

Routine Care of Your Ostomy

Pouching System Tips

- Prepare your new pouching system before you remove your old pouching system
- Empty your pouch when it is 1/3 to 1/2 full of discharge or gas. Do not let the pouch overflow
- Empty your pouch before activities and before bedtime
- If you notice that you have a lot of gas in your pouch (colostomy or ileostomy) you may want to consider a pouch with a filter
- The best time for a routine pouching system change is in the morning before you have had anything to eat or drink
- After you apply your skin barrier, press it gently against your skin for about a minute for best adhesion. Gentle pressure and warmth help with the initial contact
- If you wear a two-piece pouching system, try placing the skin barrier on your body in a diamond shape for a smoother fit

Skin Care Tips

- Remember, less is better when caring for the skin around your stoma
- For most people, water is sufficient for cleaning the skin. Remember to wash your hands after changing or emptying your pouch
- If soap is needed, use a mild soap without lotions or creams that may leave a residue or film on your skin. This can interfere with the adhesive
- Skin protective wipes are not recommended under extended wear skin barriers as this may decrease your wear time
- Make sure the peristomal skin is clean and dry before applying your skin barrier
- Things NOT recommended for routine skin care around your stoma: soap with lotions, creams, lotions, powders, baby wipes, isopropyl alcohol, steroidal medications or ointments
- Skin irritation is not “normal.” If you discover you have red, broken or irritated skin, seek the assistance of a qualified healthcare professional like a WOC/ET nurse

Day-to-Day Tips

- Change your skin barrier on a routine basis. You will get more comfortable with this after you learn what works best for you
- Wear time is based on personal preferences and stoma characteristics, but three or four days is considered normal
- If your wear time becomes erratic or unpredictable, consult your WOC/ET nurse
- Skin barrier wear time may decrease during warmer seasons when you are perspiring more or during times of increased activity
- When traveling, plan ahead. Some suggestions include: take extra supplies, pack your ostomy products in your carry-on bag when flying, pre-cut your cut-to-fit skin barriers so you don't need to carry scissors on the plane, and obtain a travel ID which explains your need for specific supplies when traveling
- You can shower or bathe with your pouching system on or off
- If you use a two-piece pouching system, you may find it convenient to switch to a different pouch for the shower so that the pouch you wear stays dry
- When emptying your pouch, rinsing it out is not necessary. A lubricating deodorant may make emptying easier. Do not put oils or cooking sprays in your ostomy pouch
- Store your extra supplies in a cool, dry place
- Routine follow-up with your WOC/ET nurse is recommended

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COMMON TERMS	
Filter	Releases gas out of the pouch and absorbs the odor. Seen with drainable and closed pouches as a featured option
Pouch	Bag which collects output from the stoma. The type of pouch is drainable, closed, and urostomy, based on the type of ostomy you have
Pouching System	Includes the skin barrier and the pouch. Options are a one-piece pouching system or a two-piece pouching system. An integrated tape border around the skin barrier provides additional security
Skin Barrier	The portion of your pouching system that fits immediately around your stoma. It protects your skin and holds your pouching system in place. Sometimes called a wafer or flange
Wear Time	The length of time a pouching system can be worn before it fails. Wear times can vary but should be fairly consistent for each person
WOC (Wound, Ostomy, Continence) Nurse	A nurse with additional education who specializes in ostomy care. Sometimes called an ET (enterostomal therapy) nurse.

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Other recommendations from my healthcare professional:

Routine follow-up with your healthcare professional is recommended.

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