

Leaving Hospital with a Stoma



General Surgery

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What is this leaflet all about?

This booklet contains information that will be helpful to you following your discharge from hospital.

Much of the information contained within this booklet will be familiar to you from conversations with your stoma nurse and the nurses on the ward. This booklet will serve as a reminder of these conversations.

If you have a problem that is not answered in the booklet, please get in touch with us and we will try to help you:

Telephone 01483 571122 **ext** 2558 or **bleep** 0911

What stoma equipment am I using?

You are currently using:

Item	Make	Description	Order Number	Pack Size	Boxes per month
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

We have placed an order on your behalf with a Home Delivery Service.

Your supplies are due to be delivered on:.....

Your GP has been sent a copy of the above information for your prescription.

Once you have your prescription from your GP please forward your prescription either to the Home Delivery Service as soon as possible or your local chemist.

The next month's supply should be requested when you have between 2-3 weeks of supplies left of your first order, as they need to receive your prescription from your GP before they can dispatch your requested items.

If you are using the Home Delivery Service the repeat prescription should be sent to them using their FREEPOST envelope, or the Home Delivery Service will liaise with your GP on your behalf.

Otherwise, take your repeat prescription to your local chemist and they will order the supplies for you.

When will I be discharged from hospital?

You will not be discharged from hospital until you feel able to empty and change your stoma bag yourself. Once you are home you will be able to practice and become more confident.

The stoma nurse will telephone you within 3 days of discharge from hospital to check that you are managing. Please expect to receive a telephone call on:.....

You will be visited by a stoma nurse within a week of discharge if you live within our catchment area. After this visit you will be seen in bladder clinic on a Thursday morning, approximately 2 weeks after your surgery, where we will remove your surgical clips and stents.

What happens when I attend the bladder/stoma clinic?

You will also be reviewed by the bladder team between 7-10 days after discharge to review your progress and inform you of your histology results. Also at this clinic appointment, we will remove your stents (thin tubes from inside your stoma) if still in and also remove your surgical clips too.

We will also examine the stoma and check it is healthy, the surrounding skin is in good condition and the template size is correct. This is also a good opportunity to discuss any worries you may have. When you attend the stoma clinic please ensure you bring spare stoma equipment with you.

How do I order more stoma equipment?

When you leave hospital your stoma nurse will give you enough stoma equipment to last until your first order arrives from the Home Delivery Service (or from your local chemist if preferred).

The next month's supply should be requested when you have between 2-3 weeks of supplies left of your first order, as they need to receive your prescription from your GP before they can dispatch your requested items.

Otherwise, take your repeat prescription to your local chemist and they will order the supplies for you.

Will I have to pay for prescriptions?

As your stoma is permanent, you will be entitled to a prescription exemption payment certificate.

How do I store and dispose of stoma bags?

Keep your stoma bags in a cool room or cupboard. Heat can make the adhesive very soft and sticky.

To dispose of a used bag first empty the contents into the toilet.

Then put the used bag in one of the supplied scented disposal sacks (or wrap it in newspaper) and put it in the dustbin with the rest of your rubbish.

How soon can I start to exercise?

After surgery it is important that you keep active. Aim to do a little walking each day and increase the amount daily so you are back to most of your normal activities 4-6 weeks after your operation, although you may be more tired than usual. It can take up to 3 months to feel fully fit.

Avoid lifting heavy objects for the first 3 months as this would strain the muscles supporting your stoma and may cause a hernia.

You may drive again between 4 – 6 weeks; you must be able to perform an emergency stop.

What about my diet?

Ideally we would like you to resume eating a well balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids, we recommend about 2-3 litres a day.

Following your surgery you may find that your bowel motions are different and people can fluctuate between constipation and loose stools. This is a consequence of the type of surgery you have had as we have used a section of your small bowel to make your stoma. This should settle down over the first few weeks or months but you may find you need to alter what you eat during this time. People find that eating small quantities little and often and avoiding long gaps between meals may help.

