

eakin[®]  [™]



skin care



Taking good care of your peri-stomal skin is of utmost importance. Your skin is the base, on which all of your stoma products will be placed, so it is vital that it is kept in good condition.

How do I evaluate my skin condition?

The skin around your stoma should be the same colour and condition as the skin on the rest of your body. However, if the skin around your stoma sometimes becomes slightly red and sore or irritated, you are not alone. According to a study*, 45% of people with a stoma suffer from skin problems near their stoma. However, most of those people surveyed in this study were unaware or would not admit that they had problems with their skin.

As we all have different skin types, the condition of the peri-stomal skin will vary hugely from one ostomate to another. Signs that your skin condition can be improved range from slight irritation and itching to severe pain and bleeding or weepy skin.

Many people with stomas think that red skin and slight discomfort close to the stoma is normal and acceptable, however this need not be the case.

What causes sore skin?

It is useful to understand the causes of sore skin, so that you can try your best to avoid them.

- 1. Faecal Enzymes** – the enzymes which are normally put to good use inside your body, breaking down your food into digestible components, will be excreted through your stoma and into your stoma pouch. If they come into contact with your skin outside the body, they have the effect of breaking down the skin. Ileostomies contain high levels of enzymes as the food is being prematurely removed from the digestive system, hence their output is particularly corrosive.
- 2. Moisture** – a large part of urine or faeces is made up of water. Prolonged contact with water will weaken and break down your skin.



Healthy skin



Irritated skin

*"Are Peristomal Skin Disorders Inevitable?", Herlufsen, Grete Olsen, Carlsen, Nybaek, Karlsmark & Jemec, WCET Congress, July 2006.

- 3. Chemical / Biological Irritants** – such as urea, ammonia and bacteria present in stomal output will damage skin over a prolonged period.

In your everyday life as an ostomate, there are some things that can compromise your healthy skin:

- **Ill-fitting appliance**

Your stoma will take around 8 weeks post surgery to settle down into what will be its average size and shape. If the hole in the skin protector is too small, it may dig into your stoma and restrict it; if the hole is too big, the output from your stoma will leak out onto your skin. Please see 'The Pouching Process' booklet for more information.

Tip: Your stoma can change size, so it is worthwhile measuring your stoma on a weekly basis for the first 8 weeks to check that you are still wearing the correct size. Using an Eakin Cohesive SLIMS® (839005) around the base of your stoma and even slightly up the spout will protect your skin against any output seeping through the skin protector.

- **'Pancaking' (colostomates only)**

'Pancaking' is caused by thicker stool which gets stuck at the top of the pouch when there is no air. It dries out and sticks around the stoma, instead of falling to the bottom of the pouch. When the stoma starts to work again, the output leaks out under the skin protector causing it to lift from the skin, which results in further leakage.

Tip: Try putting a small amount of baby oil onto the inside of the pouch, where it touches the stoma. This will help the output to slide to the bottom of the pouch. Another idea is to put a few pieces of crumpled up toilet paper into your pouch near the outside edges, this will stop the vacuum effect and keep air in your pouch. If your pouch has a filter, place the filter covers over the filter, which will also keep air in your pouch.

- **High output stoma**

If your stoma produces a lot of output, it is advisable to take extra measures to protect your skin.

Tip: An Eakin Cohesive® Seal (839002) will offer you the maximum protection against leakage. You will also need to empty/change your pouch more often. If your output is particularly watery in content, it is advisable to use Perform. This product comes in a sachet form, which, when placed in your pouch, turns your output to gel, decreasing leaks and simplifying emptying.

- **Poorly sited stoma – retracted stoma**

With standard ostomy surgery, your stoma will have been sited pre-operatively. However with emergency surgery, the stoma can be poorly sited. The same principle applies for any stoma, you must achieve a flat platform to place your pouch. Any scars, skin folds or dips must be filled in, otherwise you will leave a channel through which the leaking output will flow.

Tip: Eakin Cohesive® Seals and Cohesive® Paste can be used individually or in combination, to fill in any areas which are likely to cause leakage. Stomas which lie flush with the skin or in a little dip can be pushed out, using a Cohesive® Seal (839002) or a convex pouch so that the output flows directly into the pouch. A convex pouch can also be useful for smoothing out creases near the stoma.

- **Change in body size**

The shape of your abdomen can change with weight loss or weight gain. Considerable weight loss can make your stoma smaller and considerable weight gain can make it bigger.

Tip: If you think that your stoma has changed size, you should ask to be remeasured by your Stoma Care Nurse.

- **Change in output**

There are a number of factors which can affect your stoma output such as changes in medication, the introduction of chemo or radiotherapy, eating different foods, enduring stressful periods or having a tummy bug/diarrhoea.

