



Information Sheet - Rectal Discharge

Rectal discharge can happen if you have a colostomy or ileostomy.

What causes rectal discharge?

Mucus is normally produced in the large bowel which acts as a lubricant to aid the passage of stool through the large intestine and out through the anus. This will continue to be produced even though you have had a stoma formed.

The amount, frequency and type of mucus varies from person to person. Please remember, it is normal to continue to produce mucus and it is your body's natural way of passing the discharge through your body.

The mucus should be clear/yellowish in colour, and may be a liquid or sticky glue consistency. If you notice it to be blood stained or pus like, speak to your GP as this may be a sign of infection.

Hints and tips

Pelvic floor exercises will strengthen your core muscles which may help prevent involuntary leakage of mucus – please visit the website below for information on approved exercises called 'Core 4'.

If you experience a seeping out/leak of the mucus:

- Wear pads to absorb the discharge to feel more secure. A thin liner may be all that is needed. Wear close fitting underwear to hold the pads in place.
- Regular showering to keep the area clean will help to reduce any skin irritation.
- Use wet wipes to clean the area, especially when out and about.
- Use a small amount of barrier cream to help soothe irritated skin around the bottom. Reapply after each washing.
- Occasionally different foods can make a difference. It might be worth making a note of your diet to see if any foods affect the mucus production.

Things to watch out for...

Some people will experience a build up of the mucus which can leak out of the rectum, or it may dry up into a ball and cause a feeling in your back passage that you need to have your bowels open. Don't be alarmed, refer to our hints and tips or contact your Stoma Care Nurse.

You may also pass some faecal matter. This can happen several weeks/months after your operation. This is not unusual, but please contact your Stoma Care Nurse if this continues to concern you. Do not be alarmed if you pass some flatus (wind) from your rectum (back passage), as this is normal.

What can you do to relieve this?

Sit on the toilet when you have an urge to open your bowels. By gently bearing down without straining, the mucus may pass.

Sometimes just sitting on the toilet can often make this feeling disappear.

If the mucus is unable to be passed, the mucus may have become dry and uncomfortable. Please speak to your GP, as an option of using suppositories into the back passage can relieve this.

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 or discuss your questions and concerns with your healthcare professional.