



Fit to live your life.

Managing a *Parastomal Hernia*



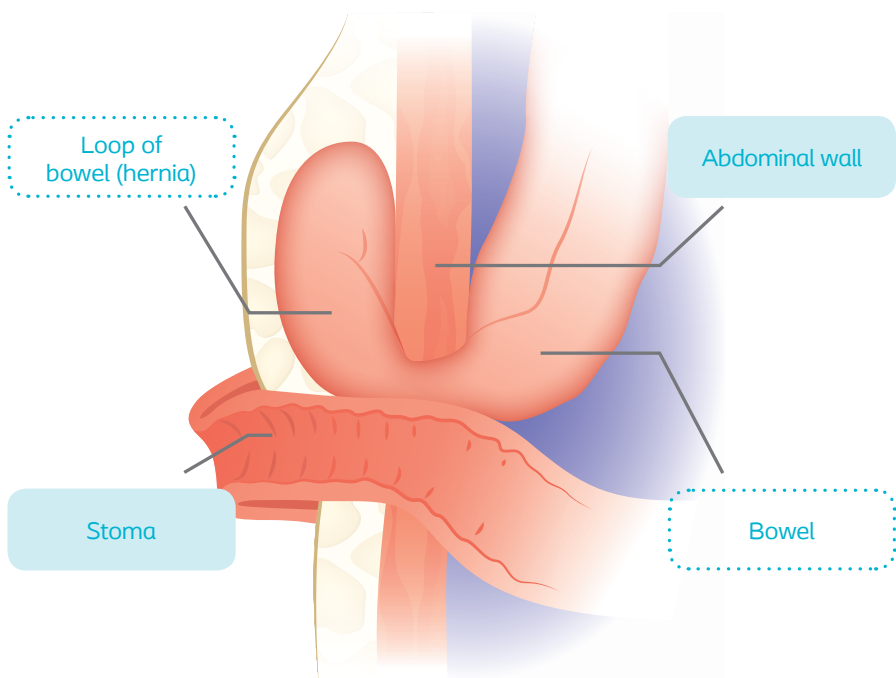
Coloplast

What is a parastomal hernia?

When you had your ostomy surgery, a section of your bowel was brought out through an incision (cut) in your abdominal wall to create the stoma. This opening may cause a weakness in the abdominal wall, allowing the bowel to push forward (see diagram below).

There are many different types of hernias that people can develop, and reasons they occur will depend on individual risk factors. This booklet is designed to help you reduce your personal risks.

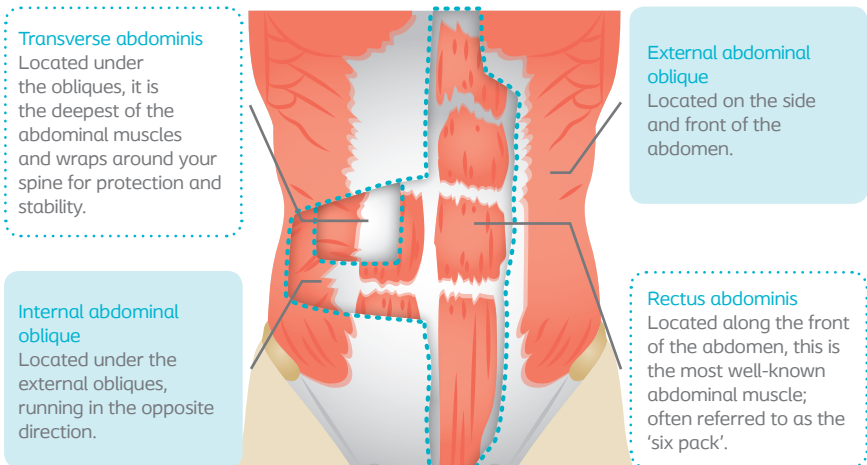
If you already have a hernia around your stoma, we will provide some hints and tips on what you can do to protect and support your abdominal muscles.



Am I at risk of developing a hernia?

Your abdominal muscles are essential for your daily life. You use them all the time for everyday body movements. They collectively form your 'core' which:

- Provides protection for your internal organs and spine
- Promotes movement and balance to the front and back of your body
- Provides stability and strength to maintain good posture



Understanding what your core muscles do (with or without a stoma) is important in knowing how you can reduce your chance of a hernia developing.

