



A SMALL PART OF A BIGGER LIFE.

# The care you give

## Helping your loved one after stoma surgery

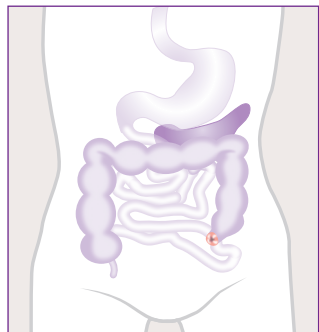


Created to support friends or family caring for ostomates

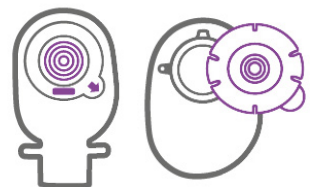
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# Support for you as you care for your loved one



This booklet has been created to support anyone caring for a loved one with a stoma. It aims to help you to understand what happens during and after stoma surgery and give practical tips on how you can help your loved one.

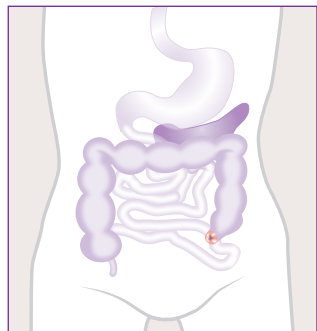
We'll guide you through stoma pouching systems and accessories, and outline the differences between products. Our step-by-step guide will show you how to change a pouch, and we highlight some of the common issues people with a stoma can face, as well as giving tips on how to avoid or treat them.

With this information, and ongoing care and support from your stoma care nurse, we hope to make your lives that bit easier.

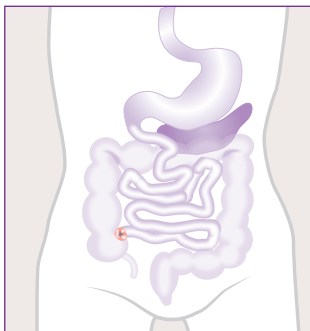
***“Developing a routine together makes caring for a stoma easier”***

# Understanding a stoma

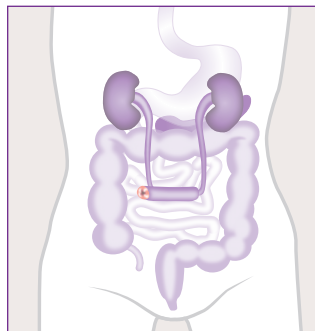
A stoma is made when part of the bowel is brought outside the body through a small surgical opening on the abdomen. It is created to divert waste from the body, either stool or urine, and will look circular or oval and pink. Straight after surgery, the stoma will be slightly swollen, but will reduce in size over the next 2-3 months, before setting into shape. Sometimes a stoma is flush to the body, sometimes it protrudes, both are completely normal as a stoma is as unique as the individual person. It has no nerve endings, so it should not feel painful to the touch. There are many reasons that someone may have to have a stoma, and you will have had the chance to talk to your loved one's surgeon or stoma care nurse prior to their surgery. After the operation, waste will pass from the body through the stoma, and is collected in a pouch worn on the abdomen.



**Colostomy**  
This type of stoma is formed from the colon, also known as the large intestine. The output from a colostomy is generally paste-like to semi-formed.



**Ileostomy**  
This type of stoma is formed from the ileum, also known as the small intestine. The output from an ileostomy is usually quite liquid in consistency.



**Urostomy**  
This type of stoma is formed by joining a small section of the ileum to the ureters. The output from a urostomy is urine and possibly some mucus.

# Stoma know-how

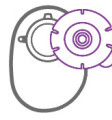
When caring for someone with a stoma, it is likely that you will play a major role when it comes to changing their pouching system and maintaining their stoma routine. Your loved one will need to wear a pouch to collect the waste from their stoma. The pouch is attached to their body by a baseplate, and comes in two types – one-piece and two-piece.

