



# Make the Most of Your Doctor Visits:

## A Patient's Guide to Self-Advocacy

Living with an ostomy can bring big changes — but you don't have to navigate them alone. Your healthcare team is there to support you, and with a little preparation and self-advocacy, your appointments can become a powerful part of your healing journey.



### COME PREPARED



**Jot down a list of questions.** Whether it's about diet, mental health, intimacy, or daily routines, bringing up topics that are important to you shows your provider that you're engaged and helps keep the conversation focused.



**Bring your own supplies.** If you have preferred products or brands, bring them along to show your provider. It may be helpful for them to know how frequently you change your pouch and whether you are experiencing any peristomal skin health concerns.



### PARTNER WITH YOUR CARE TEAM



**Ask questions freely.** No question is too small — your doctor is there to help you understand and feel confident in your care.



**Request clear instructions.** Make sure you leave with specific guidance on how to care for your ostomy at home, especially if you're stuck on a particular part of your daily routine.



**Connect with specialists.** If available, ask to see a WOC (Wound, Ostomy, and Continence) nurse for expert advice tailored to your needs.



# SPEAK UP FOR YOURSELF



**Explain your ostomy type.** Let your care team know what kind of ostomy you have and any procedures or treatments to avoid.



**Share your experience.** You know your body best — talk about what’s working, what’s not, and how you’re feeling.



**Talk about mental health.** Anxiety, depression, or stress are just as important to address as physical symptoms. Ask if counseling services are available.



**Have a conversation about intimacy.** If you’re experiencing changes in your sex life or relationships, bring it up. There may be physical reasons that need attention, and support is available.



**Ask for referrals.** Don’t hesitate to ask for extra support, and be specific. Whether it’s mental health, urology, or physiotherapy, saying “Can you refer me to someone who can help with...” makes your needs part of your medical record.

## You Always Have a Choice

Leaks or irritation? That’s a sign your product might not be the right fit. You can switch brands, try new styles, or add accessories to improve comfort. You’ve got options — and support to find what works for you.

# WHY SELF-ADVOCACY MATTERS



When it comes to living well with an ostomy, your voice is one of your most powerful tools. Advocating for yourself — by asking questions, sharing your experiences, and educating your care team — can lead to more personalized care and fewer complications. But it’s about more than just medical outcomes.

Speaking up helps break down stigma and raise awareness. And when you share your story, you’re not only building your own confidence, you’re helping others feel less alone.

**These small acts of courage create a ripple effect that strengthens the entire ostomy community.**



You deserve to feel supported and confident. Convatec’s me+™ program offers expert guidance and resources to help you advocate for yourself and build Healthy Bonds™ — meaningful connections that strengthen your journey. Let’s connect.



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