

## After Your Ileostomy

### *Getting ready to leave the hospital and self-care at home*

*This handout for ileostomy patients lists what you will need to know before you leave the hospital. It also covers self-care at home, including foods to eat and foods to avoid.*

### In the Hospital

While you are in the hospital after your ileostomy, your nurse will make sure you receive and understand:

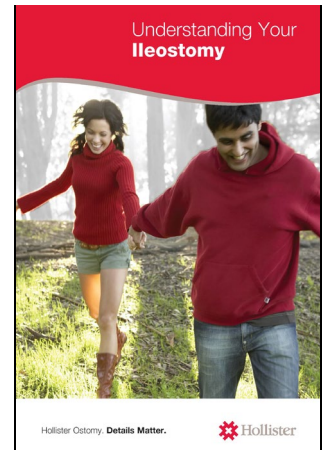
- The Hollister instruction booklet and DVD
- Instructions on fluids and salts (see pages 3 and 4 in this handout)
- Ileostomy care instructions (see pages 5 and 6 in this handout)
- Eating after your ileostomy (see pages 6 to 11 in this handout)

Before you leave the hospital, you will have:

- An appointment set with an outpatient ostomy nurse for 1 week after your surgery
- Pouches and wafers for 3 pouching system changes
- Prescription for ostomy supplies
- Daily intake/output chart (see pages 11 to 13)
- “Hat” and “urinal” to help you measure your urine and stoma output
- Pain management plan detailing pain control options

You will also have:

- A follow-up visit with your surgeon within 1½ to 4 weeks after you leave the hospital
- A referral for home healthcare, if needed (provided by Social Work)
- Phone numbers to call with questions or concerns:
  - **Ostomy nurse:** Call 206.598.4532 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
  - **Seattle Cancer Care Alliance:** Call SCCA 206.606.7780 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



*Your nurse will review this booklet and other resources with you while you are in the hospital.*

- **Dietitian:** Call 206.598.4151 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **UWMC Surgery Clinic:** Call 206.598.4477 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **After hours and on weekends and holidays:** Call 206.598.6190. Ask to page the General Surgery Resident on call.

## Self-care at Home

### Drink Fluids

- It is important for you to stay well hydrated. If your fluids and salts get out of balance, you may need to stay overnight in the hospital. Read “Fluid and Salt Balance” on page 3 of this handout.
- Watch for signs of dehydration. These include thirst, weakness, feeling lightheaded, and dark urine.
- Normal ileostomy output is between 500 cc and 1,200 cc a day.



*To avoid bowel problems, be sure to drink plenty of fluids. See page 7 for a list of fluids we suggest.*

### Avoid Bowel Problems

For 6 weeks after your surgery, to avoid bowel blockages:

- Slowly start eating foods you can tolerate (see “Eating After Your Ileostomy,” starting on page 6).
- Chew your food well.
- Drink plenty of fluids (see page 3).

Signs of bowel blockage include:

- Belly cramps
- Bloating or *distended* (swollen) belly
- Ongoing nausea and vomiting
- Thin, light-colored ostomy output
- No bowel movements or gas
- Swelling of your stoma

Your ostomy output will be watery. But, if you have diarrhea, drink a rehydration solution (see recipes on page 4). This will help you stay hydrated. It is best to eat a cracker or pretzel when drinking fluids.

### Watch Your Medicines

- Avoid sustained-release or enteric-coated medicines.
- Avoid laxatives and stool softeners unless your doctor tells you to take them. They can cause severe dehydration.

## When to Call

Call your healthcare provider or ostomy nurse if you have:

- Sudden, large changes in ostomy output
- Skin problems such as sores or wounds near your stoma
- Big changes in how your stoma looks
- Leaking under the pouch system that you cannot stop

## Fluid and Salt Balance

The colon (large intestine) normally absorbs fluids and salts from the foods we eat. Usually, your small intestine does not absorb fluids and salts well.

Right after your colon is removed or bypassed, your body will not absorb the water and salt from the foods you eat. For a while, water and salt will go into your stool.

But your small intestine will slowly “learn” to absorb some fluids and salts after your ileostomy. This may take weeks or months to occur.