As a stoma changes you may find the original products prescribed don't fit just as well. You have control to change the pouch or add accessories to ensure a comfortable and secure routine. Speak to your stoma care nurse for advice and guidance.


## POUCHING SYSTEMS EXPLAINED




**One-piece pouching systems**  
come with the baseplate already attached to the pouch. When changing the pouch, the whole system is removed and replaced with a new one.




**Two-piece pouching systems**  
consist of a pouch and a separate baseplate. The pouch can be changed without the need to remove the baseplate. One and two-piece pouching systems can come with either a soft convex or flat baseplate. Most baseplates will need changing twice weekly.



**Flat baseplates**  
are usually suited to people with a protruding stoma.




**Soft convex baseplates**  
are designed to gently push down on the skin around the stoma to help it protrude from the body, which helps to prevent leaks.



**Drainable pouches**  
can be emptied and resealed, and are more often used by people with an ileostomy, when the stool has a liquid consistency. \*



**Closed pouches**  
are usually used by people with a colostomy, where the stool is formed.



**Urostomy pouches**  
are used by people with a urostomy, and have a tap which opens and closes for easy urine drainage.

\* Colostomates with a more liquid output may also find it easier to use this type of pouch.

# Practical tips for you as a carer

The skin around the stoma is called peristomal skin and it is important to keep it dry and healthy. A leaking pouch will lead to output coming into contact with the skin, making it sore, uncomfortable and even damaged over time.



**“Managing a stoma at home is something you can support your loved one with”**

## Caring for peristomal skin:

- Clean and dry the skin around the stoma using warm water with dry wipes every time you change the pouch. Always apply the pouching system to dry skin, free from oily creams.
- Remove the baseplate gently, from top to bottom, when changing the pouch. You can use adhesive remover to help you remove the pouch gently.
- Keep an eye on the peristomal skin - it should look the same as the rest of your loved one's skin. If you notice anything unusual or they complain about itching or soreness, seek advice from their stoma care nurse.
- Care for the skin from the inside out by making sure your loved one is eating a healthy, balanced and nutritious diet incorporating vital vitamins and minerals. Staying hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids can also prevent skin from drying out.

## Avoiding leakages:

- Make sure your loved one's baseplate fits snugly around the stoma - neither too loose nor too tight. Measure the stoma regularly especially over the first 3 months as the stoma will shrink slightly over this period. The stoma nurse will show you how to customise the pouch to the perfect size. Pre-cut products are also available when stoma has settled in size.
- To ensure good adhesion, gently run a finger around the baseplate edges and where it meets the stoma. It can also help to place your hands over the baseplate for a few moments.
- Your loved one can spend a moment or two with hands placed on the baseplate to create a good bond between skin and baseplate.
- Empty the pouch regularly - a full pouch can pull on the baseplate and allow output to seep beneath it.



**You can use the measuring guide provided in our pouch boxes to help with measuring and adjusting the cutting of the baseplate.**

# Caring for someone with cognitive impairment



When you are caring for someone who has both a stoma and cognitive impairment, you will play a major role when it comes to maintaining their stoma routine.

This can seem challenging, but with the right guidance you'll find a way that works for you both.

Preparation is key, so before you change their pouch, wash your hands with warm soapy water and make sure all the items you need are close at hand.

If your loved one can help, get them to wear gloves in case they come into contact with any output and avoid any mess.

These practical tips should also make a pouch change much easier!:

- If your loved one is able to help during pouch changes, help them by giving short and clear instructions, repeated several times.
- Devising a step-by-step written or visual guide might help.
- Before each step, explain what you are about to do.
- Develop your routine together, and get your loved one involved by asking them to pass or hold items.



***“If your loved one is restless during pouch changes, encourage them to perform another task such as brushing their hair, to distract them”***

- Carry out your pouching routine in the same place each time where possible.
- If your loved one is restless during pouch changes, encourage them to perform another task such as brushing their hair, to distract them.
- If it helps, stand in front of a mirror, so your loved one can see what you're doing.
- To stop your loved one accidentally removing their pouch, try tucking their top into their underwear for extra security.
- If you notice your loved one touching their pouch it might mean that it is full and needs to be drained or changed.
- If your loved one wakes in the night, the chances are that their pouch needs to be emptied, so always check to avoid accidents.



