

Discharge Instructions for Ileostomy



During an ileostomy, a surgeon takes out the colon (large intestine) and part of the last section of the ileum (small intestine) if they are diseased. In some cases, the procedure may be needed for a short time (temporary). For instance, the surgeon may also disconnect parts of the intestine if they've been injured. This gives injured intestines time to heal. They then may be reconnected. In other cases the ileostomy may be lifelong (permanent).

During the procedure, the end of the ileum is brought through the belly wall. This makes an opening called a stoma. The stoma lets the contents of your intestines and mucus pass out of your body.

Here are some guidelines to follow after your ileostomy. Your healthcare provider and ostomy nurse will go over any information that is specific to your health.

Activity

After the surgery, you'll need to limit your activity:

- Don't lift anything heavier than 5 pounds until your healthcare provider says it's OK.
- Don't drive until after your first checkup with your healthcare provider.
- If you ride in a car for more than short trips, stop often to stretch your legs.
- Ask your healthcare provider about when you can go back to work. Most people are able to go back within 4 to 6 weeks after surgery.
- Increase your activity slowly. Take short walks on a level surface.
- Don't overexert yourself. If you become tired, rest.

Other home care

Take these steps at home:

- Take care of your stoma as directed.
- Ask your healthcare provider or ostomy nurse for a patient education sheet about ileostomy care before you leave the hospital. It will help remind you how to care for yourself. A nurse will likely see you before and after surgery to answer your questions and teach you about ostomy care. Let the nurse know if you want a family member or friend to be there.
- Ask your provider to prescribe medicines to reduce the output from your ostomy if needed.
- Don't be alarmed by bowel movements that have mucus. It's common after this procedure. You may also have more gas.
- Shower or bathe as instructed by your provider.
- Wash the incision site with mild soap and water or just warm water and pat dry.
- Check your incision each day for redness, leaking fluid, swelling, or separation of the skin.
- Don't take any over-the-counter medicine unless your provider tells you to do so.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have:

- A lot of bleeding from your stoma. Your provider may tell you to get care right away or call 911.
- Blood in your stool. Depending on the amount, your provider may tell you to get care right away or call 911.
- A change in your stoma's color or a stoma that looks like it's getting longer
- Bad odor for more than a week. This may mean an infection.
- Bulging skin around your stoma
- Fever above 100.4°F (38.0°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Shaking chills. You may be told to get care right away or call 911.
- Redness, swelling, bleeding, or fluid leaking from your incision
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Upset stomach (nausea) or vomiting
- Increased pain in the belly or around the stoma

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