There are a number of factors that can increase someone's risk of developing a hernia

For example:

- Straining your abdominal muscles – e.g. poor lifting technique of heavy objects, or manual labor without proper support
- Weak core muscle strength
- Being overweight – causes undue pressure and strain around your abdomen
- Smoking - reduces the oxygen in the tissues



And your medical history:

- A previous history of hernia
- Emergency surgery or sepsis
- High dose steroids

A man with a beard and short dark hair is smiling and looking towards the right. He is wearing a grey t-shirt. In the background, there is a blue wall with some white paint splatters and a microscope on a stand with green wires hanging from it.

How do I reduce my risk of developing a hernia?

After Surgery

The 12 weeks after your surgery is the MOST important time to be careful.

What you should do

Maintain good posture

Stand tall, sit up straight.

Start gentle exercise

Such as the Core 4 to strengthen your abdominal muscles.

Wear 'support' garments

These can be purchased from most department stores or online.

Support belts are also available online or from medical supply distributors.

If you feel you are about to cough or sneeze

Place a small cushion over your abdominal area, and push against your stomach muscles.

Do not smoke

Avoid inflicting any strain

on those healing 'core' abdominal muscles.

Avoid lifting over 5 pounds for 6-8 weeks after surgery², including vacuuming, doing the laundry, ironing or mowing the lawn.

Why should I do this

➤ This will help to strengthen your core muscles.

➤ This will build the strength and stability back to your core muscles. These exercises have been approved by physical therapists and colorectal surgeons.

➤ These will offer support to the muscles from the outside. Many people find the additional support over the ostomy pouch is helpful too.

➤ This will provide extra support to the muscles as a cough or sneeze exerts internal pressure on the weakened muscles.

➤ Research shows that smoking increases your risk of developing an incisional hernia four times more than those who don't smoke.¹

➤ When you lift something heavy, it increases your abdominal pressure. Since your muscles are still recovering, this sudden increase in pressure may cause a hernia to form.

Check with your surgeon or ostomy nurse before you start anything new.



Keeping your risks low

After three months of practicing these recommendations, you will have established good behaviors that will help decrease your risk of hernia development. It is important to continue these practices.

Lifting

You should be gradually re-introducing your normal “heavier” activities. Good lifting technique is very important now. *Remember: Bend your knees and keep a straight back.*

Smoking Cessation

- Smokers are four times more likely to develop a hernia.³
- Seek advice from your local pharmacist or physician to help you stop.

Maintain a Healthy Weight

In a recent survey, 45% of ostomates felt they had put on more weight than they liked following their ostomy surgery⁴. Make sensible diet choices that support a healthy lifestyle. A balanced diet will help you with this. Specific diet information is available on www.coloplastcare.com/en-CA/ostomy/lifestyle/diet/

Your Core

- Stay focused on your abdominal strength. Maintain the Core 4 on a daily basis.
- Stay focused on good, straight posture.
- Exercise regularly and build the intensity carefully. It is possible to do any sport/exercise that you wish.
- Walking, jogging, running, cycling, dancing, swimming or group exercise classes are all good activities to start with.
- **Just take care.**
Remember – Don't take the risk of pushing your abdominal muscles too hard, too suddenly.

A portrait of a woman with dark skin and short dreadlocks, smiling slightly. She is wearing a bright pink button-down shirt over a white top with a colorful butterfly pattern. The background is a plain, light grey.

Katryna

Should I wear support garments?

Wearing support garments such as support underwear or an ostomy support belt can be very beneficial. Together with your core exercises, support garments may reduce the development of a parastomal hernia.

What do we mean by support garments?

This includes undergarments that are made with a material which has lycra/elastic interwoven into the garment. These can be purchased at medical supply stores.

We would advise you wear this type of undergarment at all times.

For men, high-waisted boxer shorts, or cycling shorts with lycra offer support over and around the stoma as well.

These types of undergarments can be purchased at retailers such as sporting goods stores.

Please remember this type of undergarment will NOT put pressure on your stoma and will not stop it from working.

What should I do if I need more support?

Support garments are available for those who are at greater risk of developing a hernia, or who already have a hernia.

These support garments are made with a much stronger material than regular support underwear and are not available through stores, but rather through specialty suppliers.

