

Pancaking

Most ostomates probably didn't expect they'd ever dread the word 'pancake'!

What is pancaking?

A pancaking stoma is caused by firm stools sticking to the top of the stoma bag. This can happen if it is particularly thick or sticky, or the bag has vacuumed. This can make emptying or changing your stoma bag more challenging.

Stoma pancaking can cause leakage because the stool builds up around the stoma and has nowhere else to go other than underneath the baseplate. This can lead to skin problems and can even cause your stoma bag to come off. The filter may also get blocked which causes ballooning issues.



What causes pancaking?

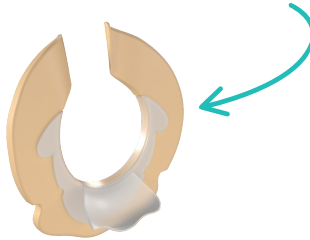
Stoma pancaking is usually caused by a lack of airflow into the pouch which creates a vacuum so the inner layers stick together. This could be because your stoma bag filter is working too well and causing all of the air to leave the bag.

It is influenced by the consistency of your stoma output. Thick or sticky stools are more likely to get stuck at the top than loose ones. This is affected by which part of your bowel is redirected, as well as your diet. It is more common in those who have a colostomy than ileostomy. This is because the stool travels through more of the colon and so becomes more formed.

How to stop pancaking

- Rub a small amount of baby oil or liquid soap to the top of the inside of the bag (being careful to avoid the filter). This can help the stools slide into the bag by lubricating them.
- Put a small piece of cotton wool or rolled-up tissue inside the stoma pouch when changing it. This allows airflow and can prevent the sides of the bag from sticking together.
- Blow some air into the new bag before applying it. Apply the filter cover to stop this air from escaping. You can then remove the cover when your bag fills with gas which you want to allow to escape.
- The Ostoform FLOWASSIST seal has solved pancaking issues for some patients because its unique chute directs stool into the bag.

*Find out more
about Ostoform
FLOWASSIST on
our website*



- Increased fluid intake – especially fruit juices – can soften stool and make it less likely to get stuck.
- Increasing insoluble fibre intake could also help to loosen stool, such as eating wholegrains, bran, brown rice/pasta, berries and green vegetables.
- However, always speak to your stoma nurse or doctor before making significant changes to your diet.
- Try moving the stool down to the bottom of the pouch using your hands if you notice it is stuck.
- Check that your clothing isn't restricting the bag – tight-fitting clothes or a stoma belt/wrap may constrict your appliance and cause pancaking.

Conclusion

Contact your stoma care nurse if you are experiencing pancaking problems. They can help you find the right combination of stoma products for you to mitigate the problem. They may also recommend medication such as stool softeners or laxatives (don't take these without consulting a medical professional first).



For more free stoma resources, visit stocare.co.uk