While your small intestine is learning to absorb fluids and salts, you are more likely to get dehydrated. Dehydration is even more likely if you also lose fluid and salt from vomiting, having diarrhea, or sweating.

## What Fluids to Choose

Your small intestine will not be able to absorb Gatorade, Powerade, and other prepared sports drinks. Drinking these may worsen dehydration. Instead, we advise that you drink *rehydration solution*. This type of drink has the right amount of water, sugar, and other electrolytes for your small bowel to absorb well. (See page 4 for recipes.)

## Tips for Staying in Balance

Here are tips for keeping your fluids and salt in balance:

- **Drink at least 64 oz. of fluids each day.** For 1 month after your ileostomy, half of this should come from a rehydration solution. Other good fluid choices include broth, Pedialyte, and water.
- Sip water throughout the day instead of drinking large amounts at a time. Smaller amounts give your bowel the best chance of absorbing the fluid.
- Wait 30 minutes before and after meals to drink.

Losing too much water, potassium, or sodium (salt) can throw your system out of balance. The table on the next page lists signs of

imbalance and what you can do at home to help get back into balance. These “home remedies” will work best if you pay close attention to your symptoms and start using the remedies right away.

**Call your surgery clinic right away if:**

- You have any of the symptoms listed below for more than 24 hours.
- Your condition does not improve after you try the home remedies.

Dehydration Symptoms	Home Remedies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong thirst</li> <li>• Dry skin and mucus membranes</li> <li>• Less urine</li> <li>• Dark urine</li> <li>• Shortness of breath (it is hard to breathe)</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Belly cramps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink a rehydration solution (see recipes below). Avoid drinking <b>only</b> plain water.</li> <li>• Drink 8 to 10 glasses (8 oz. each), spread out over the day.</li> </ul>

**Recipes for Rehydration Solutions**

Each recipe makes about 1 liter of fluid. Drink 1 liter each day for 1 month after surgery.

1. 2 cups of Gatorade  
2 cups water  
½ teaspoon salt
2. 3 cups water  
1 cup orange juice  
¾ cups water  
½ teaspoon salt
3. ½ cup grape juice or cranberry juice  
3½ cups water  
½ teaspoon salt
4. 1 cup apple juice  
3 cups water  
½ teaspoon salt
5. 4¼ cups (1 liter) of water  
½ teaspoon salt  
6 level teaspoons sugar

*(recipe from the World Health Organization)*

## Ileostomy Care

You are going home with a new ileostomy. Before you leave the hospital, an ostomy nurse will teach you how to care for your ileostomy. You will also have a follow-up visit with an ostomy nurse 1 week after you leave the hospital. Other members of your healthcare team will also give you important information about caring for your ostomy.

This handout repeats the teaching your healthcare team provided in the hospital. It will help you follow instructions when you are home. If you have any questions, please ask your doctor or nurse.

### Before You Leave the Hospital

Before you are discharged, make sure that:

- You understand how to care for your ileostomy.
  - Practice replacing the appliance while your nurse is standing nearby. Doing it yourself with your nurse watching will help you learn some ways of to get the pouch on right and to keep it on.
  - Have your family member or caregiver practice, too.
- Your nurse has reviewed with you:
  - This handout
  - The Hollister Ileostomy Education packet and DVD
  - How and when to make your follow-up visit with your surgeon
  - How and when to make your follow-up visit with your outpatient ostomy nurse
- Your nurse has given you:
  - Prescriptions for your ostomy supplies (If you choose, we can fax these prescriptions to a medical supply company of your choice.)
  - Prescriptions for your other discharge medicines
  - A chart to record your fluid intake and output at home
  - A “hat” and “urinal” to measure your urine and stoma output

### Measuring Your Fluid Intake and Output at Home

Measure your fluid intake and output until your first follow-up visit with your ostomy nurse, 1 week after your surgery. To do this:

- Collect and measure the drainage in your ileostomy pouch. Use your “hat” or “urinal” the way you learned in the hospital.

