

THANK YOU FOR COMING IN TODAY TO TALK ABOUT LIVING WITH AN OSTOMY. Below is a review of what we talked about:

What do I need to know right now?

- When you wake up from surgery, the nurses on the floor will help you learn the basics of managing your new bag
- There is a wonderful stoma nurse, Vickie, who will spend time teaching you how to change and empty the bag during your hospital stay
- You will have home healthcare nurses who will come to your house to help you learn and adjust to living with the new bag

+SOMETIMES insurance does not cover this or there is no one available in your area to help you. In this case, we will find a local wound care center to help you or you can come to our clinic to meet our ostomy nurse.

GOAL FOR THE FIRST MONTH AFTER SURGERY:

Find the right bag for you! There are so many bags to choose from and everyone has unique preferences and priorities with their new bag. You will RECEIVE SAMPLES from the main companies. They should be waiting for you when you come home from surgery. Make sure that you try a few different bags before you settle on a routine.

+If you don't receive any samples, call the clinic to ask for this to be set up.

+You can change your ostomy order every month if you want. We will order you bags when you leave the hospital, but this can be changed if you change the bag you want.

What are the basics of the living with the bag?

- **You should expect:** You should be able to trust your bag and know that you can live your life with it without worrying all the time. When you take off the bag, your skin should be in tact and healthy. If this is not true, you need help from a stoma nurse
- Ostomy bags are meant to last up to 1 week. You can take a bath, a shower, swim and go in a hot tub with the bag on.
- You can change your bag as frequently as every 2-3 days if that is what you prefer
- There are no long term activity restrictions with a bag
- You can have sex with the bag. There are some good tricks for how to feel comfortable and a helpful handout at <https://www.ostomy.org/sexuality/>
- The back of the bag has a wax ring that seals the bag to your skin. This adhesive is especially designed to wick away moisture and maintain the health of your skin.

Ileostomy: Please read the detailed handout

Colostomy: Please read the detailed handout

What happens during the first 6 weeks after surgery?

- Your stoma will be shrinking over the first 4-6 weeks after surgery
- You will need to measure the stoma every time you change the bag. Once it is the same size over 2-3 changes, you can order your bags pre-cut
- Once your stoma stops shrinking it is a good indicator that you can start eating more freely, adding one new food a day to make sure that you tolerate it.
- Remember that your body will be working hard to recover from surgery. You will need extra rest, so plan for that by doing your exercise and walking in the morning. If you are tired in the afternoon, take a nap! Your body needs rest.
- Remember that protein is key to healing after surgery. Make sure that you are eating enough healthy protein during your recovery.
- Remember that you cannot lift anything heavier than 10 lbs after surgery to prevent hernias. At 6 weeks, you can start back on your weight lifting and core activities.

If you would like more information, you may want to check out the following ostomy resources:

- 1) www.C3life.com
- 2) www.patientslikeme.com
- 3) www.girlswithguts.org
- 4) www.ostomy.org

Please make sure that the stoma mark that I placed today stays on your body. This mark allows the surgeons to know exactly where to put the stoma during surgery. The placement of the stoma influences your quality of life after surgery and is an important piece to help you with a smooth transition into using the bag. Keep the mark on your body using the permanent marker I gave you today. If you lose that, you can also use a Sharpie marker.

You may want to buy some accessories to help keep the bag more "low profile". You may want to google "Ostomy Wraps" to see the variety out there to order. You could also visit www.ostomysecrets.com, which has a selection of garments. Many people also invest in a stealthbelt, which you can find easily on the web.