

What Is a Colostomy/ Ileostomy?

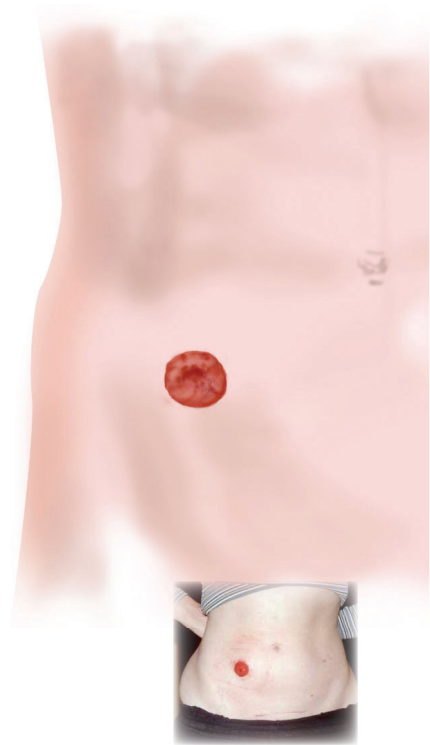
An ostomy is a surgically created opening in the abdomen for the discharge of body waste. After the ostomy is created, you will expel or release waste through a stoma.

- ▶ Ostomies that discharge stool are called ileostomies or colostomies.

Your stoma is the end of the small or large intestine that can be seen protruding or sticking out of the abdominal wall. It is the new site where stool will leave the body and be collected in the ostomy pouch. The size and location of your stoma depend on your specific operation and the shape of your abdomen.

Most stomas are similar and will:

- ▶ Stick out of the body, usually an inch or less above the skin
- ▶ Vary in size
- ▶ Be round or oval in shape
- ▶ Be red and moist (similar to the inside of your mouth)
- ▶ Have no feeling
- ▶ Be slightly swollen for the first weeks after the operation and then shrink to their permanent size





Who Needs an Ostomy?

Disease or injury such as cancer, trauma, inflammatory bowel disease, or certain birth defects can block the flow and drainage of stool. If the segment of the intestine cannot be repaired, then your surgeon will perform an ostomy operation. The ostomy will reroute the stool to a new opening on the abdomen.

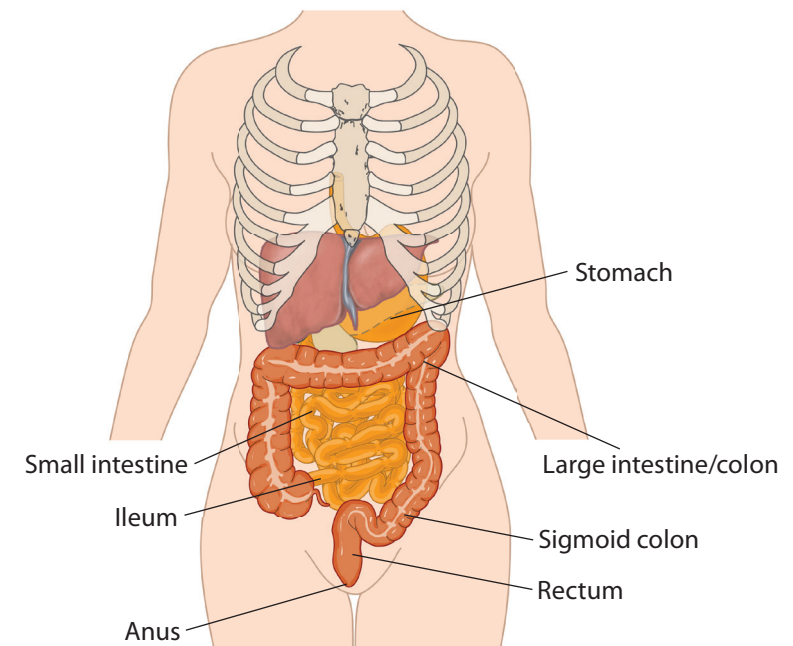


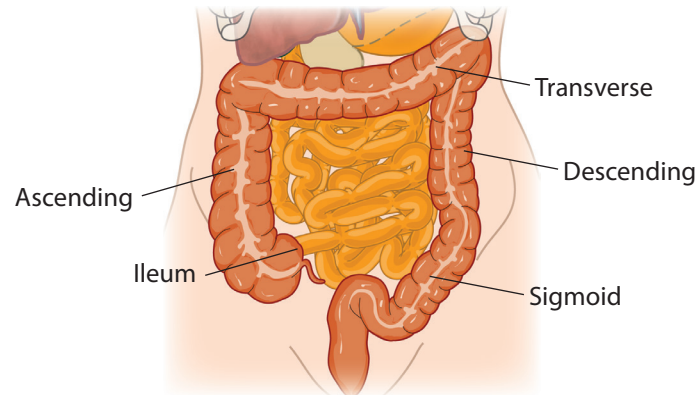
Your Ileostomy/ Colostomy Operation

Understanding Your Digestive System

Food passes from your mouth through your esophagus to your stomach. The stomach breaks down food into small pieces that move into the small intestine.

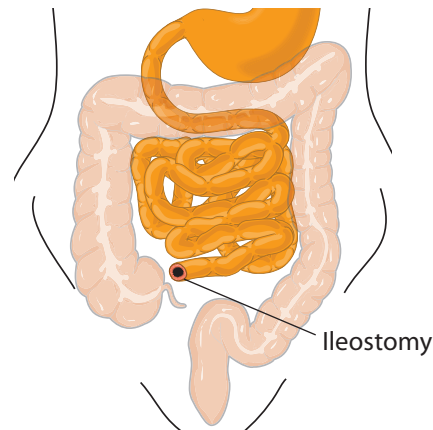
In the small intestine, enzymes break down food into a thick liquid. The body absorbs nutrients, vitamins, and water. The material then moves into the large intestine, also called the colon. In the colon, water is absorbed from the stool. It becomes thicker as it moves through the parts of the colon. Your stool passes from the colon into the rectum and is expelled through the anus. Your operation will bring either the small or large intestine to the surface of the abdomen.





Ileostomy

An ileostomy is the opening created by the surgeon to bring the small intestine (ileum) to the surface of the abdomen. An ileostomy may be temporary or permanent. Ileostomies are created higher in the intestine, and less water is absorbed from stool. The stool that comes out of your stoma will be more liquid. It will get thicker over time.¹



Colostomy

A colostomy is the opening created by the surgeon to bring the colon (large intestine) to the surface of the abdomen. There are various kinds of colostomies, each named for the location in the colon where the ostomy is formed. They are ascending, transverse, descending, or sigmoid colostomy. A colostomy may be temporary or permanent. The stool draining from a colostomy is more formed.¹



About the Pouch

Your stool will exit from a new opening called a stoma and will be collected in a pouch. You won't be able to feel or control your stool as it leaves your body through the stoma, so you will need to wear an ostomy pouching system.

The pouching system sticks or adheres to the skin around the stoma. The pouch:

- ▶ Collects stool
- ▶ Contains the odor
- ▶ Protects the skin around the stoma

Stool on the stoma will not cause any problems, but stool on the skin surrounding the stoma can cause the skin to get red or irritated.

Ostomy pouching systems are lightweight and lie flat against the body. Pouching systems come in different sizes and styles. Your doctor or a WOC nurse can help you choose which one is best for you. Most people try several types of pouches before they choose one permanently.

