

Colostomy Take-Down

A colostomy take-down reconnects the large intestine and closes the stoma and the skin opening.

Bowel Prep: The Day Before Surgery

You will need to do a full bowel prep with antibiotics to empty your bowel of food and stool before surgery. We will discuss this with you in detail and provide instructions. We will also write the prescriptions needed for the bowel prep.

When You Shower

- Gently wash your wounds with a mild soap and water.
- Pat dry.
- **Do not** soak in a bathtub, hot tub, or go swimming until the wounds are fully healed.
- **Do not** put lotion, powder, or ointments on the wounds.

Watch for Signs of Infection

- Increased redness or warmth.
- Pus-like drainage.
- Excess swelling or bleeding.
- Temperature (by mouth) above 100.4 °F for two readings taken 4 hours apart.

Cover your incision with a gauze dressing. Change the dressing daily or as needed. You may stop wearing the dressing when there is no drainage.

Activity

- **Do not** drive while you are taking opioid medicines. **Do not** drive if you are unable to comfortably check blind spots and stop in case of an emergency.

- For the first 6 weeks, **do not** lift over 10 pounds.
- After 4 weeks, slowly increase your activity. If you are not sure, check with your doctor.
- Check with your doctor before going back to work.
- Sex may be resumed when you feel ready.

Pain Relief

It is normal to have pain after surgery. We will talk with you about pain medicine. In the hospital we may give you Tylenol® and ibuprofen on a scheduled basis. You may also be given opioid pain medicines, for severe pain, if you needed it prior to discharge.

Diet

You will be sent home on a low residue diet. This includes easy to digest foods, and some, but limited fiber.

At first, you may have frequent unformed loose stools. This will begin to improve as your diet includes more fiber and return to more regular activities. Long term, we encourage you to drink 8-10 (8 oz.) glasses of fluid daily. You may also be recommended to take a daily fiber supplement long-term.

If you have problems with bowel movements, call your doctor.

Rectal Skin Care

After an ostomy take-down, it is important to prevent anal skin problems. You may have loose or hard stools as you heal.

To prevent problems, use baby wipes instead of toilet paper. You can also use a gentle skin ointment on the anal skin area after each bowel movement and before you notice any problems.

Try using one of the skin ointments below:

- Desitin[®]
- Vaseline[®]
- A&D ointment[®]
- Zinc oxide
- Calmoseptine[®]

When to Call

- Bloating.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Anal skin problems.
- Bowel movement problems.
- Pain not controlled by current regimen.
- Any signs of a wound infection.

Who to Call

Digestive Health Center

Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

(608) 242-2800

Toll-free number: **(855) 342-9900.**

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 5/2025 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4921.