Essential Information before Formation of Ileostomy

Introduction

This leaflet supports the discussions you are having about the formation of an ileostomy and includes information about stoma function, training in stoma care, obtaining equipment and sources of support. It also includes information about common stoma related risks and complications to be aware of.

Discussions with a Specialist Nurse are aimed at preparing you fully for the surgery. This is an opportunity for you to see stoma appliances, discuss how the stoma is managed and for the best possible position for your stoma to be sited. This will also allow the most suitable appliance for you to be chosen to help you adapt to life with a stoma. You may want to speak to someone who has had stoma surgery in the past which can also be arranged for you. Just ask when you feel ready.

What is the Stoma Like?

The ileostomy is moist and is normally pinkish-red in colour like the inside of your mouth. It is usually positioned on the right side of your abdomen and protrudes out a little to help prevent leakage. It is swollen at first after the operation and it can take up to 8 weeks for the swelling to go down. There are no nerve endings in the stoma so it will not be painful. It is normal for the stoma to bleed a little when cleaned.

How Does the Stoma Function?

The stoma output is often very loose in the early days after surgery. Once established, the output varies from a liquid to a porridge-like consistency. The stoma usually functions after eating or drinking and may then be quiet for a few hours in between.
How do I Empty and Change the Stoma Pouch?

The Specialist Nurses and ward staff will teach you how to empty and change your stoma pouch. Someone else can be taught if you need help or are unable. You will be shown how to empty the pouch into the toilet. This is done when the pouch is one third full which is usually about five times a day. Always empty the appliance before bedtime as your stoma can be active overnight.

The pouch is usually changed every one to three days. The pouch is odour-proof and has a filter to deodorise and allow wind to escape which also helps to prevent it from ballooning up. You will be offered a choice of pouches to try where possible.

Are there any Complications?

As with all surgery there are risks associated with stoma formation. Most stoma related issues can be managed without the need for further surgery.

Skin problems associated with leakage of faeces onto the skin can usually be managed by the Colorectal Nurse Specialist. People with existing skin conditions like eczema or psoriasis are more prone to skin problems around a stoma.

Studies have shown that around 20% of people with an ileostomy will develop a hernia causing a bulge to develop around the stoma. The risk increases with age and is more common in people with larger stomas.

If you are prone to developing hernia or you developed one; your clinical Nurse specialist will be able to help you manage this by fitting you with a stoma support belt/pant.

How do I obtain Stoma Equipment?

All the stoma equipment you will need along with a bag to store everything in will be provided for you whilst you are in hospital. You can order your stoma equipment through a Delivery Company or local Chemist. We will explain how to obtain ongoing supplies after your discharge from hospital.

All the equipment is available on prescription and if your stoma is permanent, you will be exempt from paying prescription charges. Otherwise, your prescription options will be discussed with you.

Going Home

When you can manage the stoma and you are medically fit to go home the Specialist Nurse will provide essential equipment, discharge information and a stoma clinic appointment. You should contact the Specialist Nurse after discharge if you have any unexpected problems.

If you go home unexpectedly over the weekend:

DO NOT LEAVE HOSPITAL UNLESS YOU HAVE A SUPPLY OF AT LEAST 6 DRAINABLE APPLIANCES, DRY WIPES, DISPOSAL BAGS AND ANY ACCESSORY PRODUCTS YOU REQUIRE.

Adapting to Life with a Stoma

Naturally it takes time to adapt after having a stoma, but some people have difficulty coming to terms with this. If you feel you are not coping with stoma, it is affecting your relationships or limiting your social activities then please contact your Specialist Nurse as she has experience of these issues and can provide many additional sources of support.

Stoma Clinics For patients under Good Hope, Solihull and Heartlands

The Specialist Nurse will arrange to see you in the Stoma Clinic within 1 - 2 weeks of your discharge from hospital and again at 3 - 4 weeks. Alternatively, a community stoma nurse can visit you at home. At this appointment she will check your progress, discuss your quality-of-life questionnaire, review your stoma and order any equipment you need. After this you will be placed on telephone follow up and called at 3 months, 6 months and 12 months, however you are free to contact the Specialist Nurse for a stoma clinic appointment if you have any stoma problems or need to discuss any related issues.

Further Information:

The Colorectal Nurse Specialists are available Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm excluding Bank Holidays.

Colorectal Nurse Specialists:

Heartlands Hospital	0121 424 2730 (24hr answerphone)
Good Hope Hospital	0121 424 7429 (24hr answerphone)
Queen Elizabeth Hospital	0121 371 4501

Additional Sources of Information and Support:

NHS Choices
www.nhs.uk/choices On-line information about ileostomy surgery

Ileostomy and Internal Pouch Association 0800 018 4724
www.the–ia.org.uk

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk.