



Enjoy an active summer

An ostomates' simple guide to sport and activities



Enjoy summer your way

With winter a distant memory and summer just around the corner, we all start thinking about spending more time outdoors.

For some people, heading off on holiday to enjoy days by the sea or the pool is the highlight of the year, while others can't wait to head off on long walks or take part in sports and games with family and friends.

When you have a stoma, it's quite common to think that you can't enjoy activities like swimming, going to the gym, cycling, or playing tennis, but that's not true. Gentle exercise is advised within a few days of stoma surgery, and once you're fully healed, you can get back to doing whatever you want, with just a few adjustments.

In this guide we'll give practical tips and advice on living the life you want to live with a stoma, and enjoying summer your way.



It's never too early, or too late, to get active

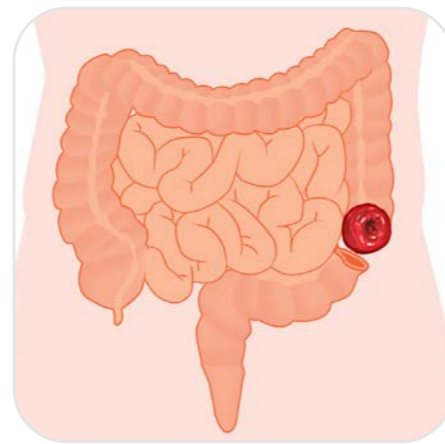
Stoma surgery is necessary when a medical condition or an injury stops your bowel or bladder from working properly. When you have this operation, the bladder or diseased or injured part of your bowel is removed, and part of your bowel is brought outside the body to form a stoma.

After this, waste from your body will pass through the stoma and into a pouch that you wear.

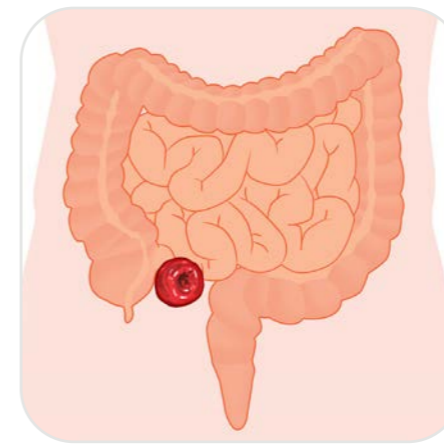
A stoma made from the opening in the colon (large bowel) is a colostomy, a stoma made from the ileum (small bowel) is an ileostomy, and a stoma made after removal of the bladder is a urostomy.

In the early days, as you recover in hospital, you will be looked after by a stoma care nurse, who will show you how to change your pouching system and look after the skin around your stoma (peristomal skin).

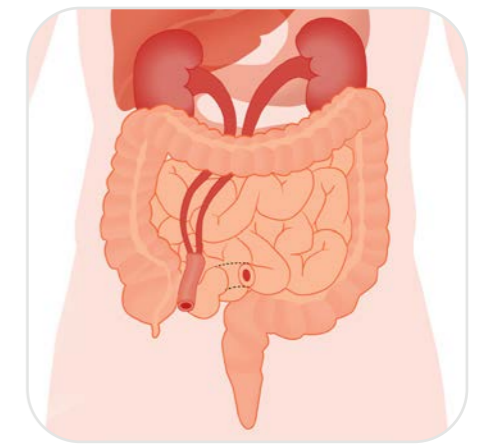
Your medical team will also encourage you to get back to light exercise as soon as you feel ready. Everyone is different, and so everyone's recovery is different but this type of surgery should not stop you from getting back to an active life. And that is true for everyone - those who have just had surgery, and those who have had a stoma for many years. It's never too late to start exercising and enjoying all sorts of activities, even if it's just mowing the lawn or playing a game of tag with the grandchildren!



Colostomy



Ileostomy



Urostomy

Your medical team will encourage you to get back to light exercise as soon as you feel ready.



On your mark, get set, go!

If you're thinking about getting active this summer and you don't know where to start, why not take a look at the me+™ Recovery Programme.

STAGE ONE - 'Get Ready'

This will show you two simple breathing exercises you can try to help build core strength. You can start these straight after your surgery if you feel ready, or any time afterwards. Remember, it's never too late.

"I'm hugely passionate about helping people when they are at their most vulnerable, using exercise therapy and movement to help regain strength and confidence. Having lived with a stoma myself since 2010, I know how important this is."

Sarah

Clinical Exercise Physiologist



After you've mastered the breathing techniques, you can move on to the first part of the three-phase Recovery Programme.

The gentle exercises featured on our videos, and demonstrated by **Clinical Exercise Physiologist Sarah Russell**, are designed to strengthen muscles and help you get back to doing all the activities you want.

They may also help to reduce your risk of developing a parastomal hernia. Quite common for people who have a stoma, this is a bulge that can develop around the site of a stoma because the muscle has been weakened by the surgery.

If you're trying a new exercise, you should talk to your stoma care nurse first, or if you're taking classes with a personal trainer, let them know about your condition so they can tailor exercises to suit you. With time and a few adjustments, you can enjoy a summer full of all your favourite activities.



The me+ **Get Ready** exercises and me+ **Recovery Programme** can be found by scanning the QR code or visit meplus.convatec.com

Prepare for an active summer

It's natural to have concerns about exercise after a major operation, but in many cases, having a stoma means a new lease of life, free from feeling poorly. And once you've started getting back to movement, you'll probably find a new confidence when it comes to thinking about trying the activities you enjoyed before your surgery.

If you enjoyed running or walking before you had your stoma, there's nothing to stop you taking up these outdoor activities again when you're fully recovered. If you want to swim, cycle, or kick a ball about in the park, nothing should be out of bounds.

However, being active doesn't have to mean taking part in strenuous exercises or fast-paced sports. Running about with your grandchildren, walking the dog, playing crazy golf, or dancing (even if it's just in the kitchen when no-one's watching) are all great forms of exercise, and come with added fun!

The key to a summer full of activities when you have a stoma is preparation.



For expert advice and real-life stories on physical activity and lots of other topics

Scan the QR code or visit meplus.convatec.com



Tips for a summer of activities

- Just to be sure, always speak to your stoma care nurse or your doctor before starting any new, or vigorous exercise
- Before embarking on any form of exercise, empty or change your pouch
- Put your baseplate on at least an hour before starting exercise so it's secure
- Walkers and runners should start slowly with a lap or two around the garden or your local park, gradually increasing your distance
- Don't walk or run too far in one direction - remember, you have to come back
- Talk to a personal trainer about an exercise programme tailored to you
- Go at your own pace and listen to your body - if something causes you pain, stop and speak to a healthcare professional