Tip: Please also refer to our 'Diet' booklet to examine the effects that some foods can have on your output.

- **Too frequent pouch changes**

Less is definitely more when it comes to pouch changes. The less you have to interfere with and wash your skin, the better. Unnecessary washing and cleansing can remove the skin's natural protective layers and increase the likelihood of irritation.

Tip: Using an Eakin Cohesive® Seal will prolong the wear time of your pouch, meaning that you have to change less often.

- **Hairy Abdomen**

Some people prefer to remove the hair around their stomas as pouch removal can be extremely painful when the pouch pulls on the hairs.

Tip: If you decide to shave, it is less painful to wet shave in the direction of hair growth, once a week. A clean disposable razor should be used. Another option is to cut the hairs with scissors. Hair removal creams are not advisable.

- **Bleeding**

If you experience any bleeding it is important to check the source of the bleeding. If there is blood in the stomal output, you should seek immediate medical attention. However if the stoma itself is bleeding after washing, this is quite normal, as it is made of the same tissue as the inside of your mouth.

- **Lumps around your stoma**

If you experience any sort of growths or lumps around your stoma, you should seek medical attention. A large bulge may indicate a parastomal hernia.

Tip: If you do experience a parastomal hernia, Eakin Stoma Support Belts are recommended to provide full abdominal support. You can find more information on their usage and benefits in 'The Pouching Process' booklet.

- **Skin allergies**

If you suspect a skin allergy, you need to determine which product you are allergic to. You can determine this by patch testing the products individually on another part of your body.

It is possible that you can become sensitized to a product that you have been using for years. In this case you should speak to your Stoma Care Nurse to discuss your options.

Tip: Eakin Cohesive® products are the most skin friendly on the market. If you become allergic to the skin protector on your pouch, a large Eakin Cohesive® Seal can be used to cover the area of sensitive skin, before placing your usual pouch on top.

Skin care for Urostomates

Urostomates are advised to empty their pouches regularly as the urine in the pouch becomes more corrosive over time. This can be damaging to the skin, should the urine come into contact with it. It is especially important for urostomates to keep themselves properly hydrated. If the urine becomes more concentrated, it will also be damaging to the skin on contact. Please see our 'Diet' booklet for more information.

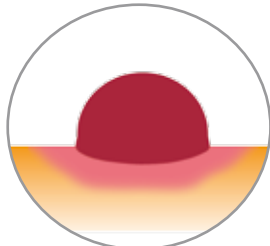
Is there anything I can use to treat sore skin?

Eakin Cohesive® Seals were developed in 1980 and have since been helping ostomates around the world to have healthy skin around their stomas.

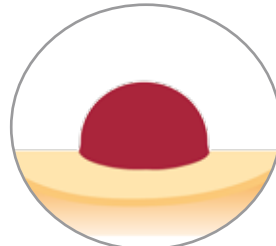
Cohesive® Seals work in a 3-way action to combat the main causes of sore skin:

1. Cohesive® Seals more effectively bind harmful enzymes than any other seal, which dramatically reduces the effect they can have on your skin.
2. Cohesive® Seals absorb more moisture than any other seal, therefore your skin around the stoma will be protected against breakdown.
3. Cohesive® Seals block chemical and biological irritants so they cannot come into contact with your skin.

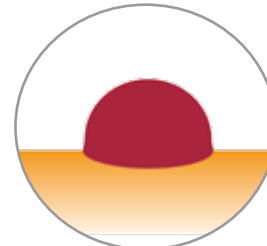
Skin healing with Cohesive® Seals



Skin close to the bottom of the stoma is red and sore.



Cohesive® Seals prevent leaks and protect the skin around the stoma.



Skin problems are prevented and resolved when Cohesive® Seals are used.

How should I prevent sore skin from occurring?

As we all know, prevention is better than cure. For this reason we recommend using Cohesive® SLIMS as part of your stoma care routine.

- Step 1.** Use lukewarm tap water to clean the skin around your stoma. Make sure that your skin is as dry as possible to encourage adhesion.
- Step 2.** If you have any residue left on your skin, use Release Adhesive Remover. Use of any other creams compromises adhesion. If the residue cannot be removed easily, continue with your pouching routine. The residue will be removed at the next pouch change.
- Step 3.** If you have any scars or skin folds to fill, use Cohesive® Paste.
- Step 4.** Then stretch a Cohesive® SLIMS to the right size so that it will fit snugly around your stoma. Warming the seals helps them to mould to your body contours.
- Step 5.** Place the Cohesive® SLIMS on the skin around your stoma. It should fit right up against the stoma all around, note the diagrams below.
- Step 6.** Fit the pouch in position as normal and hold firmly in position for 30 seconds.





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