

Understanding Your Urostomy

A simple guide to your urinary diversion, stoma, and daily care

What is a urostomy?

A urostomy is a type of urinary diversion. It creates a new path for urine to leave your body when your bladder cannot be used.

Your surgeon may use a small piece of intestine to create a passage from the kidneys to an opening on your abdomen. This opening is called a stoma.

This sheet focuses on urostomies that drain through a stoma on the abdomen. Your care team will explain your specific surgery and care plan.

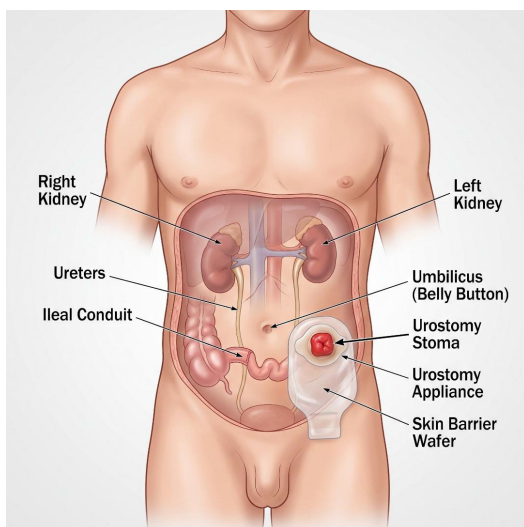


Image description: An ileal conduit urostomy with kidneys, ureters, stoma, skin barrier, and pouching system labeled.

What is a catheter?

A catheter is a soft, thin tube used to help urine drain. For some types of urostomies, it may be gently placed into the stoma to drain urine, help keep the opening open, or check for a blockage.

Types of urinary diversion

Ileal conduit (incontinent urostomy): Urine drains continuously into a pouch worn on the outside of your body. You will learn to empty and change the pouch and use a nighttime drainage bag if prescribed.

Continent catheterizable diversion: An internal pouch stores urine. You empty it by placing a catheter through the stoma on the schedule given by your surgical team. You usually do not wear a pouch all the time.

Everyday Care

Protect your skin: Check the skin around your stoma with each pouch change. Call if it is painful, very red, broken, itchy, or leaking repeatedly.

Know what is expected: A healthy stoma is usually moist and pink to red. A small amount of mucus in the urine may be normal when bowel tissue is used.

Follow your plan: Empty your pouch before it feels heavy. Use supplies, nighttime drainage, catheterization, and hydration instructions exactly as your team directs.

When to Contact Your Care Team

Call your surgeon or ostomy nurse promptly if you have:

- Repeated pouch leakage or a pouch that will not stay sealed.
- Very red, painful, open, or weeping skin around the stoma.
- Fever, chills, worsening pain, nausea, vomiting, or feeling unwell.
- Much less urine than usual, urine that stops draining, or new trouble inserting a catheter.
- A stoma that becomes pale, dark red, purple, gray, or black.
- Persistent or heavy bleeding, new swelling or a bulge, or significant pain around the stoma.

SEEK EMERGENCY CARE

Call emergency services or seek emergency care for severe pain, fainting, confusion, trouble breathing, uncontrolled bleeding, or if you feel severely ill.

Living Well with a Urostomy

With practice and support, many people return to work, travel, movement, hobbies, and intimacy. Keep your surgeon's and ostomy nurse's phone numbers where you can find them. Ask about an interpreter or other support you need.

Helpful support

Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society

findanurse.wocn.org

United Ostomy Associations of America

ostomy.org

Ostomy 101

ostomy101.com

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