An active body and mind

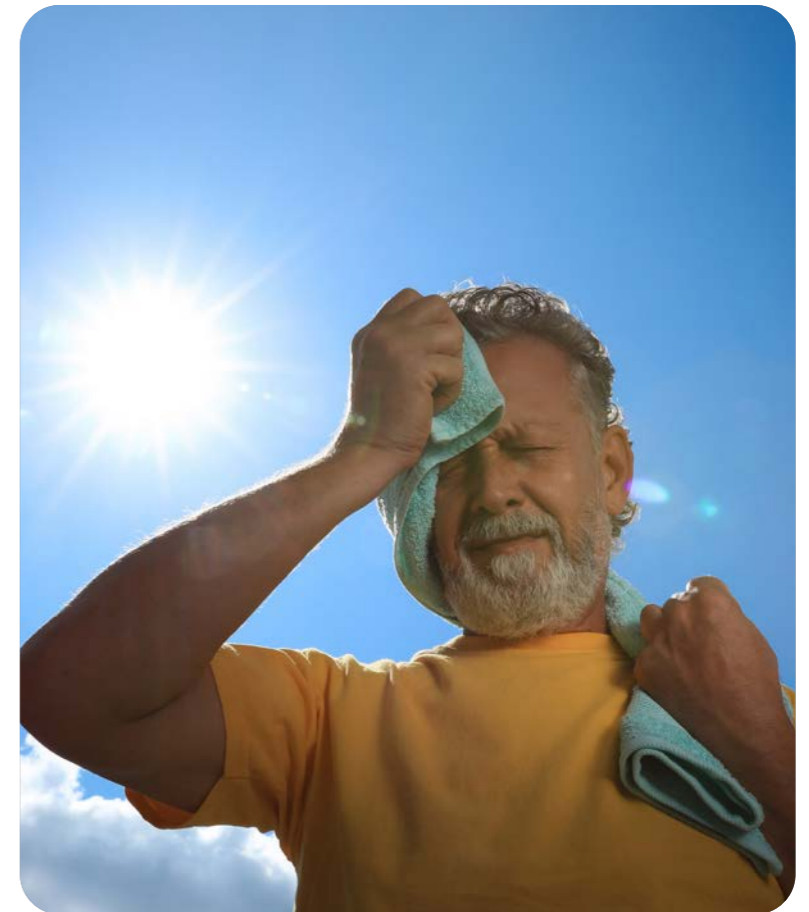
Warm sunny days are just made for getting out and about in the great outdoors and enjoying some exercise in the fresh air. And not only does exercise help to strengthen core muscles, it can work wonders for you in many other ways too.



Are any activities out of bounds with a stoma?

Having a stoma is no barrier to activities and exercise. When you go back to an old activity or take up something new, it's best to speak to your stoma care nurse beforehand. Take it easy at first, build up gradually, and if anything starts to hurt make sure you take a break.

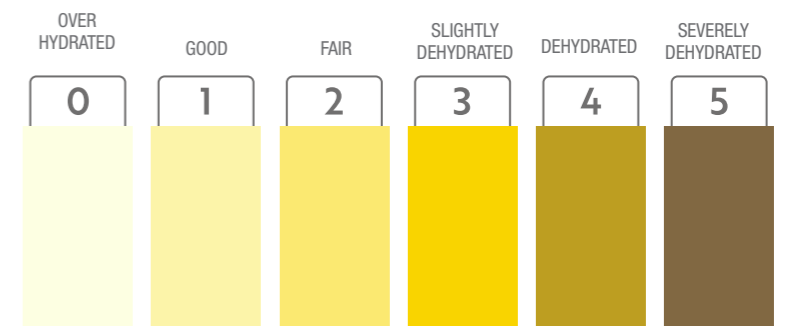
Because you sweat more during exercise, you should also make sure you stay hydrated by drinking enough water. As someone living with a stoma, drinking plenty of fluids can help you to avoid blockages and counteract the extra loss of fluids you might experience through your stoma output. If you have a urostomy, drinking plenty of water can also help to reduce your risk of contracting urinary tract infections.



Are you dehydrated?

A simple way to check your hydration level is to look at the colour of your urine. Generally, a light straw-like colour is good, and dark urine usually means you're dehydrated. This is just an initial guide, not to be used as an accurate indicator. If you think you may be dehydrated, you should seek medical advice.

URINE COLOUR CHART



<https://www.southtees.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Urine-colour-chart.pdf>

Exercise can help to:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Strengthen bones and muscles, which can decrease the risk of injury as we age
- Boost mental wellbeing and mood by stimulating chemicals in the brain
- Lower the risk of many illnesses including some cancers and coronary heart disease
- Boost energy levels as oxygen and nutrients flood tissues
- Boost self-esteem as you feel positive about your physical appearance
- Enhance sleep quality
- Build friendships with like-minded people in exercise classes or groups



What counts as exercise?

