

Post-colostomy Home Care



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GENERAL INFORMATION

During a colostomy, the colon is rerouted through the abdominal wall. Stool and mucus can then pass out of the body through this opening, called a stoma. The following are general guidelines for home care following a colostomy. Your doctor and nurse will go over any information that is specific to your condition.

SYMPTOMS TO WATCH FOR

We advise that you call your doctor if you are experiencing any of the following conditions:

- Excessive bleeding from your stoma
- No gas or stool for greater than one day
- Significant change in the color of your stoma
- Bulging skin around your stoma
- A stoma that looks like it's getting longer
- Fever of 100.4°F or higher
- Bodily Chills
- Redness, swelling, bleeding, or drainage from your incision
- Nausea or vomiting
- Increased pain

POST-COLOSTOMY GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following guidelines have been laid out to help you with your personal post-colostomy care at home. Please contact your doctor if you have any questions related to these recommendations.

- Take care of your stoma as directed. Your doctor and nurse discussed how to do this with you before you left the hospital. You will need appliances to collect the stool.
- Ask your doctor or nurse for a patient education sheet about colostomy care before you leave the hospital. This will help remind you how to care for yourself.
- Don't lift anything heavier than 5 pounds or push a vacuum cleaner until your doctor says it is okay.
- Don't drive until after your first doctor's appointment after your surgery.
- If you ride in a car for more than short trips, stop frequently to stretch your legs.

- Ask your doctor when you can expect to return to work. Most patients are able to return to work within six weeks after surgery.
- Increase your activity gradually. Take short walks on a level surface.
- Shower as needed. Ask a friend or family member to stand close by in case you need help.
- Wash your incision site with soap and water and pat it dry. It is okay to wash colostomy in the shower with or without appliance covering.
- Check your incision every day for redness, drainage, swelling, or separation of the skin.
- Take your medications exactly as directed.
- Take all usual prescription medications.

FOLLOW-UP

You should call 801-601-4423 when you get home to schedule an appointment to see your surgeon. The first visit is 10-14 days AFTER you are discharged home.