

Stoma care

☑ Essential Equipment

Suitable appliance (stoma pouch or bag), scissors, measuring guide, gloves and apron, access to sink or bowl of warm water, wipes, measuring jug if required, receptacle for soiled disposable items.

Appliances come as a one piece closed system, one piece drainable system or a two piece system.

☑ Care setting considerations

Always ensure you have the equipment required to safely meet the patient's needs in your current setting. For example, in a community setting it may be necessary to dispose of waste in the rubbish bin. This should be double bagged first.

The size of the appliance is determined by measuring the stoma using the measuring device that accompanies the appliances. Some appliances need to be cut to size. Too large an opening in the bag exposes the skin to the bag contents and too small an opening may cause trauma to the stoma.

☑ What to watch out for/action to take

Whilst maintaining stoma care:

- the colour of the stoma and surrounding skin
- the consistency of the faeces
- any complaints of pain or discomfort

The information gained from these observations will enable you to fully assess the condition of the patient's skin and if necessary plan any changes in treatment plus evaluate whether the current treatment is effective. Any abnormalities or changes must be reported to a relevant individual and recorded in the patient's notes.

☑ Field specific considerations

Learning Disability – it may be important to ascertain what a patient's usual routine is, as they may not be able to tell you. Assisting a patient to develop their ability to maintain their elimination needs can be an important step towards independence.

Mental Health – patients who are severely depressed may not view stoma care as important, so both physical and psychological support could be required.

Child – encourage and assist parents or carers to be involved to maintain the usual routine. Supporting, educating and enabling parents or carers to adopt new care practices within any environment is an important nursing role.

Step	Reason and patient-centred care considerations
1. The first step of any procedure is to introduce yourself to the patient, explain the procedure and gain their consent.	<p>There will be differences in how you go about this for children or those with mental health or learning disabilities as not all patients will be able to provide consent, but they will be able to assent.</p> <p>It could be that the procedure is one normally undertaken by the patient's family or carer, or they may express the wish to be involved in the care you are about to deliver. If this is so, and it is appropriate, it is an opportunity to maintain the patient's usual routine, or you could support the patient's family or carer in adapting their usual routine to meet the patient's changed care needs.</p>
2. Gather the equipment required. Ensure these are clean as appropriate.	To ensure you are ready to complete the procedure.
3. Ensure privacy, so close doors and curtains/blinds as necessary. If you are at a patient's bed-space ensure you draw the curtains fully.	<p>Patients will need to feel comfortable when carrying out stoma care. Maintains privacy, dignity and comfort. Caring for a patient's hygiene is a personal and intimate procedure which takes time to perform with dignity.</p>
4. Ensure the patient is in a comfortable position, adjust clothing to expose the abdomen.	To ensure the area is visible for the patient to access or to observe.
5. Wash your hands, put on an apron and gloves.	To prevent contamination from body fluids.
6. As appropriate encourage the patient to undertake as much of the process as possible.	Promotes independence.
7. Place disposable wipes around stoma site.	To protect surrounding skin from spills or leakage.
8. Empty the appliance and if necessary measure contents.	To monitor output and to ensure easier removal.

Step	Reason and patient-centred care considerations
9. Remove appliance and dispose of in a disposable bag or receptacle.	To ensure safe disposal.
10. Wash skin surrounding the stoma with warm water and wipes.	To remove excess faeces and ensure skin is intact.
11. Observe surrounding skin for signs of redness and excoriation and also colour and condition of stoma.	To ensure complications are identified promptly.
12. Dry skin thoroughly around stoma site and apply barrier wipes or sprays.	To prevent excoriation and to ensure the new appliance will be securely attached.
13. Prepare appliance and place in position.	Ensure appliance is prepared as per manufacturers guidelines. This will ensure skin is protected.
14. Dispose of any waste products as per guidelines.	To ensure safe disposal.
15. Remove your apron and perform hand hygiene and document in the patient's notes the care you have given and any relevant observations of pressure areas etc.	Reduces the risk of infection. Maintains patient safety and accurate records.
16. Offer or support the patient and ensure the patient is comfortable.	

Evidence base: Baillie L. (2009); Dougherty and Lister (2011); NMC (2007, 2015)

Peripheral vascular cannula care

☒ What is normal?

Many patients who are cared for in an in-patient environment such as an acute hospital will have an intravenous peripheral cannula inserted. This device is