Not everyone wants to play sport, go to the gym or tackle a 10km run, and that's just fine, because there are plenty of other ways to be active. If you try some of these fun activities, you'll be exercising without even knowing it:

- Gardening - digging, raking, sweeping, weeding and mowing will keep you active, and at the end of your session, you'll have a beautiful garden to enjoy (if you lift or carry anything heavy when gardening, remember to do it safely, bending at the hips and knees only, keeping your back straight)
- Playing - if you have children or grandchildren, a simple game of tag or hide-and-seek will have you running about and working those muscles while enjoying memory-making family time
- Walking the dog - most dogs need plenty of walks, so they give you a good reason to get out in the fresh air; they'll love you even more for it, and you'll be surprised by how many people talk to you when you have a cute canine friend in tow
- Dancing - turn up the music and practice your disco moves at home, or go to classes in anything from ballroom to Latin, salsa to Zumba - it's a great workout for your body and might also boost your social life
- Crazy golf - just like proper golf, this version involves a good walk with a competitive edge, and loads of fun thrown in
- Walking - if you struggle to motivate yourself to go for a walk every day, tie it in with a phone call to a friend, or see it as a chance to listen to music or a Podcast, or absorb the plot of an audio book



Can I swim?

Just as you can safely have a bath or a shower with a stoma, so can you swim.

Summer is a great time to head to the beach or the pool, and swimming is great exercise.

In fact, you can enjoy all sorts of fun on the water this summer, from water-skiing to snorkeling, there's nothing to stop you.



Tips

Before you wade into the sea or jump in the pool, make sure that you empty or change your pouch first. Applying your baseplate at least an hour beforehand gives the adhesive plenty of time to get to work. For more security, you could try using ESENTA™ Hydrocolloid Strips.

If your pouch has a filter through which gas is released, stick a filter cover on, so no water can enter your pouch, and remember to take extra stoma supplies with you. That way, if you need to, you can change your pouch after a swim.


It's understandable for anyone to feel self-conscious in swimwear, stoma or not! But if you're worried about people noticing your pouch and you have a colostomy, you could try using a stoma cap. These are much smaller than a pouch, so suitable for shorter periods of time.

Swimming costumes in bold colours and busy patterns do a good job at disguising any bulges you want to hide, and a pouch can be tucked into high-waisted bikini bottoms or swim shorts. Swimming shorts with an inner pocket are available to buy, or you could wear an ostomy band or wrap if you're planning on jumping, diving or working out in the water at an aqua aerobics class.


Flying with a stoma

If you are flying to your holiday destination, here are some tips:

- If you recently had your surgery, check with your stoma care nurse or doctor about your fitness to travel
- Take your stoma supplies in your hand luggage just in case your suitcase goes missing
- Pack extra supplies in your suitcase
- Book a seat near the toilets
- You can't take scissors on a plane, so you may want to take pre-cut or Mouldable Technology™ products
- Check your carrier's rules on liquids in hand luggage
- Purchase appropriate travel insurance
- If you like, you can take a travel certificate about your condition to show airport staff, or use the Convatec Stoma Travel Pass

