

## **Activities and Daily Living**

It is normal to be uncomfortable about the changes in your physical appearance after ostomy surgery. It is important to remember that no one needs to know that you have an ostomy. People will not know just by looking at you. Over time taking care of your ostomy will become just another part of your daily hygiene.

Support groups like the United Ostomy Association of America can help you and your loved ones by offering support and answering questions.

The United Ostomy Association of America

[www.uoaa.org](http://www.uoaa.org)

1-800-826-0826

### **Do I need new clothes?**

No, you should be able to wear the same clothes you wore prior to having an ostomy.

Your pouch can be worn inside or outside underwear – what ever is most comfortable for you.

### **Physical Activity**

Returning to enjoyable physical activities will boost your morale. You may be anxious to get back to the activities you enjoyed before surgery but should consult your doctor for advice. After returning home from the hospital a daily walk outdoors is a good place to start.

Most physical activities are not a problem ie golfing, gardening, interactive sports, biking, running, or hiking. Take great precaution however when lifting heavy objects. It's your only restriction. For example, cutting the lawn is fine but lifting a lawn mower into a car is a great risk for developing a hernia. Most doctors will give you a lifting restriction of 10 pounds to avoid hernias around your ostomy.

If you participate in a contact sport such as football, wrestling, or karate let your ostomy nurse or your doctor know. You may require a support binder with a cover for your stoma.

### **Swimming with an Ostomy**

Ostomy appliances are durable and can be worn confidently during water sports.

Allow your appliance to be on overnight, so the seal can set up securely.

Women may want a patterned suit with lining to provide a smoother profile.

Men can wear a tank shirt with swim trunks if the stoma is above the belt line.  
Men's swimsuits can be sewn with a pocket or jockey shorts, to provide support.  
Empty your pouch before swimming.  
Use a mini or closed pouch to provide a lower profile.  
Use Pink Tape to frame the wafer or wipe tape with a skin sealant for added security.

### **Outdoor Activities**

Summertime can be very warm and humid in many climates. Ostomy wafers can melt in high heat or when exposed to prolonged moisture. You may need to change your appliance more often if you sweat a lot or are in a hot climate. This situation is not harmful to your ostomy or skin but is something of which you should be aware.

Hot tubs and sauna baths will also cause your wafer wear time to decrease. These activities are acceptable; just be aware that you may need to change your appliance more often.

### **Intimate Relationships**

It is normal to be anxious about the changes in your body. It is important for you and your partner to communicate your feelings to each other and respond to the concerns. Having an ostomy emotionally affects both individuals in the relationship. Talk to your doctor about when it is safe to resume sexual activity. Empty your pouch before sexual relations. You may choose to wear a mini pouch at this time or use a pouch cover. Becoming pregnant is not affected by having an ostomy. If you have questions about pregnancy be sure to ask your doctor or your WOC nurse.

Intimate Moments Apparel  
[www.intimatemomentsapparel.com](http://www.intimatemomentsapparel.com)  
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Yentl's Secrets Stomal Apparel  
[www.yentlssecrets.com](http://www.yentlssecrets.com)  
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Options Ostomy Support Barrier Inc.  
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