



Bullen.

A guide to **living with a stoma**

Common stoma issues



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Common stoma issues

Pancaking

Pancaking is a common issue that many people with a stoma experience. It is when output sits around the top of the stoma bag instead of falling to the bottom. This can cause output to get trapped and start to push the baseplate of the stoma bag away from the skin, which can then lead to leaks and sore skin. There are a couple of reasons why pancaking may happen...

1 Stoma bag filter

The filter on a stoma bag can create a vacuum sucking out all the air and leaving the sides of the bag stuck together. You can alleviate this by applying a sticker over the filter (these can be found in the box your stoma bags came in) to stop air in the bag from being released. Some people also add in a little piece of scrunched up tissue to keep the sides of the bag open. You could also grease the inside of your bag with a little olive oil or baby oil to help the output down to the bottom of the bag.

2 Sticky output

If your output is quite firm and sticky then this can cause it to stick around the top of the bag. To alleviate this problem, you may need to make a few dietary changes to loosen up your output so that it slides down into the bag. It is worth trying to increase your fluid intake as this can help to create the right consistency. Increasing your fibre intake can also help with this issue. If dietary changes have no effect, then your doctor may be able to prescribe a small dose of a laxative to help. Please check with your GP or stoma nurse before making any dietary or medication changes, especially if you have a related bowel condition.

Ballooning

Ballooning is when wind that passes out of the stoma cannot escape through the filter of the stoma bag and inflates the bag. Occasionally the force of the pressure can cause the baseplate to loosen and lift. Generally ballooning occurs if the filter on the bag gets blocked.

The filters can get blocked if they get wet so it is worth covering your filter with a sticker (these can be found in the box your stoma bag comes in) when bathing, swimming or showering or changing your bag after it gets wet. If you find that you experience a lot of wind and ballooning, then you should check your diet to see if you can reduce your intake of certain foods such as alcohol, fizzy drinks and spicy foods, garlic, onions, brussels sprouts and cabbage. Making sure that you eat at regular times, avoid getting hungry, eating slowly and chewing your food well can also help reduce wind. Some people also find that peppermint oil capsules help and these are available on prescription or over the counter.



Controlling odour

In general, you shouldn't really notice any odour from your stoma bag unless you are changing or emptying your bag as the filter on your bag should be able to effectively deal with this. If you do notice any odours whilst you are wearing your stoma bag then it is a good idea to change your bag to see if this helps as the filter may have failed. Some bags are also more effective at filtering odours than others so it's also worth testing other bags if you find that you experience odours on a regular basis.

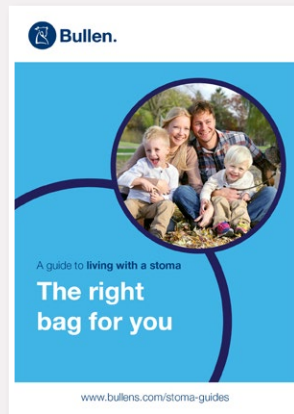
To control odours when emptying your bag, you can use ostomy odour drops that mask odours or a product such as Na'Scent which eliminates the bacteria that causes odours. These are usually available on prescription. Some people also use a product that you spray directly into the toilet before emptying to disguise any odours.

All guides in our series...

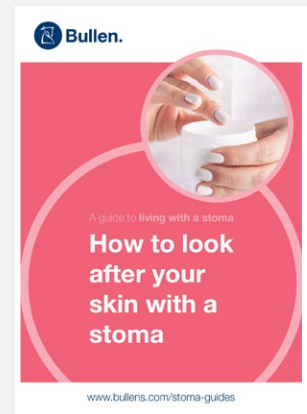
www.bullens.com/stoma-guide



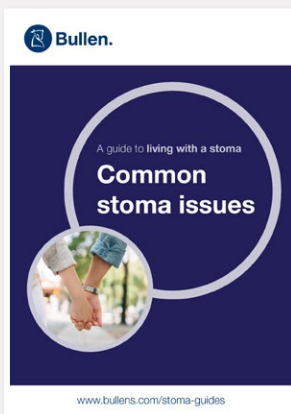
The definitive guide to living with a Stoma (includes all guides)



The right bag for you



How to look after your skin with a stoma



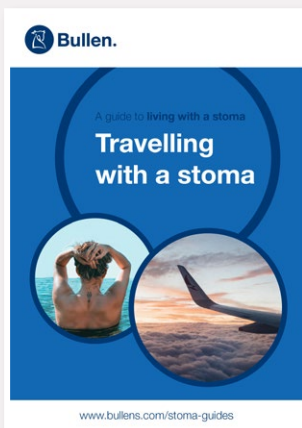
Common stoma issues



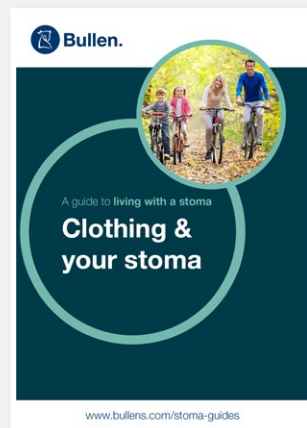
Where to get help and support for your stoma



Guide to diet and exercise after a stoma surgery



Travelling with a stoma



Clothing and your stoma

Can we help?

Why not give us a call today and speak to one of our friendly personal customer advisors and find out more about how Bullen Healthcare can help you get on with life with a stoma without any worries.

Call us on

Freephone 0800 031 5401

Visit us at

www.bullens.com/stoma-guide

Useful Links

Ileostomy and Internal Pouch Support Group

www.iasupport.org

Colostomy UK

www.colostomyuk.org

Urostomy Association

www.urostomyassociation.org.uk