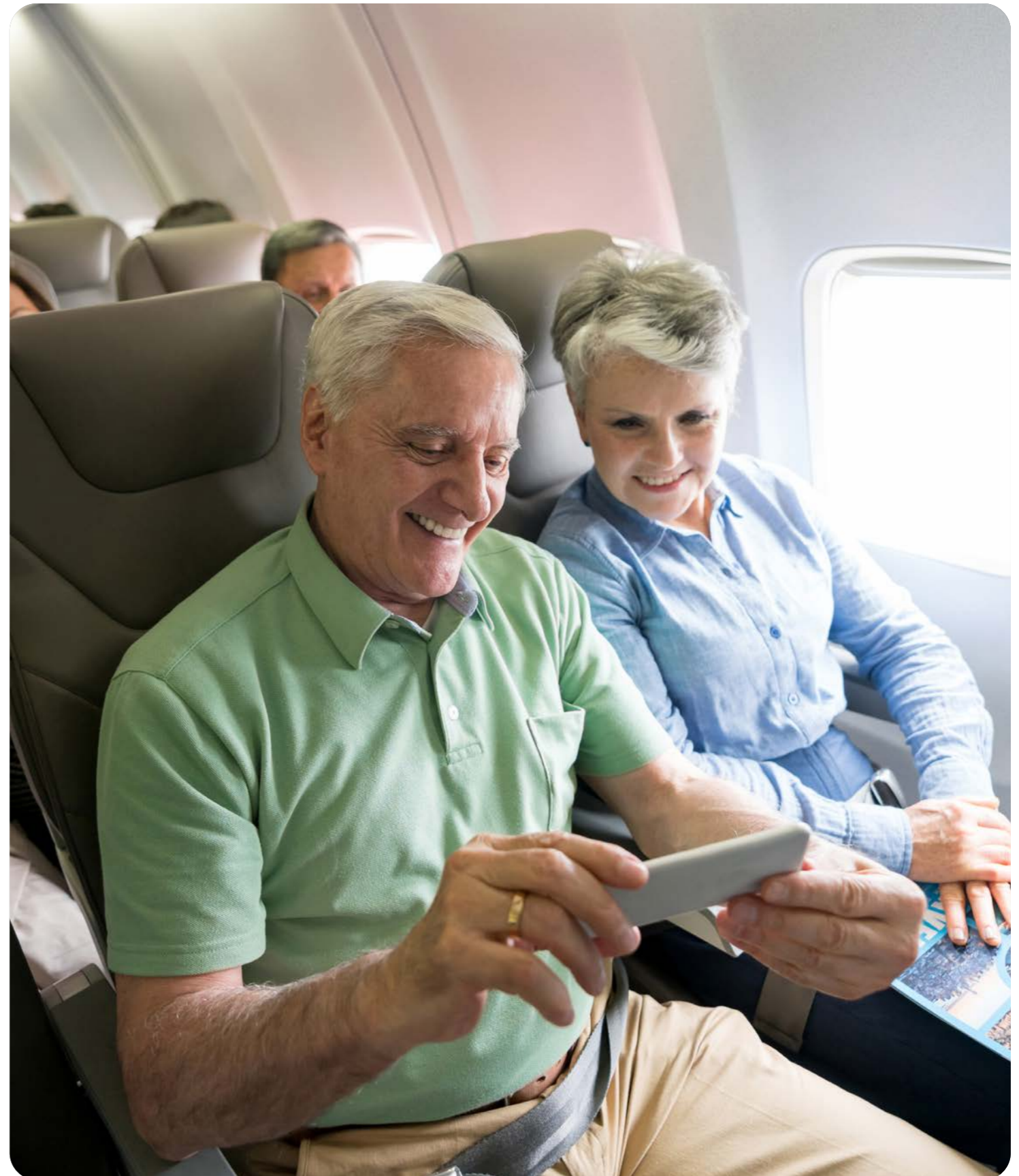


Download our Stoma Travel Pass for hassle-free travel



scan the QR code

Don't let worries about security checks and body searches at airports and ports stop you looking forward to your holiday. Download the free Convatec Stoma Travel Pass today and let it do the talking for you.



Can I go to the gym?

If you're thinking about getting fit this summer, you'll probably head to your local gym. If you've not exercised for a while, or you're new to the gym, speak to a health care professional before you try anything too strenuous.



"As an ostomate who goes to the gym three times a week, here are my tips on exercising with a stoma."

Community nurse and ostomate
Miroslava Holíková

Tips

At the gym, why not chat to a personal trainer about your condition and your fitness levels. They can tailor an exercise programme to your individual circumstances.

You could sign up to a Yoga or Pilates class, both are great for strengthening the core, which can help to reduce your risk of developing a hernia. A lot of people credit these forms of exercise for improving mood and promoting calm too.

You'll want to make sure you change or empty your pouch before starting any kind of workout or class, and attaching your baseplate at least an hour beforehand should make you feel more secure.

Wearing close-fitting stretchy clothing or a support garment can help to stop your pouch moving, but it shouldn't be so tight that it cuts into it.