# Everyday living with a Stoma

From staying active and eating well to going on holiday and getting a good night's sleep, there's nothing stopping you and your loved one from enjoying life to the full after their stoma surgery.

## Helping your loved one to stay active



There are so many benefits to exercise, and encouraging your loved one to stay active can help both their physical health and their mental wellbeing.

### Start slowly

Start any new activity gently, building gradually and setting small goals along the way, and make sure you seek advice from your loved

one's stoma nurse if you feel the need. If your loved one was active before surgery, there's no reason why, with the right guidance and support, they shouldn't regain their fitness and get back to the lifestyle they love. If they didn't previously take part in physical activity, start slowly by taking them for a gentle walk or a swimming session. Both these activities are very easy on the abdominal muscles, which is important after stoma surgery.

***“Start any new activity gently, and seek advice from your loved one's stoma nurse if you feel the need”***



### Be patient

There's no rush, so take it one day, one walk or one swim at a time. Being active does not have to involve working out at the gym – simple pleasures like walking the dog or a stroll in the countryside are great ways to exercise as your loved one recovers from surgery.

Your loved one's stoma care nurse will be able to offer advice regarding when to increase exercises.

As they regain their strength and confidence you can encourage them to take on other types of exercise that they enjoy such as pilates, yoga, cycling or hiking. If your loved one attends a class, remember that sweating during exercise can lead to dehydration, so make sure they drink plenty of water.

Be careful if your loved one engages with heavy weights or intense exercise as without support an ostomate can be at risk of herniation.

# The importance of eating well



## Top tips for healthy eating

Despite what many people think, living with a stoma does not have to make a huge difference to what your loved one can eat. With time they should be able to enjoy the foods they ate before surgery but it is worth considering how they eat.

- Keep it full and varied – it's important that someone with a stoma eats a balanced diet including fruit, vegetables, proteins and carbohydrates.
- Serve smaller portions – when introducing new foods, only give small amounts to see how their body responds.
- Little and often – straight after stoma surgery some people find that eating 4-6 smaller meals throughout the day suits them better than eating 2-3 larger meals.
- Bring mealtimes forward – to decrease the amount of output produced overnight, try not to serve large meals late in the evening.
- Make a note – keeping a food diary will help you to work out which foods your loved one needs to avoid or eat in moderation.
- Help digestion – encourage your loved one to chew their food well, or mash it or cut it into small pieces before serving.

## Work out which foods to avoid

When you're caring for someone with a stoma, you'll need to keep an eye on the consistency of the output and monitor any shifts that could indicate intolerance to certain food. Spicy foods, fruit juices, whole wheats, alcohol and too many green vegetables can all cause loose output. Everyone is different though, so try keeping a food diary to help you find out which foods don't cause issues, and which are best avoided.

## Avoiding food blockages with an ileostomy

Just as some foods can lead to loose output, others like nuts, mushrooms, sweetcorn and coconut can cause a blockage if they are not properly digested, especially for ileostomates. These foods can swell in the bowel, creating an obstruction that stops the stoma from working properly, often leading to cramps and sickness. They don't need removed from a diet though, just be careful ensuring these foods are fully cooked and that your loved one chews them well. If you need to, mash them or cut them into small pieces.

# Stay hydrated

Experts recommend that we all drink at least two litres of fluids a day, and staying hydrated is vital for anyone with a stoma. If you can spot the signs of dehydration, you'll be able to help your loved one stay healthy.

## KEEP YOUR LOVED ONE HYDRATED

- Encourage them to drink at least 2 litres of fluids a day.
- Salt helps the body to absorb and keep hydrated, consider giving them foods such as crisps to avoid dehydration, unless they have been advised not to.
- Consult your Stoma Care Nurse if you have any worries.

