**Instructions for colostomy surgery patient**

**Colostomy – colostomy, sigmoid colostomy, transverse colostomy**

 A colostomy is performed due to illness, accident or other reason. A stoma can be permanent or temporary. It is usually located on the left side of the abdomen, the transverse colostomy on the right side below the costal arch. In surgery, the colon is lifted through the abdominal wall and stitched onto the skin. The stool is fairly firm and the stoma works involuntarily.

**Stoma care**

A healthy stoma is reddish and moist. The size and color of the stoma should be monitored. The stoma may be swollen at first, but this will decrease over a few weeks. When caring for a stoma, it is important to take care of the cleanliness and condition of the skin. The opening of the stoma adhesive must be the right size. This prevents possible skin problems and affects how well the adhesive adheres to the skin around your stoma. Handling a stoma can cause minor, harmless bleeding from the sensitive and numb mucous membrane.

**Changing the stoma appliance**

Reserve the necessary stoma supplies within reach.

Cut the adhesive to right size to adapt it to your stoma. Prepare the moldable appliance before adapting it to your stoma.

Remove carefully the adhesive on the skin with one hand, supporting the skin.

Removal can be aided with an removal spray or wipe.

Used appliance is disposed of with mixed waste.

The stoma and surrounding skin are cleaned with water.

Any adhesive/seal residues can be cleaned with a removal spray or towel if necessary. Dry the skin thoroughly with a soft towel or paper.

Rubbing and scratching the skin should be avoided.

The new appliance is applied to the skin carefully.

The adhesive adheres better if it is warmed between the hands before insertion.

The appliance change interval is individual depending on the stoma appliance model.

Follow the instructions given by your stoma nurse.

Your stoma nurse will tell you about the availability of stoma accessories.

**Diet**

Eat varied and regular normal food that suits you. Eat calmly and chew food thoroughly. These balance bowel movements. The body's fluid balance must be taken care of. Fluids should be drunk at least 1.5-2 liters per day. Flatulence and constipation are the most common problems. Adequate fiber intake prevents constipation. If necessary, stool softener medicines can be used from pharmacies. Flatulence is individual and can be prevented by paying attention to your diet. Foods that form gas in the intestines include: peas, peppers, cabbage, swede, apple, fresh rye bread and carbonated drinks.

**Hobbies, exercise, return to work**

A stoma is not an obstacle to hobbies or returning to work. Exercise is desirable for maintaining physical fitness. You can get individual post-operative instructions from your place of treatment. With the guidance of a stoma nurse, you will find suitable stoma appliances and any necessary support textiles.

**Sexuality**

Sexuality is part of human life. A stoma is not an obstacle to sex life. The disease, surgery performed for it and possible adjutant treatments can cause changes in the body and sexual function. If you have any problems, don't hesitate to talk to your doctor or stoma nurse.

Patient Association Finnilco ry is a national organization for stoma-, correspondingly operated and incontinence patients [www.finnilco.fi](http://www.finnilco.fi)

In matters related to social security, such as home help and payment matters, you can discuss with a social worker at the hospital.

**Tips and tricks:**

• A stoma does not prevent you from going to the sauna and swimming. In the steam, protect the stoma appliance with a towel so that the pouch does not burn the intestinal mucosa when heated.

• When the skin around the stoma is very dry, you can use a light moisturizer that absorbs well.

• The stoma appliance should always be replaced if the stool has got under the adhesive.

• Air baths soothe the skin around the stoma, as does spraying with warm water.

• If your skin is irritated or you have problems with the stoma appliances adhesiveness, contact a stoma nurse.

• A sealing paste or ring can be used to improve adhesiveness of the stoma appliance if necessary.

• It is a good idea to remove hair around the stoma regularly.

 • Always carry a spare appliances and cleaning supplies.

• Store stoma appliances at room temperature and protect from direct sunlight

• It is good to remember the brand and size of the stoma appliance.

• It is a good idea to have stoma supplies at home for about three weeks

• When travelling, also stock up on stoma appliances in hand luggage.

For travelling, ask your stoma nurse or Finnilco ry about your stoma passport [www.finnilco.fi](http://www.finnilco.fi)

**Contact information of the stoma nurse:**

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