- If your ileostomy output changes a lot, then also start measuring your urine output. (See “Call your surgery clinic if” below.)
- Record these amounts on your “Daily Intake and Output Chart” (see pages 11 to 13).

**Call your surgery clinic if:**

- Your ileostomy output is less than 500 cc in 24 hours
- Your ileostomy output is more than 1,200 cc in 24 hours
- Your urine output is less than 700 cc in 24 hours
- You feel very tired (fatigued) or weak (these are signs of dehydration)

**Your Follow-up Visits**

When you come to the clinic for your follow-up visits:

- Write down any questions or concerns you have and bring these with you. Be sure to ask your nurse your questions. Write down the answers so you remember them later.
- Bring a clean stoma bag and skin appliance with you. We will need fresh ones to put on after we inspect your stoma.
- Bring your intake and output charts.

**Eating After Your Ileostomy**

Everyone’s tolerance for foods is different. When you first start eating solid foods after your ileostomy:

- Avoid foods that are high in fiber, such as whole grains, dried beans, and most raw vegetables and fruits.
- Choose foods that will help thicken your output (see list on page 8).
- Eat 6 small meals a day instead of 3 large meals.
- Avoid any foods that cause diarrhea or blockages.
- You will need to take vitamin supplements while you have an ileostomy. You may not absorb all of your nutrients from your food:
  - Take 1 chewable (not gummy) complete multivitamin each day.
  - Take 500 mg liquid or chewable calcium citrate 3 times a day.
  - Choose brands that have the USP approval seal.

## Foods to Try

Food Group	Try	Notes
<b>Dairy and Milk Substitutes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skim or low-fat milk</li> <li>• Powdered milk</li> <li>• Buttermilk</li> <li>• Soy milk</li> <li>• Yogurt</li> <li>• Cheese</li> <li>• Low-fat ice cream or sherbet</li> </ul>	If you have bloating or gas after drinking milk or eating dairy foods, try lactose-free products.
<b>Meat and Other Protein Foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meats and poultry cooked with no added fat</li> <li>• Smooth nut butters</li> <li>• Fish</li> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Tofu</li> </ul>	When trying nuts, fish, and eggs, start with small amounts. These foods may cause odors.
<b>Grains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bread, bagels, rolls, pasta, crackers, and cereal made with white or refined flour</li> <li>• White rice</li> </ul>	When you first start eating solid foods, avoid whole grains, which are high in fiber.
<b>Vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-cooked vegetables without seeds</li> <li>• Strained vegetable juice</li> </ul>	Some vegetables may cause gas, blockages, or odors.
<b>Fruits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pulp-free fruit juices (avoid prune juice)</li> <li>• Ripe (all yellow) bananas</li> <li>• Avocado</li> <li>• Soft melons (honeydew or watermelon)</li> <li>• Peeled or cooked apple</li> <li>• Canned fruits (avoid pineapple)</li> </ul>	Some fruits may cause blockages (see page 8).
<b>Fats</b>	Any	Start with very small amounts. Fats may cause symptoms or discomfort.
<b>Fluids</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decaffeinated coffee or tea</li> <li>• Noncarbonated drinks</li> <li>• Rehydration drinks</li> </ul>	Avoid plain water.

## Foods That May Cause a Blockage

These foods have tough skins and stringy fibers that can cause a blockage in your intestine.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apples</li><li>• Bean sprouts</li><li>• Bok choy</li><li>• Cabbage, coleslaw</li><li>• Celery</li><li>• Coconut</li><li>• Corn</li><li>• Cucumbers (unpeeled)</li><li>• Dried fruit, such as raisins</li><li>• Fruit and vegetable skins</li><li>• Grapes</li><li>• Green peppers</li><li>• Lettuce, other greens</li><li>• Meats that are tough or fibrous, such as grilled steak</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mushrooms</li><li>• Napa cabbage</li><li>• Nuts</li><li>• Olives</li><li>• Peas</li><li>• Pickles</li><li>• Pineapple</li><li>• Popcorn</li><li>• Relishes</li><li>• Sausage casing</li><li>• Seeds</li><li>• Spinach</li><li>• Whole grains</li></ul>
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## Foods That Help Thicken Output

These foods make your food move more slowly through your digestive tract. This gives your intestines more time to absorb nutrients.