Are there any problems I might experience?

- **Bleeding from the stoma:** it is common for stomas to bleed when they are cleaned particularly in the first few weeks. The bleeding usually stops very quickly. **However if you notice blood coming from within the stoma please let your doctor know.**
- **Stoma bag leaking or coming unstuck:** this may occur if your skin is not dry when the bag is applied or you may have an uneven skin surface around your stoma. **Contact your stoma nurse for advice as soon as possible.** It is important to sort this problem out quickly so that your skin does not become sore.
- **Sore skin:** this is usually due to leakage of urine onto the skin and may be caused by a badly fitting bag. Check that the template size is not too big - you should only be able to see a couple of millimetres of skin around your stoma. **Contact your stoma nurse if you would like her to check your template size.** Also your stoma will reduce in size during the first 6-8 weeks; your local stoma nurse will help you resize your stoma template during this time.
- **Alternative stoma bags:** there are many different types of stoma bag on the market. Your stoma nurse will be able to show some to you and advise which would be suitable.

- **Bulging around the stoma (hernia):** sometimes due to a weakness in the abdominal muscles behind the stoma a bulge develops around the stoma. This can be uncomfortable and unsightly and may make it difficult to fit the stoma bag. Contact your stoma nurse and they can advise you about support garments. Occasionally surgery to repair a large hernia maybe suggested.
- **Altered bowel function;** you may find your bowel function a little erratic following your surgery. This is because we have taken a section of small bowel and used it to make your stoma. Some people find they either suffer with constipation or loose stools. This should settle down during the first couple of weeks or months.
- **Leakage from the urethra;** once the drain has been removed following your surgery, you may still find there is some leakage from the tube that you used to pass water from. This should reduce over time.
- **Urinary Tract Infections (UTI's);** Bacteria that is commonly present in your urostomy is usually flushed away if you drink plenty of water, we would recommend between 2-3 litres a day. Antibiotics should only be prescribed if you become unwell and have the following symptoms; cloudy, offensive smelling urine, accompanied by discomfort or pain around your stoma or kidney area and a raised temperature. If you need to take a urine sample, the easiest way is to apply a new pouch and take a sample from the first urine emptied.
- **Mucus production;** your bowel naturally secretes mucus to assist the passage of stool. Your stoma is made from a piece of bowel and will, therefore, produce mucus but again this usually decreases with time. Some people find drinking cranberry juice or taking a vitamin C tablet may decrease this mucus.

Getting help with problems & who to contact

Like any new skill, learning to cope with a stoma takes time and practice. It is very common to have a few problems in the early days.

Your stoma nurse is available to give you advice and practical and emotional support.

Most problems are easily solved, either by a telephone call or by a visit to the stoma clinic.

You will be offered regular appointments at this clinic, but if a problem occurs between clinic visits it is not necessary to wait until your next appointment.

The stoma nurse can be contacted

between 08.00 and 16.00

Monday to Friday

on 01483 571122 ext 2558 or bleep 0911

Please leave a message if we are not available and we will call you back as soon as possible.

For an urgent problem, it is usually possible to see you on the same day.

Outside office hours, or in an emergency, please contact your GP.

It is also possible to get advice from the nursing staff on your ward at the Royal Surrey County Hospital. Ring the hospital switchboard on 01483 571122 and ask to be put through to the ward you were discharged from.

You may also find it very useful to contact one of the voluntary organisations listed below.

Reference source(s):

Urostomy Association;

www.urostomyassociation.org.uk/

Contact details

Your Local Stoma Nurse is.....

Stoma Nurse at Royal Surrey County Hospital

01483 571122 ext 2558 or bleep 0911

Monday – Friday

08.00 – 16.00

Alison Roodhouse

Cystectomy Bladder Clinical Nurse Specialist

01483 571122 ext 4492

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–4.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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Author: Jane Blizzard

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