## KNOW THE SIGNS OF DEHYDRATION

- Decreased and dark-coloured urine
- Dry mouth and feeling thirsty
- Feeling weak and lethargic
- Headaches and confusion
- Consult your Stoma Care Nurse if you have any worries



***“Full and varied - it's important to eat a balanced diet with fruit, vegetables, proteins and carbohydrates.”***

# Going on holiday

Your loved one has been through major surgery, and as their carer you are both adjusting to life with a stoma. If anyone deserves a holiday, it's you! Having a stoma doesn't stop anyone travelling, you will just need to prepare a little bit more. Here's some hints and tips to help everything run smoothly.



## Make sure your loved one is fit to travel

If your loved one has only just had surgery, speak to their stoma care nurse to ensure they are fit to travel.

## Arrange the right travel insurance

Make sure you take out the right level of travel insurance for you and your loved one. Anyone with a stoma, who has had stoma surgery or is undergoing treatment is assumed to have a pre-existing medical condition, and this may affect their premium and cover.

## Pack extra stoma supplies

Changes in diet, temperature and environment can make a stoma more active. The last thing you want is to run out of supplies during your holiday, so make sure you pack extras for every eventuality. It's also a good idea to divide stoma supplies between both of you, in hand luggage and main suitcases.

Some pouches may not stick so well on sweaty skin, so consider speaking to your stoma care nurse about products that may help if you are heading to warmer climates.

## Going abroad

At every airport you will have to go through airport security, which will include a walk through a body scanner. As this will almost certainly indicate that your loved one is wearing a stoma pouch, we recommend they carry a travel certificate. This can be provided by their stoma nurse and will alert staff to give them extra time or care during security. You can also enquire about "hidden disability" lanyards, which will identify them to airport staff and airline crew as someone who needs a little more support, time or understanding.

## Be mindful about food and drink

Enjoying the local cuisine is often a fun part of going on holiday. Depending on where you go, it's worth being extra vigilant when travelling with someone who has a stoma. To help your loved one avoid problems on holiday they should take these steps:

- It's ok to enjoy caffeine or alcohol but ensure you are both drinking plenty of water as well.
- Use bottled water – avoid ice cubes in drinks or food that is uncooked and may have been prepared in tap water, for example salads or raw vegetables. Consider using bottled water for brushing your teeth too.
- Buy packaged ice cream – this sweet treat is one of the biggest causes of stomach upsets, if in doubt, stick to a commercial brand that's sold in sealed packaging.
- Pack rehydration powders – an essential item which can be used to replace lost salts in the event of dehydration.

## Don't be worried about swimming

Most ostomy pouches are water-repellent and can also be fitted with a filter cover for extra security.

That means if your loved one wants to, they can dive straight into the sea or pool. No special swimwear is needed, but some ostomates prefer to wear something to hide their pouch such as a tankini or high-waisted swim shorts. Swimming costumes are also available with built-in pouch pockets.

## Back in the driving seat



Getting behind the wheel and driving again is an important step back on the road to independence and freedom for many people after stoma surgery.

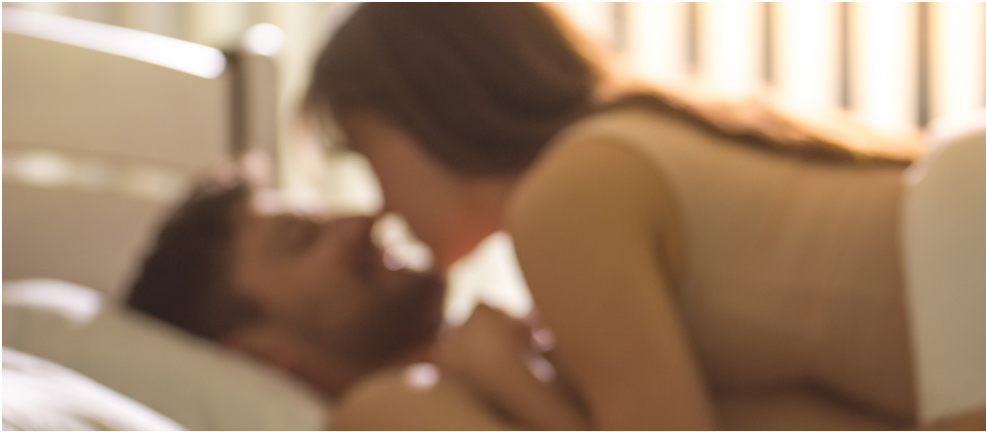
If your loved one drives, they should feel comfortable enough to perform an emergency stop and reversing that may require additional movement in the car.