Eat more of these foods if your output is watery. Eat them with each meal after surgery to add bulk to your output. It is a good idea to keep some of these foods with you when you leave your house. Keep them handy at work, in your car, or in a purse or satchel, in case your ostomy output is high while you are out.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applesauce</li><li>• Bananas</li><li>• Barley (when it's OK to have fiber)</li><li>• Cheese</li><li>• Marshmallows</li><li>• Noodles</li><li>• Oatmeal (when it's OK to have fiber)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Peanut butter, creamy</li><li>• Potatoes, no skin</li><li>• Pretzels</li><li>• Rice, white</li><li>• Saltine crackers</li><li>• Tapioca pudding</li><li>• White bread (not high fiber)</li><li>• Yogurt</li></ul>
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### **Foods That May Increase Output or Cause Diarrhea**

These foods do not affect all people in the same way. Try these foods in small amounts to see how they affect you. Avoid these foods right after surgery and on days when your output is high or watery.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alcoholic drinks</li><li>• Beans, baked</li><li>• Bran</li><li>• Broccoli</li><li>• Brussels sprouts</li><li>• Cabbage</li><li>• Caffeine (especially hot drinks)</li><li>• Chocolate</li><li>• Corn</li><li>• Fried foods</li><li>• Fruit: fresh, canned, dried, or juice</li><li>• Greens, raw: turnip, other leafy vegetables</li><li>• High-fat foods</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High-sugar foods</li><li>• Legumes</li><li>• Licorice</li><li>• Milk and other dairy foods</li><li>• Nuts and seeds</li><li>• Peas</li><li>• Prunes</li><li>• Stone fruits such as apricots, peaches, plums</li><li>• Spicy foods</li><li>• Soup</li><li>• Sugar-free foods and gum</li><li>• Sugar substitutes</li><li>• Tomatoes</li><li>• Wheat and whole grains</li></ul>
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### **Foods That May Cause Odor or Gas**

These foods may cause discomfort right after surgery. Try them in very small amounts at first. Avoid them if they cause problems.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alcohol (including beer)</li><li>• Apples</li><li>• Asparagus</li><li>• Bananas</li><li>• Broccoli</li><li>• Brussels sprouts</li><li>• Cabbage</li><li>• Carbonated drinks</li><li>• Cauliflower</li><li>• Cheese, some types</li><li>• Corn</li><li>• Cucumber</li><li>• Dairy products</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dried beans</li><li>• Eggs</li><li>• Fatty foods</li><li>• Fish</li><li>• Grapes</li><li>• Green pepper</li><li>• Melons</li><li>• Onions</li><li>• Peanuts</li><li>• Peas</li><li>• Prunes</li><li>• Radishes</li><li>• Turnips</li></ul>
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## Foods That May Discolor Stool

Beets and food with red dye may turn stool red. Asparagus, spinach, and broccoli may darken stool.

## Foods to Avoid

This table gives a basic list of foods that may cause problems while you have an ileostomy.

Food Group	May Cause Odor or Gas	May Cause Blockages	May Cause Diarrhea
<b>Dairy</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foods that contain lactose (try lactose-free products)</li> </ul>
<b>Meats, Other Protein Foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dried beans and peas</li> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Fish</li> <li>• Peanuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fried meats, fish, and poultry</li> </ul>
<b>Fruits</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coconut</li> <li>• Dried fruits</li> <li>• Apples with skins</li> <li>• Grapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grape juice</li> <li>• Prune juice</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asparagus</li> <li>• Broccoli</li> <li>• Brussels sprouts</li> <li>• Cabbage</li> <li>• Cauliflower</li> <li>• Corn</li> <li>• Garlic</li> <li>• Onions, leeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabbage (raw), coleslaw</li> <li>• Celery</li> <li>• Corn</li> </ul>	
<b>Drinks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol, including beer</li> <li>• Carbonated drinks</li> </ul>		
<b>Other</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spicy foods</li> <li>• High-fat foods</li> <li>• Foods with added sugar</li> </ul>





