Take the adhesive ring with the flexible clear plastic facing you and place it over the stoma, so that the stoma comes through the centre hole.



- 3 Peel the backing paper off the ring to expose the adhesive.
- 4 Position the stoma on your stomach with the clear plastic facing away from you.
- 5 Press firmly around the edges of the adhesive ring until it is fixed in place.

Preparing the stoma bag for putting on your stoma

- 1 The Esteem® drainable bag with InvisiClose® tail closure system is made up of a security flap A, interlocking closures B, and outlet end strips C.



- 2 Hold the security flap up. Fold the tail end towards you and press the interlocking closures together.



- 3 Close the security flap and press the interlocking closures together



Applying the stoma bag

- 1 Make sure that the inner surfaces of the bag are separated and that it contains some air.



- 2 Using the tab, remove the release paper from the adhesive as smoothly as possible.



- 3 Position the bag around the stoma and line up the adhesive ring at the bottom of the stoma. Then, apply from bottom to top, making sure that the drain outlet is pointing downwards towards your legs. Press the skin barrier adhesive firmly into place around the stoma.



If you want to, you could wear your bag, to see how it looks and whether you can see it under your clothes.

Emptying the bag

To empty the stoma bag, you can use the toilet. You can either sit on the toilet and let the bag hang down between your legs, or stand or kneel facing the toilet with the bag drain hanging into the toilet bowl.

- 1 Carefully lift the security flap up towards you to unlock.



- 2 While holding the security flap up against the front of the bag, unlock the interlocking closure by lifting at the corner and unravelling the folds four times.



- 3 Making sure that the tail drain is positioned into the toilet bowl allow the contents of the bag to empty out.
- 4 If you were using the bag for real, once you empty the drain, you would wipe it clean using a piece of toilet tissue and stick the security flap back down so that you could continue to use the bag. As this is just an exercise you do not need to do this (unless you want to).

Removing the bag

- 1 Standing in front of the toilet bowl, take hold of the skin barrier (adhesive) and start to peel it gently away from your skin while applying light pressure on your skin with your other hand.



- 2 The bag will slowly peel away from your tummy.



- 3 Once you have removed the bag, you can get rid of it in a plastic bag.
- 4 If you were doing this for real, after removing the bag you would clean the skin around the stoma and apply a clean one.

Do not flush the bags down the toilet as they may block your drains.

If you were practising with the closed bag included in this pack, you may want to cut open the top or bottom of the bag and empty the contents into the toilet. The bag would then be disposed of in a plastic bag.



More information

In this pack there is a **Colostomy instruction guide** and a booklet called **Living with a colostomy part one – before surgery and during your hospital stay**. These documents form part one of a series of booklets we have produced to help you adapt to life as quickly as possible after your surgery. If you would like to receive more information from this series, please ask your stoma care nurse or fill in and return the card included in this pack and we will send parts 2 and 3 directly and discreetly to your home.

Please also have a look at the accompanying booklet for more information on what you need to know before you have your surgery. It also includes details on how you can get supplies of appliances and other equipment that you may need through a free home-delivery service.

One of these services is offered by Amcare™. As well as arranging to deliver supplies, Amcare™ has a network of care centres to provide your stoma supplies as promptly and discreetly as possible, with as little hassle as possible. They also offer a free cutting service together with other support activities. (You can find contact details for Amcare™ on the back cover of this booklet).

Notes

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**If you would like more information,
you can get it from the following
organisation.**

The Colostomy Association

2 London Court, East Street
Reading RG1 4QL

Phone: 0118 939 1537

Website: www.colostomyassociation.org.uk

Further contact details

Amcare™

Home-delivery service

Freephone: **0800 88 50 50**

ConvaTec

Free customer helpline

0800 834 822

Or visit: www.convatec.co.uk

Acknowledgements

This material has been produced by ConvaTec following an original idea by Janice Lee MSc, RGN, Dncert, ENB 216, Queen's Nurse, Specialist Nurse Stoma Care, NHS Newcastle and North Tyneside Community Health.



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