Your stoma appliance is designed to protect your skin from output (faeces or urine). The adhesive of your stoma appliance sticks best to healthy, clean and dry skin. This reduces the risk of leakage, which is one of the main causes of skin irritation.

Maintaining healthy skin is often simply about checking you are applying and removing your stoma appliance correctly and with the right frequency. The length of time between changes will vary for each individual.

Using the ‘Apply Remove Check’ process described here will help ensure you are in the right routine.

**APPLY**

Applying to clean and dry skin keeps your stoma appliance securely in place to protect your stoma from leakage and skin irritation. The adhesive plate should fit snugly around your stoma. Supporting products, such as rings or a paste, can help you achieve a snug fit.

**REMOVE**

The stoma appliance needs to be removed gently to protect the skin around the stoma. Pull down the removal tab to loosen the adhesive plate from the skin. Gently remove the adhesive plate by rolling it step by step downwards. Apply light pressure to your skin with your other hand. Regardless of your appliance-change routine, you must change your appliance if you feel itching or burning.

**CHECK**

You can check your adhesive plate straight away but should wait a few minutes before examining the skin it has been covering. If necessary, use a mirror to check your skin. If you experience one or more of the following signs, it may be because you need to change your appliance more often or use another appliance type:

- Erosion of the adhesive plate
- Leakage on the plate or your skin
- Irritated or discoloured skin around your stoma.

Before use, always consult the “instructions for use” document delivered with the products.

Did you know...

Skin irritations are commonly confused with allergy, which occur only very rarely

Skin irritations are a common problem for people with a stoma. If you see any changes in the appearance and colour of the skin around your stoma compared to the skin on the rest of your stomach, you probably have a skin irritation.

This guide has been designed to help you assess your skin so you can manage mild skin irritations and know when to seek help from your healthcare professional in case of more severe irritations.

Examples of mild skin irritations

Examples of severe skin irritations

The best way to prevent any irritations in the skin around your stoma is to regularly check your skin to confirm you are in the right appliance-change routine.
Check the skin around your stoma for irritation

Remove your appliance and wait a few minutes before checking your skin.

**Healthy Skin**

- Is the skin around your stoma the same colour as the skin on the rest of your stomach?
  - Yes
  - No

**Leakage**

- Can you see faeces or urine on either your skin or the adhesive plate?
  - Yes
  - No

**Pressure**

- Can you see red, purple or black pressure marks on the skin around your stoma caused by a convex appliance, belt, clothing or by being overweight?
  - Yes
  - No

**Friction/Stripping**

- Has the skin around your stoma been stripped off?
  - Yes
  - No

**Other**

- You seem to be suffering from a skin irritation that is not covered in this guide.

Please note! If your skin does not improve in 7-14 days after following this advice, seek help from your healthcare professional.

**Mild Skin Irritation Caused by Leakage**

- What you can do:
  - Follow the 'Apply Remove Check' guidelines on the reverse.
  - Go through the Body Check link to check if you are using the right appliance.

- What your healthcare professional can do:
  - Help you change to a different shaped product if the stoma is at or below skin level. In this case, you may require a convex-shaped product.
  - Help you change to an erosion-resistant adhesive plate or try special products that dry and heal the skin, such as ostomy powder or Aloe Vera gel above 90%, or prescribe gentian violet if the skin is broken with discharge or bleeding.
  - Advise on any raised skin overgrowth complications.

**Severe Skin Irritation Caused by Leakage**

- It is recommended that you see your healthcare professional and follow the guidelines above for relieving a mild skin irritation caused by leakage can also help.

- What your healthcare professional can do:
  - Help you find an alternative solution if you use a convex-shaped product.
  - Help you change to a different type of adhesive plate that is less sticky.
  - Help you regularly alter the position of the hole in the adhesive plate.

**Mild Skin Irritation Caused by Pressure**

- It is recommended that you see your healthcare professional and avoid wearing belts or clothes that put pressure on the stoma area.

- What you can do:
  - Avoid wearing belts or clothes that put pressure on the stoma area.

- What your healthcare professional can do:
  - Help you find an alternative solution if you use a convex-shaped product.

**Severe Skin Irritation Caused by Pressure**

- It is recommended that you see your healthcare professional and also avoid wearing belts or clothes that put pressure on the stoma area.

**Mild Skin Irritation Caused by Friction/Stripping**

- Pay attention to your adhesive removal technique and make sure you are peeling the adhesive plate off gently.
- Consider using an adhesive remover or a protective skin product.

- What you can do:
  - Only use warm water to wash the skin under the adhesive plate.
  - Take care when removing hair growth from the skin around your stoma. If shaving, make sure to use a clean and sharp razor.

**Severe Skin Irritation Caused by Friction/Stripping**

- It is recommended that you see your healthcare professional and follow the guidelines above for relieving a mild skin irritation may provide relief in the meantime.

- What your healthcare professional can do:
  - Help you change to a different type of adhesive plate that is less sticky.
  - Help you regularly alter the position of the hole in the adhesive plate.

**Fungal Infection (Greyish)**

- It is recommended that you seek help from your healthcare professional.
- The following symptoms may indicate that your skin irritation is either disease or infection related or caused by an allergic reaction:
  - Any kind of wound or ulcer growth

- Tip: Taking pictures of your stoma area can help you determine whether your skin irritation is improving.

For more help: If you have any questions about using this guide or your appliance-change routine, please contact your healthcare professional or Coloplast® Care on XXXXXXXX.