Keep some extra supplies in the car, just in case, and be sure to check with their insurance provider that they have adequate cover.



# Intimacy

If you and your loved one enjoyed an intimate relationship before their stoma surgery, there is no reason for this to stop. It's important to acknowledge the changes their body has been through and that you communicate and share your feelings.



## Communication and experimentation

People often tell us that their relationships are stronger than ever after stoma surgery. For one simple reason: communication. By opening-up and sharing their thoughts, the bonds they have with their partners are strengthened.

They may need to experiment with different positions to make intimacy more comfortable and consider using extra lubrication. They might experience vaginal dryness or erectile dysfunction, if so seek advice from their stoma nurse.

## Confidence and comfort

Being confident is about being comfortable. Here are some tips you may want to consider:

**Be prepared** – empty or change your pouch before sexual activity.

**Cover your pouch** – some people prefer to cover their stoma pouches during intimacy. There are many garments available from lacy waistbands and lingerie designed to disguise or hide your pouch to ostomy belts and wraps.

**Try a smaller pouch** – it might be possible for you to wear a smaller, more discreet pouch.

## Being open about having a stoma. Or not.

It's your loved one's stoma. So, whether they tell people about it or not is entirely up to them. Some people like to have the reassurance of family and friends to rely on, especially during recovery.

While others are more private and may find it awkward to talk about their condition. They'll have their own reasons and ultimately, it's their decision.

# Getting a good night's sleep

Good sleep is vital for everyone, to aid physical and emotional health. But bedtime can also be a cause of concern for people living with a stoma and their carers because of the risk of leakage. These tips for a more relaxed night-time routine should help to ease your concerns.



- Always perform a pouch change, or ensure the pouch is empty, before bedtime. Double check that the pouch is on properly.
- Don't serve the last meal too close to bedtime to give the stoma time to do its work beforehand. It's also a good idea to avoid fibrous food late in the day, as well as fizzy drinks.
- Your loved one will get a better night's sleep if they are comfortable. Try to support their body with pillows, with one in between their legs or under their back.

# Remember to care for you too

Caring for a loved one with a stoma although rewarding, will no doubt lead to some stressful times, and it is vital that you care for yourself too. If you are physically and emotionally healthy, it will help both you and the person you are caring for. If you feel you are struggling to cope, some of these self-care tips may be useful:



***“Care for yourself by getting plenty of exercise, sleep and healthy food”***



- Eat a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids.
- Exercise regularly by taking short walks.
- Try to get a good night's sleep – avoiding caffeine, limiting screen time, having a warm bath before bed could help.
- Don't try to fit too much into your day, and schedule in some relaxation such as reading, watching a favourite TV programme or listening to music.
- It's good to talk, so why not call a friend or family member for a chat.
- Don't be afraid to ask family and friends for help.

You should also remember that you are not alone if you are feeling worried or overwhelmed. Talking to your loved one's stoma care nurse could be a useful first step to finding practical solutions. Connecting with people in a similar situation by joining a support group, or seeking online advice and tips could also be helpful.

eakin dot® pouches are designed to manage stoma care with ease



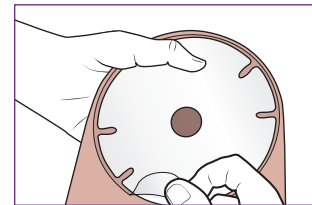
# Managing a stoma simply and with ease



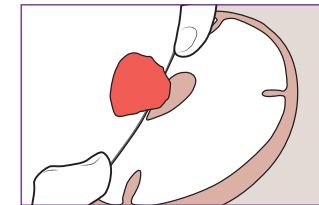
*“If your loved one can help, give them short, clear and repeated instructions”*

Other pouches may be used slightly differently - always refer to the instructions for use to be sure.