They are available in the form of belts, underwear and girdles, and come in a number of different strengths of support.

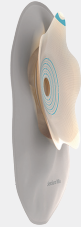
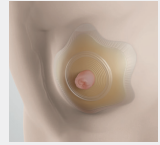
However, as the position of everybody's stoma is different on their abdomen and each person's risks vary - it is strongly advised that you are measured and fitted appropriately by a specialist or ostomy nurse.

Following this assessment, advice would be provided on how to obtain the products directly or in some cases, with a prescription.

Are there other ostomy products designed to fit people with a hernia?

There is a new pouching system that is specially designed for people with a hernia or outward area around the stoma.

SenSura® Mio Concave hugs the outward area for a snug fit, resulting in less creases and folds in the barrier, which may help to prevent leakage. For more information or to request samples, visit www.coloplast.ca/mioconcave



What should I do if I think I have a hernia?

You may have noticed a lump or bulge around your stoma, which may even be visible under your clothing. The size or shape can vary from the size of a golf ball to the size of a grapefruit, or even larger.

If you are concerned that you may have developed a hernia, consult your ostomy nurse, who can assess the area and advise accordingly.

In some cases, your doctor may order a scan to confirm the diagnosis.

The development of a hernia often changes the shape of your abdomen and your stoma, which may cause issues with the fit and performance of your current pouching system. Start by checking your barrier cutting as your stoma may have changed shape and may be need to be remeasured. Contact your ostomy nurse for a reassessment to help you resolve issues – such as sore skin or leakage- before they occur.

Should I be worried?

No. Hernias are a very common issue and rarely cause major complications.

The most frequent symptom an individual may experience is a dragging feeling or discomfort which often gets worse towards the end of the day, as your abdominal muscles get tired. Strengthening your core will make a difference.

Will I need more surgery?

The good news is that having a hernia around your stoma does not necessarily mean you will need further surgery. A hernia can be supported with special underwear or garments and through implementing key lifestyle changes.

Taking steps to strengthen your core and manage your weight will have a significant impact on your well-being.

Hernia treatment and management is normally non-surgical, due to the potential for recurrence.

Your ostomy nurse or surgeon will be able to advise you on the options for a repair of a hernia if deemed appropriate for your situation.

Surgery is generally only indicated if you are experiencing other stoma-related issues such as: discoloration of the stoma, changes in stoma output or persistent stoma management issues. Major complications are rare with a parastomal hernia, but if you have symptoms of severe pain, stoma colour changes or no stoma output, you should immediately seek medical advice from your physician or local emergency department.



My Hernia Action Plan

What should I do now?

At this stage you either are looking to:

1. Reduce your risk of developing a hernia
2. Reduce the impact your hernia has on your life

Reducing your risk of hernia - or the impact a hernia may have on your life - is very much in your control – and all the steps here will help you lead a healthy lifestyle.

Use our tool on the next page to help stay focused on your journey!

Things that will help	Example	This is what I will do. Write your own goals here	Date	How am I doing? Complete this 6 weeks later	Date
Think before you lift	I will bend my knees when I lift things				
Core 4 exercises www.coloplast.ca/core4	I will do the Core 4 every morning and evening				
Regular exercise	I will take a 10-minute walk every day				
Take control of my weight	I will find out what my healthy weight should be, and make a plan so I can get there				
Stop smoking	I will stop smoking over the next 2 months				
Start wearing support underwear	I will find some comfortable support underwear, and wear it				
Support garments	I will seek advice from my ostomy nurse on support garments				
Check stoma for changes www.coloplast.ca/ostomycheck	I'll regularly check my stoma for changes in shape or for issues				

Exercising with a stoma starts with the Core 4

Where it ends is up to you



Tummy Tightening Breathing

When to start

This exercise can be started within days of surgery. Provided all is well, you can even start while you are still in hospital, and your recovery is progressing normally.

How to do it

Lie on your back, with your head supported by a pillow and your knees bent as far as is comfortable. Simply take a deep breath in and slowly exhale through your mouth.

As you exhale, gently tighten up the deep muscles in your lower tummy. You should feel a very gentle 'tightening'. Do not try to lift your bottom or press your back into the bed. Just hold this 'brace' feeling for a count of 3-5 seconds, and then release. Breathe and relax and then repeat 3-5 times.

