

## Hollister Support Network



### Talk to an expert

Our on-staff Ostomy Nurses can answer questions.

Our Customer Service Center has an experienced team of representatives to assist you with your product selection.

A wide variety of educational materials are also available.

## Lifestyle Series

### Skin Care for Your Stoma: 3 Easy Steps to Maintaining Healthy Skin



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## Skin Care for Your Stoma



When you have a stoma, it is vital to know how to care for the peristomal skin - the skin around your stoma. The condition of this skin can affect not only your general well being but also the skin barrier and pouching application. Learning how to

take good care of the skin around your stoma can bring great rewards in the form of both physical comfort and peace of mind.

It is always much better to prevent, rather than treat, skin problems around the stoma. In this booklet, you will find solid information to help you keep your skin healthy and at its best, along with some handy tips.

With this in mind, we will start with steps to maintain healthy skin and prevent problems. A simple three-part program of Cleanse, Condition and Protect can ensure your skin is always in top condition.

If you do find you have a skin problem, rest assured that most problems are usually easily treatable. However, the process can take time and may cause stress. In this booklet, you will also find support and guidance for managing some of the most common skin complaints.

Remember, though, if at any time you feel that you cannot get your skin healthy, or you feel you have tried all options without success, it may be time to visit your stoma care nurse or doctor for some help and advice.

If you are unsure of some of the terms used in this booklet, you will find a glossary on the last page.

## Take Care of Your Skin



Your skin is the largest organ on your body. It does many things for you that you may not even be aware of. It helps make some vitamins, controls your temperature, shields you against harmful germs, waterproofs you, tells you

what's happening in the outside world and gets rid of wastes. No wonder looking after your skin is so important! It looks after you!

At some point in life, everyone experiences a painful break in the skin. Most of us have endured blisters and sore feet caused by new shoes, or a bad sunburn or just the cuts and scrapes that happen with every day living.

Skin breakdown is not only uncomfortable, but can also be messy. With that in mind, we will provide some practical solutions to caring for the skin around your stoma.

Remember, each person's skin is unique. What works for one person may not work for someone else. That's why we offer many alternatives in this booklet.

## Prevention is Better than Cure



As we said earlier, the best course of action is to keep skin problems from starting. A correctly fitting pouch system - that is, one which is snug to the stoma, but not too tight - is a good start.

If you can see any exposed skin on the inner circle of the skin barrier when you apply it, chances are the hole on your barrier is too big. If in doubt, use a stoma measuring guide and double check to make sure you have the correct fit. Especially in the early days following surgery, stomas can change both shape and size, so it is a good idea to always re-measure. Also, if you lose or gain weight, the peristomal skin may change size and thus affect your pouch seal.

Check to see if you have any skin dips or gullies around your stoma. If you do, you may want to add a stoma paste as filler to smooth the surface. (If you remember using “paste” in grade school, you may be thinking that stoma paste is a sticking agent. However, stoma paste is a caulking agent, not an adhesive.)

If you don't want to use a stoma paste, there are other choices such as barrier rings and strips. These are free of alcohol and easy to apply.

You can also obtain skin barriers that fit an outward curve of the skin around the stoma. These are convex skin barriers, and they are different from flat backed barriers; the back of the barrier is curved outwards along with the skin. This fills in places where the skin is folded or the stoma is recessed, and gives the stoma a little push forward to assist the stoma drainage to go into the pouch. It also helps flatten out any peristomal folds and creases which might be interfering with a good skin barrier seal.



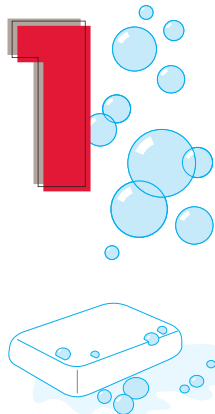
If you have a small amount of broken skin, you can apply stoma powder to protect these areas from further breakdown. Be sure to brush off the excess powder before applying any other pastes or skin barriers. Once your skin has healed, stop using the powder. It is not used for prevention, only to help treat an existing problem.



### Tips:

- Be gentle when you are removing the skin barrier. Don't pull the skin barrier straight off the skin; instead, gently press the skin away from the barrier. If you are aggressive when pulling off the skin barrier, it can cause what is commonly known as skin stripping.
- If you find your appliance or tapes are difficult to remove, or if you are concerned about residue, you can use removers that have been developed for the purpose. They are available in aerosol and wipe form.
- Make sure you empty the pouch when it is one-third to one-half full. This ensures the adhesive is not carrying too much weight and maintains a good skin seal. If the pouch gets too full, the contents will leak and wash back over the barrier. This can dissolve the barrier, which weakens the seal between your skin and the pouch.

## Three Steps to Healthy Skin



### Step 1: Cleanse

Many people feel that they need to keep the peristomal skin very clean at all times. This can reach a point where they practice excessive cleaning, scrubbing and disinfection. As you might guess, this can be very harsh on skin since it removes the protective layers around the stoma.

