

# Care Gram

## Living With an Ostomy

### Changing a Colostomy Appliance

1. First, gather your supplies. You will need:
  - Skin barrier, outer pouch, toilet tissue, and clamp (if using one)
  - Plastic bag, scissors (if cut to fit barrier), and mirror (optional)
  - Water, soap (without moisturizer), washcloth, and small towel
  - Skin gel or wipes (optional – may not need)
  - Stoma adhesive paste and powder (if needed)
2. Cut opening in skin barrier with scissors. Cut just enough so that 1/8-inch of skin or less is showing after the barrier is placed around the stoma. If using a moldable barrier, place your thumbs (or fingers) at the edge of the starter hole and roll the adhesive back until you create an opening of desired shape and size.
3. Use adhesive tape remover to loosen/remove the old appliance and throw it away in the plastic bag. Save clamp (if using one).
4. Wipe off excess bowel movement from around the stoma, using toilet paper. Clean the stoma and skin around the stoma with a clean washcloth. Use soap and water or just plain water. Rinse and dry well with a towel.
5. Treat any irritations with small amount of stomahesive powder.
6. If there is a crevice or deepened area around the stoma, fill it with stomahesive paste or use other products as mentioned by your care provider.
7. Take paper backing off skin barrier.
8. Apply skin barrier to abdomen. Hold your hand over the applied skin barrier for 2 to 3 minutes. This will seal the barrier to your skin.
9. Apply the outer pouch and clamp (if using one).
10. Empty the pouch when it is about 1/3 full.
11. If needed for comfort, you may rinse out the pouch a few times a day (as needed) with warm water either from the bottom or by unsnapping the pouch and pouring water through it. If you are using a pouch with adhesive, you cannot get the adhesive wet.

### Living Day to Day with an Ostomy

#### Job and Recreation

- Generally, an ostomy does not prevent a person from returning to work. Be sure to have extra supplies and clothing on hand if needed.
- An ostomy should not interfere with the activities that you enjoyed prior to surgery.

A person with an ostomy can even go swimming. Cover the stoma while you are swimming. If you do not wear an ostomy pouch, cover the stoma with a temporary ostomy patch.

If you have a pouch with a filter, cover the filter when bathing or swimming. Be sure to empty the pouch before you swim. Use waterproof tape for stronger protection.



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Page 1 of 5

**Traveling**

There are no concerns for flying or driving. When you travel by plane, pack extra supplies in your carry-on luggage.

If you have had urostomy surgery, you may want to wear a leg bag. The leg bag will hold more urine, which will last longer during a long car or plane ride. If you normally use a night drainage system at home, you should take that with you too.

**Marital Life**

A person with a colostomy is usually able to have a normal sexual relationship. Women who have colostomies can become pregnant and have babies.

The sexual organs are not usually involved when a person has a colostomy. Ask your doctor if your surgical procedure will interfere with sexual relationships.

If you or your partner has questions or is anxious about sexual relations, talk to each other and consult with your doctor. It may also help you to discuss your thoughts with another couple who have dealt with having a colostomy.

Remember that you are the same person that you were before your surgery. Having a colostomy does not change the way the rest of your body functions.

Your partner may need reassurance that he/she will not hurt the stoma. Small, closed-end pouches are available for intimate times. You can also purchase special intimate apparel designed for people with an ostomy.

**Nutrition**You Set the Limits

The good news is that most diet changes (if any are needed at all) will be for the better. For example, if you had surgery for Crohn's disease or chronic ulcerative colitis, your pre-surgery diet was probably bland. In the weeks after surgery, you might have been on a restrictive diet. However, once you have healed, there is no reason why you cannot return to some of your favorite foods. Just make sure you use common sense.

Diet concerns are different depending on the type of ostomy surgery. The following are some diet tips for people with a colostomy, ileostomy, and/or urostomy. Be sure to talk to your doctor or nurse first before making any big changes in your diet.

Colostomy and Ileostomy

- Blockage
  - This may be caused by high-fiber foods such as seeds, corn, celery, popcorn, nuts, coleslaw, Chinese vegetables, coconut macaroons, grapefruit, raisins, dried fruit, fried foods, apple skins, and orange skins.
  - Be sure to chew all food thoroughly before you swallow.
- Loose Bowels
  - This may be caused by green beans, broccoli, spinach, highly spiced foods, raw fruits, and beer.
- Gas Production
  - This may be caused by foods from the cabbage family, onions, beans, cucumbers, radishes, and beer.

- Odor-producing Foods
  - These include cheese, eggs, fish, beans, onions, vegetables of the cabbage family, some vitamins and medications, and asparagus.
- Reducing Fecal Odor
  - The foods that may help are cranberry juice, buttermilk, or yogurt; however, the ostomy system is odor proof.
- Medication
  - Ask your doctor if you need to change any of your medication due to changes in the way your food is absorbed.