As you progress, you can do the exercise on the floor without a pillow and aim for a 'stronger' tightening feeling. Hold the 'brace' for a count of 10-15 and breathe deeply in and out 2 or 3 times. Repeat up to 5 times. Place your hands on your tummy so you can check and feel the muscles tightening.

Try to do this 2 or 3 times per day.



Pelvic Tilt

When to start

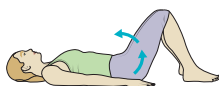
This exercise can also be done just days after surgery. Just start very gently and work within a small pain free range.

How to do it

Lie on your back, with your head supported by a pillow and your knees bent as far as is comfortable. Very gently rock your pelvis upwards and flatten your back into the bed or floor. You should feel your tummy and bottom muscles tighten a little. Rock back to your starting position and repeat. Initially just aim for 5 repetitions, and go very gently.

As you progress, allow your back to arch up a little more, and tighten your tummy more strongly as you push your back into the floor. Build up towards 20 reps.

Try to do this 2 or 3 times per day.



Knee Rolls

When to start

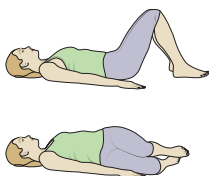
Introduce this exercise 7-10 days after surgery. Always work within a pain free range and keep the movement very small to begin with.

How to do it

Lie on your back, with your head supported by a pillow and your knees bent as far as is comfortable. Arms out to the sides. Keep your knees and ankles together and gently let your knees begin to drop over to one side. Only go as far as is comfortable, then carefully tighten your tummy muscles and roll your knees over to the other side. Try to keep your shoulders down and your head relaxed, looking up with your eyes. Aim for 5 rolls.

As time goes on, you can increase the range so your knees drop lower and build up to 20 repetitions.

Try to do this 2 or 3 times per day.



Hip Lift

When to start

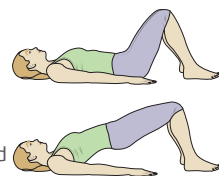
Introduce this exercise 7-10 days after surgery and initially make sure you do it very gently and with a small movement, only going as high as feels comfortable.

How to do it

Lie on your back, with your head supported by a pillow and your knees bent as far as is comfortable. Very gently tilt your pelvis backwards and tighten your pelvic floor muscles. Lift your bottom off the bed/floor and slowly lift up vertebrae by vertebrae until your bottom is off the bed. Lift your bottom as high as you comfortably can. Hold this for a moment, then slowly lower your spine and pelvis back down. Imagine you're lifting a string of pearls off the floor and back down again.

Repeat 3-5 times initially building up to 10-15 repetitions in time and lifting higher as you feel more comfortable.

Try to do this 2 or 3 times per day.



Note! If you have any concerns about whether or not you should do the exercises, talk to your ostomy nurse or surgeon before you start.



Personal support for you

Coloplast® Care is a support program designed to encourage and inspire people to lead a fulfilled life with an ostomy. We provide straightforward advice, tips for your routine, and inspiration for daily life. Whether you are facing an operation or have been living with an ostomy for years, having ostomy-related questions is perfectly normal - and we're here to help.

Join Coloplast Care at

**www.ostomy.coloplastcare.ca or
call 1-866-293-6349**



Advice You Can Trust

"While no one can guarantee that a parastomal hernia will not develop, this guide provides great advice on steps you can take to reduce your risk.

Simple steps such as maintaining a healthy weight, doing core muscle exercises and giving up smoking can make a big difference."

Dr. Neil Smart, Consultant Colorectal Surgeon

This guide has been developed in association with a range of healthcare professionals and ostomates.

References

1. Lars Tøe Sørensen, MD; Ulla B. Hemmingsen, RN; Lene T. Kirkeby, MD; et al. "Smoking Is a Risk Factor for Incisional Hernia." *Archsurg.com*, Volume 140 (2005): 121.
2. WOCN's Stoma Complications: Best Practice for Clinicians, date of publication 11/26/2014
3. Smoking is a risk factor for incisional hernia. *JAMA Surgery*, Sorenson et al, 2005.
4. Coloplast Care Survey. June 2016. 535 responses. Data on file.

Ostomy Care / Continence Care / Wound & Skin Care / Interventional Urology



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