

# Peristomal skin protection

Peristomal skin is the area of skin around your stoma and underneath the baseplate of your pouch. Keeping it healthy is important because it provides a natural barrier to moisture, stoma output and irritants. Unfortunately, most ostomates will experience sore peristomal skin and skin problems at some point, but there are many things you can do to prevent it and to treat the problem quickly if it arises.

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## Healthy peristomal skin

Peristomal skin should look like the skin on any other part of your body. You can compare it to the skin on the other side of your abdomen to help you notice anything out of the ordinary.

A healthy stoma is pink or red in colour and moist to touch. It is round or oval-shaped and sticks out slightly from the skin. The skin around it should be smooth, dry and not irritated.

## Unhealthy peristomal skin

Unhealthy peristomal skin may be:

- Red, grey or purple
- Itchy
- Painful
- Bleeding
- Weeping
- Thick or wart-like
- Gritty
- Bumpy

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, they could be a sign of a peristomal skin infection. However, it can be hard to spot. Seek medical advice for treatment for any peristomal skin problems, even if it's just feeling a little irritated, as it can rapidly escalate.



## **Remove your pouch safely**

- Change your bag immediately if it has leaked. Stoma output causes skin irritation.
- Remove your adhesive appliances from top to bottom gently and slowly.
- Medical adhesive remover such as StoCare Remove is designed to make this easier. This can be used as a spray or a wipe and should be used for each bag change to protect your skin from MARS (medical adhesive-related skin injury).



## **Prepare your peristomal skin for pouch changes**

- Remove hairs from around your stoma to prevent the adhesive on the baseplate from pulling on them, causing pain and inflammation.
- Clean the skin gently with warm water. Do not scrub.
- Minimise any irritants. Avoid perfumed soaps, lotions, creams, baby powder, baby wipes, or wipes containing alcohol. These products can irritate your skin and compromise the adhesion of your appliance which may lead to leaks.
- Make sure your peristomal skin is completely dry before replacing your pouch and skin barrier. Dry skin ensures a good adhesive seal and reduces risk of fungal infection.

## **Use the right products**

- Make sure your template is measured correctly and cut to the right size so that the baseplate doesn't rub or cause leakages because of poor fitting.
- Before applying your new pouch, you may benefit from using a barrier product such as StoCare Protect. This provides a protective film to prevent irritation from stoma output and adhesive.
- Ask your stoma nurse for advice. They can recommend different products if you are experiencing skin issues, such as a seal.

## **Conclusion**

It is not normal to suffer with repeated peristomal skin issues. If you are experiencing any pain or discomfort, speak to your stoma nurse about a solution as soon as possible before it gets worse.

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