



# Information Sheet - Ballooning

Ballooning happens when there is a build-up of wind in the stoma pouch (bag), causing it to inflate like a balloon. This can happen if you have a colostomy or ileostomy.

## What causes ballooning?

When you swallow food or water, you also swallow a certain amount of air. Most stoma pouches have charcoal filters built into the bag. These allow the wind to be released. However, if the filter capacity cannot handle the amount of wind produced, or if the filter has become wet or blocked by the stoma output, ballooning can occur.

## Your lifestyle

### Hints and tips to reduce ballooning

- Eat regular meals throughout the day
- Sip drinks and try not to rush your meals
- Chew food thoroughly
- Eating live yoghurt or taking pro-biotics daily can help to balance the bacteria in your digestive system, which in turn can reduce wind

### You may find...

- **Certain food types** such as spicy or high fibre foods and some vegetables (e.g. onions, cabbage, beans) can increase the amount of wind produced
- **Fizzy (carbonated) drinks** lead to an increased amount of air entering the intestine
- **Other activities** such as drinking through straws, drinking from a bottle with a sports cap, chewing gum, smoking, shortness of breath and even snoring can increase the amount of air swallowed

## What can you do to reduce ballooning?

One of the main ways to reduce ballooning is to reduce the amount of air entering your digestive system.

Remember, we are all different and some foods that increase wind for one person is not the same for another.

## Hints and tips in relation to your appliance

- Check the contents of the bag have not soaked into the filter. If this is happening, you may need to change your pouch more often
- Ensure your bag changes are within the recommendations provided by your stoma care nurse
- If you use an open (drainable) bag or a two-piece pouch system, release the wind from the pouch regularly during the day
- On some pouches, the filter can get wet from the outside, when swimming or showering. If this is happening, try covering with a 'filter cover' (which is found in your box of bags)

## More support

If you did not find all the information that you need in this factsheet, you can contact Coloplast Charter on **0800 783 1434** for advice and support. Alternatively, you can visit [www.coloplastcharter.co.uk](http://www.coloplastcharter.co.uk) or discuss your questions and concerns with your healthcare professional.