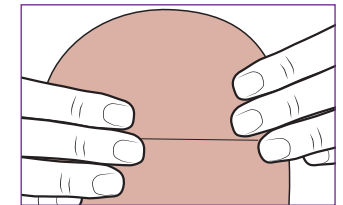
## eakin dot® 1-piece application and removal



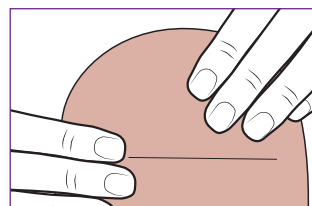
After measuring and cutting the baseplate  
**Peel** (protective film of the baseplate)



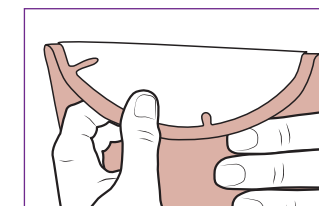
**Align**



**Apply**



**Smooth**  
(upwards and outwards)



**Removal**  
Peel downwards and away from the skin

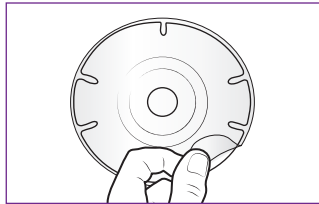
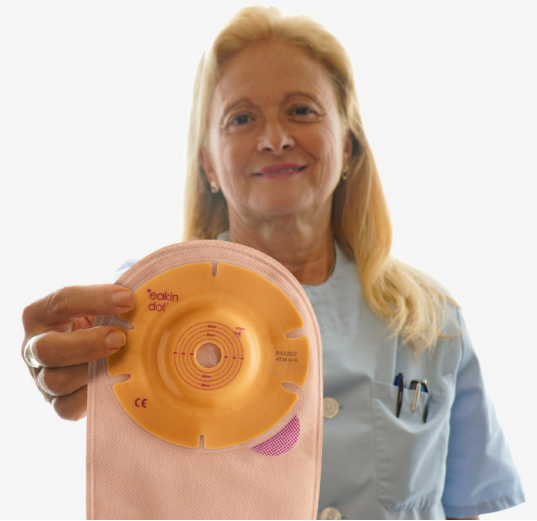


Scan here to see the application video

# eakin dot® 2-piece application and removal

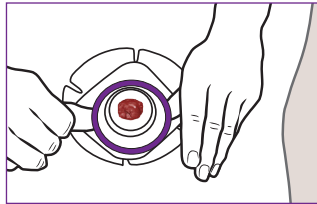


# Emptying a drainable pouch



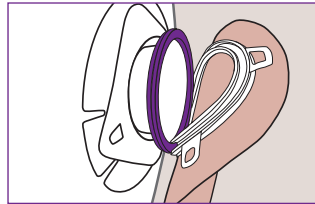
After measuring and cutting the baseplate