There is no need to use harsh cleansers or disinfectants. Your stoma will not get infected. If you think about it, what did you do before you had a stoma? Cleaning around your stoma can be just that simple.

Plain warm water is as simple as it gets. After carefully removing your skin barrier as described, cleanse your skin with warm water. Many people like to remove everything in the shower and completely rinse. It's your choice. It will not harm your stoma.

Remover wipes are useful if you have a build up of residue from either tapes or skin barriers. Be sure to cleanse your skin after using remover wipes.

If you want to use soap, select a brand that is not oil based and doesn't leave a residue. Specially designed skin cleansers are available which are soap and fragrance free if you wish for extra gentle cleansing.

Once you have given your skin a good rinse, simply pat the skin dry. Then reapply your skin barrier.



### Tip:

- Always rinse your skin with plain water after using cleansers, soaps or removers, since the residues from these can affect your pouch seal.



### Step 2: Condition

(This step is optional.)

If your peristomal skin shows signs of trouble such as redness or mild irritation, you should condition your skin. Taking quick action at this stage can help keep your skin in good shape.

Many skin care products are oil based, which can interfere with pouch adhesion. If you have problem skin, such as dry/flaky skin or even just some mild redness and irritation, a non oil-based creme should be used that will not interfere with pouch adhesion.

Again, ensure you have a correctly fitting barrier to prevent skin irritation from leakage.



### Tip:

- When using **Hollister** Skin Conditioning Creme, apply only a small amount, and wait for it to be absorbed into your skin. The skin will feel dry yet moisturized. Then apply the skin barrier. This will still allow the barrier to adhere to your skin.

## Three Steps to Healthy Skin *(Cont'd)*

# 3

### Step 3: Protect:

There are many products to protect the skin that are specifically designed for people with stomas. These include pastes, stoma powders, and protective wipes, as well as rings (washers) and strips.

There are various types of stoma pastes which are used as fillers or caulks. Pastes can be applied directly around the stoma. Or you can apply paste on the skin barrier. Either way, you should have a firm seal between the pouch and your skin.

Be sure to use stoma paste only as a filler and not adhesive. Pastes contain varying amounts of alcohol, and they can sting on broken skin. When they are applied to unbroken skin, there should be no sensation.

Stoma powder (not talcum) is a good skin protector for broken skin. It absorbs moisture and protects the skin.

You can apply stoma paste over powder to seal the powder in. This may reduce the stinging sensation that can be experienced with pastes.

Skin protective wipes offer a protective film to the skin. This can serve a dual purpose by A) helping shield the skin against corrosive discharge and B) allowing easier removal of skin barriers. Most skin protective wipes contain alcohol, so, if you have broken skin, there might be



a stinging sensation when you apply them. If you find it difficult to remove your skin barriers and tapes, or if you are stripping your skin, you might want to consider trying these wipes.

It is not recommended to use Skin protective wipes with **Flexend** skin barriers; this can reduce the amount of wear time.



### Tips:

- When using powder, make sure to brush off the excess before applying any other pastes or skin barriers. Paste, skin protective wipes or rings can be applied directly over the powder once the excess has been removed. Be sure to stop using the powder once your skin has healed.
- When using **Adapt** Barrier Rings, apply them to the wafer or pouch first before attaching to the skin. Make sure the ring and skin barrier opening are of equal size, that is, the size of your stoma.

# Managing Common Skin Problems



Even if you are careful to maintain healthy skin, at some point, you might develop a problem. If the skin around your stoma is damaged, it will look irritated and feel sore, and you know you need to place a skin barrier over the irritated area.

When you have a problem, it's important to learn what caused the irritation. Following are some of the situations that can cause irritated skin.

## Improperly Fitting Skin Barrier

If the opening on your skin barrier is too large or does not adhere well, the drainage from your stoma can damage your skin. This is of particular risk for people with an ileostomy.



### Tips:

- Measure your stoma periodically.
- Select a product that fits closely around your stoma.
- Apply **Adapt** Stoma Powder (Stock No 7906) to any open or broken skin before applying your new skin barrier.
- Discontinue powder use after the skin has healed.
- Contact your stoma care nurse if the skin does not improve.



## Leakages Causing Irritation

Stoma discharge can be irritating to your skin, causing redness that can lead to open raw skin that weeps or even bleeds. This type of irritation is often very painful. (People with ileostomies are at the highest risk for this kind of skin damage.)

A change in the size or shape of your stoma or the shape of your abdomen can change the fit of your pouching system, leading to leakage.



### Tips:

- Change your pouch promptly if drainage is leaking under the skin barrier.
- Change your pouch on a regular schedule before it leaks.
- Contact your stoma care nurse if you are having difficulty keeping your skin barrier on.
- Consider using accessories (convex skin barriers, paste, rings/seals) to help prevent leakage under the skin barrier.