Another important tip is to take a bottle of water with you to the gym. The average person loses between 2 and 2.5 litres of fluid every day simply through their normal bodily functions such as going to the toilet, sweating and even breathing. Exercise will make you sweat more, so it's easy to become dehydrated.



Signs of dehydration include:



- Dark-coloured urine
- Passing less urine than usual
- Headache
- Feeling nauseous
- Cramps
- Tiredness/fatigue
- A dry mouth
- Feeling thirsty, and sometimes, if you feel hungry it could actually be your body telling you that you need fluids



Can I run and cycle?

Summer is a great time to head off on a run or a bike ride in the countryside. And if you enjoyed running and cycling before you had a stoma, the chances are you'll enjoy it afterwards too. As with any form of exercise with a stoma, you just have to make a few adjustments and you may want to check with a healthcare professional before starting

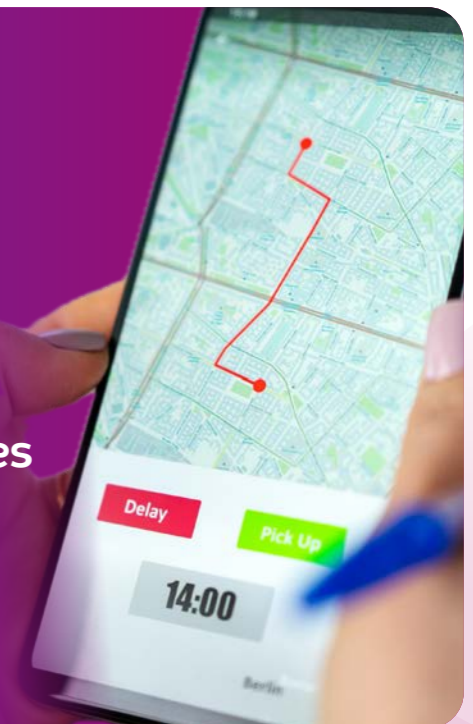


Tips

- Don't head off until you've emptied or changed your pouch
- Attach your baseplate at least an hour before you set off
- Don't overdo it at first, start with shorter runs and rides and build up gradually
- Plan your route so that if you need to use a toilet, there is one available
- Take water with you so you stay hydrated
- Listen to your body and if you feel pain or discomfort take a break or stop



Plan your route in case of emergencies



Can I play sports/games?

Having a stoma should not stop you from taking part in any type of sport - exercise is good for everyone's physical and mental health.

Once you are fully healed from your stoma surgery, and with the go-ahead from your stoma care nurse, there is nothing stopping you from getting back to playing your favourite sports, from football and tennis to basketball and golf.

Tips

- Before you head out on to the pitch, court or field, make sure you empty or change your pouch
- Attach your baseplate at least an hour before you play any sport
- Ease yourself back in gently - if you're going to take part in a ball sport, have a kickabout in the park first to see how it feels with your stoma
- If you're playing a rough sport where there might be physical contact, you can protect your stoma with a support garment or a stoma cup or guard
- Listen to your body and take breaks if you need to
- Stay hydrated by stopping regularly for a drink of water



Team Colostomy UK Rugby League

In 2018, Colostomy UK formed a Rugby League side to prove that having a stoma is no barrier to playing even the toughest of contact sports.

The team had amazing 2021, 2022 and 2023 seasons, and is looking forward to more success in the future, with plans for a wheelchair league and a women's league in the pipeline.



To email us
direct scan
the QR code

We would love to hear about the sports and activities you enjoy as an ostomate.

You can share your stories and pictures with us on social media or by emailing cic@convatec.it

Visit us on convatec social media



Don't let leakages spoil your summer

As an ostomate it is very likely that you have worried about your pouch leaking. And when you are taking part in physical activities, this can be even more on your mind. This is a natural concern as accidents can happen, but with a bit of preparation you can lessen the chances.