**Peel** (protective film of the baseplate)



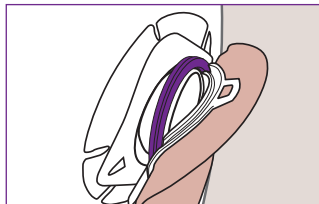
**Align**

the centre hole of the baseplate around the stoma

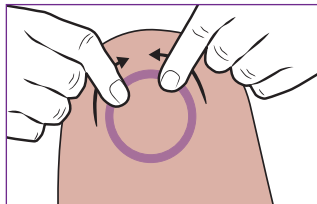


**Pop**

extend pop-up on baseplate



**Apply**



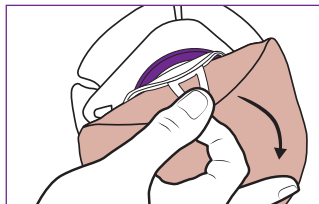
**Click**

An audible click will confirm secure attachment

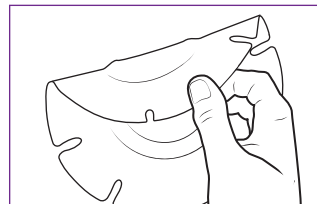


Scan here to see the application video

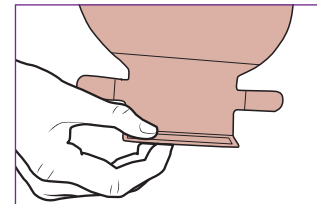
## To remove



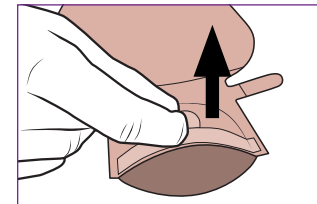
**Peel down the pouch**



(If you wish to remove the baseplate)  
**Peel** downwards and away from the skin. Use adhesive remover to help prevent skin stripping

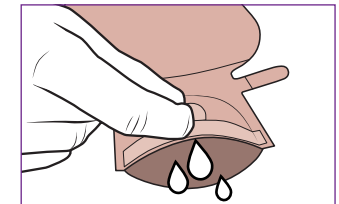


**Peel tabs and unfold**

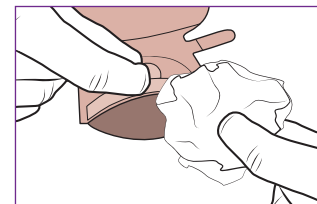


**Pull upwards, opening tab**

Grip the outlet at both sides and pull the tab

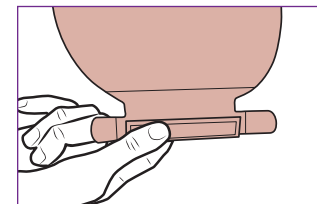


**Drain**

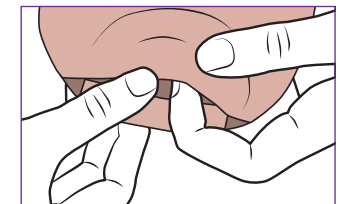


**Clean**

(with a flushable wipe or toilet paper)



**Fold outlet and close the Velcro tabs to secure**



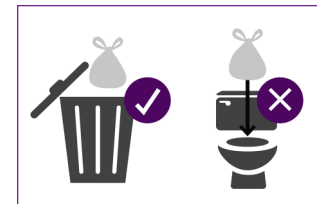
**Optional:**

Attach Velcro strip to Velcro dot under the split

## Disposal

Place used products into a waste bag and waste bin

Do not flush the product down the toilet.



# Supporting products

At eakin®, we have a range of supporting accessories that can help create a secure fit that can make your routine easier to manage and more comfortable.

## ACCESSORIES EXPLAINED

### Seals

These absorbent seals can be moulded and stretched to fit around any shape or size of stoma to ensure a secure fit. They contain skin-friendly ingredients and can be used to help prevent leaks. Simply apply then fit the pouch as usual.



### Paste

This alcohol-free filler can be used to smooth out the skin around the stoma for a better pouch fit and reduced risk of leaks.



### Barrier protection

This barrier film has been designed to protect the skin from bodily fluids while also moisturising and creating a good surface for pouch adhesion.



### Adhesive remover

An alcohol-free, silicone-based adhesive remover designed to help make pouch removal both less painful and help prevent skin stripping.



# Make a note of it

This guide has been created to help you as a carer for someone living with a stoma.

Use this space to make a note of all the important information and details about their condition, so it's all in one handy place.



Stoma Nurse.....

Hospital .....

Telephone.....

Extension.....

Stoma Type (Loop or End).....

Operation Name.....

Date of Surgery.....

Surgeon/Consultant.....

Stoma products used...

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# Make a note

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