## Managing Common Skin Problems *(Cont'd)*



### Skin Irritation Under Tape

Irritated skin that develops only under the tape of your skin barrier can occur for a variety of reasons. The skin may be itchy, blistered or open and weeping. This problem can develop at any time, even if you have worn the same type of product for months or years.

In this case, you may be sensitive to an ingredient in the tape, or your skin may have become damaged when tape is removed.



### Tips:

- Try a pouching system without tape. These products are adhesive but use a skin barrier instead of tape.
- Apply **Adapt** Stoma Powder (Stock No 7906) to any open skin before applying your new pouching system.
- Contact your stoma care nurse if you are having difficulty keeping your skin barrier on.



### Rash Under a Stoma Product

Sometimes a rash is caused by a skin infection or sensitivity, or even from leakage. The area may be red or red with bumps. Itching may also be a symptom. It is important to get assistance in determining the cause since the suggestions for treatment will vary.



### Tips:

- Contact your stoma care nurse if you are having difficulty keeping your skin barrier on.
- If an anti-fungal is recommended for treatment, make sure it is in powder form, not a creme.

### General Reminders:

- Don't ignore skin problems around your stoma.**
- Do seek help for skin irritation or leakage.**
- Don't use home remedies.**
- Do call for samples if you need to try something new.**

## Hollister Skin Care Accessories

These products are available should you need them, but are not essential for every person.

### Cleanse



#### Hollister Skin Cleanser

Stock No 7210

A mild gentle foaming cleanser for fecal and urinary discharge. Leaves skin clean and fresh.



#### Universal Remover Wipes

Stock No 7760

A pre-moistened wipe impregnated with remover that helps dissolve residues from adhesives and tapes. Makes removal of adhesives from the skin a more comfortable experience. This is not needed every time.



### Condition

#### Hollister Skin Conditioning Creme

Stock No 7220

An aloe vera based product with vitamins to soothe sore and flaky skin. Can be used under adhesives.

### Protect

#### Adapt Paste

Stock No 79300

A low alcohol paste used as a filler to seal gaps and prevent leakages.



#### Adapt Stoma Powder

Stock No 7906

A specially designed powder to treat small areas of problem skin around the stoma.



#### Adapt Convex Barrier Rings

Stock No 795xx

An alcohol-free alternative to paste. The rings are applied to fill in dips in the skin around the stoma and guard against leakages. The specially designed convex shape fills deeper gullies and defects.



#### Adapt Barrier Rings

Stock No 780x

Another alcohol-free alternative to paste. These flat rings give an extra seal around the stoma and work like a tap washer to prevent leaks.



#### Skin Gel Wipes

Stock No 7917

A pre-moistened pad with a material designed to help shield the skin from irritating discharge. Once wiped on the skin, it is allowed to dry and provides a protective film.

Other accessory items include stoma belts, deodorizers and a lubricating deodorant.

### For Additional Information:

Please visit the Hollister website  
[www.hollister.com](http://www.hollister.com)

# Glossary

<b>Appliances</b>	Here this term is used to describe your stoma supplies. This includes, pouches, skin barriers etc.	<b>Seals</b>	A range of discs or 'washers' that act as extra security applied to either the skin or the skin barrier to prevent leaks.
<b>Colon</b>	The large bowel (intestine)	<b>Skin Barrier</b>	A specially designed adhesive system that sticks to the skin around the stoma and protects it from discharge. It may be part of a one or two piece system.
<b>Colostomy</b>	A stoma opening into the large bowel.	<b>Stoma</b>	An artificial opening into the body. From the Greek word meaning mouth or opening. Also known as an 'ostomy'.
<b>Convex Products</b>	A range of specially modified skin barriers with an outward curve to apply a small amount of pressure around the stoma to prevent leakages.	<b>Stoma Care Nurse</b>	Also known as SCN, or ET (Enterostomal Therapy nurse), STN (Stomal Therapy Nurse), WOCN/WOC (Wound Ostomy & Continence Nurse). This is a specially trained nurse with broad expertise for the care of stoma patients.
<b>Dehydration</b>	A loss of too much water from the body	<b>Urostomy</b>	A urinary stoma. Also known as urinary diversion and often (Ileal) Conduit
<b>Ileostomy</b>	A stoma opening into the small bowel		
<b>Ostomy/Stoma Association</b>	An association or club for people with stomas		
<b>Paste</b>	A paste designed as a gap filler and skin protector for stoma care. It is not used as an adhesive to help skin barriers stick but is used as a caulking agent.		
<b>Peristomal Skin</b>	Skin surrounding a stoma		
<b>Pouch</b>	A specialized bag used to collect bodily wastes from the stoma		
<b>Powder</b>	A powder specifically designed for stoma care. It is not the same as talcum powder.		