- Apply your baseplate at least an hour before any physical activity
- Empty or change your pouch before activity, so it's not heavy and pulls at the skin
- Wear a support garment or stoma cup/guard for extra security
- Try using **ESENTA Hydrocolloid Strips™**, designed to move with your body and keep your baseplate firmly in place



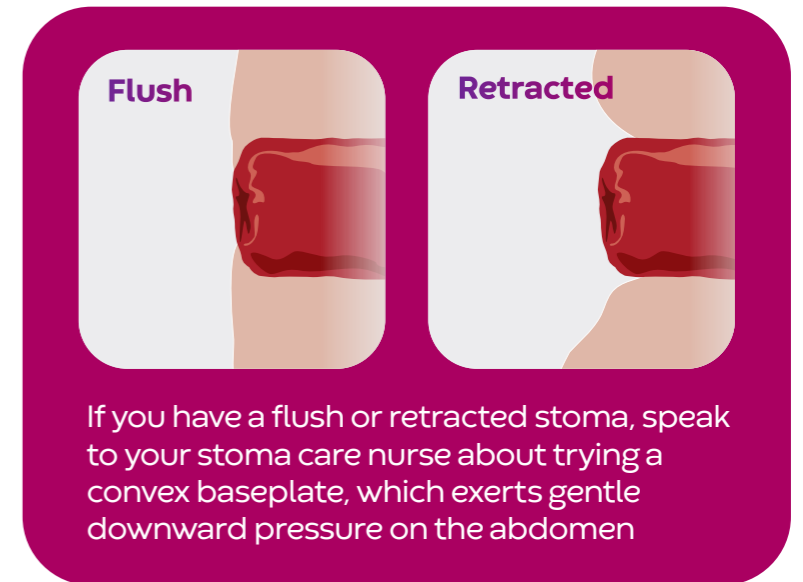
To order your **ESENTA Hydrocolloid Strip™ samples** scan the QR code



Leakages are not only embarrassing and upsetting, but if output from your stoma comes into contact with your peristomal skin, it can lead to soreness and damage.

Common causes of leakages include:

- A poorly fitting baseplate - it should fit snugly around your stoma - a stoma can change size and shape, especially in the first few weeks after surgery, or if you gain or lose weight
- Wearing your pouching system for too long, leading to a full and heavy pouch pulling away from the skin
- Attaching your baseplate to skin that is already sore - this can stop the baseplate from sticking properly, allowing output beneath it



To order your **Esteem Body™ samples** scan the QR code

To try to reduce the risk of leakages:

- Remove your baseplate slowly and gently, from top to bottom
- Gently wash peristomal skin with warm water, avoiding soaps and gels
- Pat the skin completely dry before applying your baseplate
- Keep any hair around the stoma as short as possible
- Change or empty your pouch before any physical activity
- Talk to your stoma care nurse if you have any concerns about your peristomal skin

Taking part in any form of exercise is good for your physical and mental health, and we hope this guide gives you even more confidence to jump into a sporty and active summer.

- forever caring -

Pioneering trusted medical solutions to improve the lives we touch



Miroslava Holíková

Community nurse and ostomate

Convatec would like to thank community nurse Miroslava Holíková for her help in creating this booklet and reviewing its content.

A nurse with 25 years' experience, Miroslava has worked in hospitals and social services facilities, and now serves as a community nurse offering expert home care.

Miroslava is also an ostomate, having undergone surgery for an ileostomy in 2019, and this has given her a great depth of understanding about the needs and concerns of her patients who have a stoma.

As an advocate for healthy living and a mother of two lively teenagers, she knows only too well how life-changing this type of surgery can be. She also knows that, with time and a little patience, no activity needs to be out of bounds, and it is possible for ostomates to lead a full and active life.

This booklet is adapted from the sources in local language: Bathing with an Ostomy - Gastrointestinal Society. Living with a stoma: Tips to Physical Activity - Convatec. Guide: How To Travel With a Stoma - Convatec. <https://www.southtees.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Urine-colour-chart.pdf>