### Urostomy

- In most cases, people with urostomies enjoy a normal diet.
- Cranberry juice, yogurt, or buttermilk will help with urinary odors.
- You may want to avoid asparagus because it causes a strong urinary odor.

### Gas

- You do not have to give up a favorite food because it is known to cause gas, loose stools, or odor.
- Every person's body is different – it is hard to give rules that apply to everyone.
  - Your body may tolerate certain foods better than others.
- If you enjoy onions, but know that these cause gas, just eat less or avoid onions before going to a social gathering.

### Taste and Test

- The best way to find out how you tolerate different foods is to experiment.
- You probably will be able to eat the same foods you ate prior to surgery.
- If a certain food does cause a problem, try it again in a few months – your body may adjust to the food by then.
- To be safe, add new foods to your diet slowly.
  - Add a ½ cup of the new food to your meal for a week; then, see how your body tolerates the food by how you feel.
- Remember to chew your food well and drink plenty of fluids – check with your doctor on the amount of liquids to drink if you are on limited fluids.

**How Foods Can Affect You**

The foods and habits listed in the following table may or may not cause side effects. Always remember to chew your food well and drink plenty of fluids.

<p><b>Odor-forming Foods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asparagus</li> <li>• Beans</li> <li>• Broccoli</li> <li>• Cabbage</li> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Fish</li> <li>• Garlic</li> <li>• Onions</li> <li>• Peas</li> <li>• Some spices</li> <li>• Turnips</li> </ul> <p><b>Gas-forming Foods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beer</li> <li>• Brewer’s yeast</li> <li>• Broccoli</li> <li>• Brussels sprouts</li> <li>• Cabbage</li> <li>• Carbonated drinks</li> <li>• Cauliflower</li> <li>• Corn</li> <li>• Cucumbers</li> <li>• Dairy products</li> <li>• Dried beans</li> <li>• Heavily spiced foods</li> <li>• Mushrooms</li> <li>• Onions</li> <li>• Peas</li> <li>• Radishes</li> <li>• Spinach</li> <li>• String beans</li> <li>• Turnips</li> </ul>	<p><b>Foods that Decrease Diarrhea:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fermented dairy products</li> <li>• Oatmeal</li> <li>• Pasta</li> <li>• Peanut butter</li> <li>• Potatoes</li> <li>• Refined bread products</li> <li>• Refined cereals</li> <li>• Rice</li> <li>• Some cheeses</li> </ul> <p><b>Foods that Decrease Constipation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beans</li> <li>• Beer</li> <li>• Broccoli</li> <li>• Green beans</li> <li>• Highly seasoned foods</li> <li>• Legumes</li> <li>• Non-fermented dairy products</li> <li>• Nuts</li> <li>• Raisins</li> <li>• Raw fruits with seeds and skin</li> <li>• Raw vegetables</li> <li>• Spinach</li> <li>• Whole-grain cereal and breads</li> </ul> <p><b>Nausea-producing Foods</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drinking or eating fast</li> <li>• Fried foods</li> <li>• Greasy foods</li> <li>• Mix of hot/cold foods at the same meal</li> <li>• Mix of solid/liquid foods at the same meal</li> <li>• Odorous foods</li> <li>• Overly sweet foods</li> <li>• Physical activity or emotional stress before a meal</li> <li>• Rich foods</li> </ul>	<p><b>Gas-forming Habits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being anxious</li> <li>• Chewing gum</li> <li>• Chewing tobacco</li> <li>• Eating quickly</li> <li>• Eating with mouth open</li> <li>• Snoring with mouth open</li> <li>• Using straws</li> </ul> <p><b>High-fiber Vegetables:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asparagus</li> <li>• Broccoli</li> <li>• Celery</li> </ul> <p><b>Hard to Digest Foods</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruits with pulp (oranges and grapefruit)</li> <li>• Hard nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts)</li> <li>• Skins on apples, pears, and peaches</li> </ul> <p><b>Foods that Could Cause Blockage:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coconut</li> <li>• Corn on the cob</li> <li>• Dried foods</li> <li>• Popcorn</li> </ul>
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**Ostomy Resources**

You can buy ostomy supplies by mail order through:

**Edgepark Surgical Inc.**

(888) 394-5375

[www.edgepark.com](http://www.edgepark.com)

**Byram Healthcare**

(877) 902-9726

[www.byramhealthcare.com](http://www.byramhealthcare.com)

If you have any questions, please call:

**Wound/Ostomy Nurse**

Licking Memorial Hospital

(220) 564-4490

**Intestinal System**

