

What if...

you get a parastomal hernia?

What is a parastomal hernia?

A parastomal hernia is a bulge or swelling around or underneath your stoma. The hernia usually develops slowly and may increase in size over time.

What can cause a parastomal hernia?

When a stoma is created, the end of the bowel is brought out onto your tummy through the muscle of the abdominal wall. This process can cause a weakness or gap in the abdominal muscle. Sometimes a loop of bowel bulges through that gap causing a hernia to develop.

Hints and tips

In the weeks following your stoma surgery:

- *Avoid heavy lifting*
- *Avoid getting constipated*
- *Support your stoma and tummy whilst coughing or sneezing*

In the months following your stoma surgery:

- *Wear a support garment if you are doing heavy work*
- *Keep your back straight, bend your knees and place your feet apart when lifting heavy objects*
- *Take regular, gentle exercise such as swimming or walking*
- *Avoid high impact sports such as rugby, football or strenuous racket sports*

What if...

you get a parastomal hernia?

Getting back to your normal lifestyle:

- *Try not to gain weight, or lose a bit of weight if you need to*
- *Always check with your doctor or stoma nurse before starting any new exercise programme or sport*

It is important to remember that:

- *Not everyone gets a parastomal hernia, nor do all hernias cause pain, symptoms or stoma management problems*
- *Most parastomal hernias can be managed using an abdominal support garment*
- *If your parastomal hernia does increase in size, it can make pouch choice and fitting difficult*
- *Surgery to repair a parastomal hernia is always the last resort as there is a very high risk that the hernia will recur*
- *A strangulated hernia is a rare complication. If this happens, you will experience severe pain in your tummy, your colostomy will stop working and will change from its normal bright red colour to a darker, bluish red. Seek help immediately as you will require urgent surgical treatment*

If you need advice or help about pouch management or the use of support garments, make an appointment to see your stoma care nurse.