

Colostomy Daily Care

Closed End Pouch vs. Drainable Pouch

Which is right for you? Either one could be used. The choice should be determined by how often you have a bowel movement. Closed end pouches cannot be emptied and are changed when they have stool in them, which is usually no more than twice daily. Refer to the pouch change instructions for closed end pouch.

Drainable pouches have an open tail that can be emptied when needed. They are routinely used when the pouch needs to be emptied more than twice daily.

Emptying Your Pouch

Never let a pouch become more than half full. It is best to empty the pouch when it is 1/3 full. A full pouch is heavy and can break the seal on the wafer causing a leakage.

Stand in front of the toilet to empty your pouch. Some ostomates prefer to sit on the toilet and empty between their legs. Try both ways before deciding.

Place some toilet tissue in the toilet bowl to decrease splashing of stool.

Unroll the bottom of the pouch or remove the closure device if one is used.

Empty the pouch contents into the toilet.

Wipe the tail end of the pouch with toilet paper or a moist toiette.

Close the pouch tail.

Wash your hands. You will become so proficient at this that your hands may not seem soiled. Please note: good hand washing habits have been reported to decrease spread of infection.

It is not necessary to rinse the inside of the pouch. Some ostomates and ostomy nurses have reported that excessive pouch rinsing has led to shorter wafer wear time. Rinsing can weaken the inside seal around the stoma.

Change the pouch (use a new one) when the wafer is changed. Changing the pouch daily is not needed; just empty when 1/3 to 1/2 full.

Releasing Gas or “Burping” the Pouch

Gas or flatus will accumulate in the pouch. It must be released or it could cause a blow off. Avoid this messy and embarrassing event. The pouch could have a lot of gas in it but not much stool. Gas can be easily released by “burping” the pouch if you are wearing a two-piece appliance.

Hold the wafer or flange edge at the top with one hand and unsnap the pouch from the wafer with your other hand. Allow the gas to escape and snap the pouch back onto the wafer. Be sure to check that the pouch is securely snapped back onto the wafer.

If you are wearing a one-piece appliance with a drainable pouch (open at the bottom) gas can be released from the tail end.

Odor Control

The most important way to reduce odor is using an odor proof pouch and keeping the tail of the pouch clean. Odor will occur when the pouch is emptied. To assist with this type of odor control, pouch deodorants, oral deodorants, charcoal filters in pouches and room deodorizers can be used.