

Understanding Your Stoma Output Can Help Prevent Complications



Green Zone - Normal

- Porridge/toothpaste consistency.
- Empty pouch between 4-6 times per day



Yellow Zone - Caution

Have you had watery output for over 12 hours?

- Consider diet: increase starchy foods such as white bread, grain, white pasta, potatoes and root vegetables
- Reduce fruit and green leafy vegetables. Including fruit juice
- Start Loperamide 2mg half an hour before each meal to slow the bowel down
- Stagger eating and drinking – fluids half hour before or after meals
- Observe the colour of your urine – should be pale yellow



Red Zone - Danger

Have you had watery output for over 12 hours?

- Please contact your stoma nurse for advice or Doctor if out of hours
- Be aware of signs and symptoms of dehydration: headache, dizziness, thirst, reduced urine output, dark coloured urine, cramps and tingling

In the meantime:

- Please make up rehydration solution: Drink the litre of rehydration solution over the day
- Please do not drink plain water even if you feel thirsty as this will reduce your body's essential chemicals further
- Reduce intake of tea/coffee
- No fizzy/carbonated drinks

If you are in the **GREEN** Zone

- A normal ileostomy output should be a thick toothpaste or porridge consistency.
- You should empty your pouch between 4-6 times a day.
- You may find that the stool consistency varies during the day depending on what you eat. This is normal.
- The usual offenders for a looser than normal output are: leafy green vegetables, spicy foods and pulses. (Although this will vary considerably from individual to individual). You should try to eat a normal healthy diet and introduce new foods slowly. If you find your output varies significantly it may be worth keeping a food diary. You should try not to restrict yourself too much. If you find a food that does not agree with you, it is worth retrying at a later date.
- Try to eat at regular intervals and avoid missing meals.
- Drink approximately 2 litres per day.

If you are in the **YELLOW** Zone

- If you are experiencing a loose watery output consider your diet.
- Cut out high fibre foods and follow a low fibre diet to reduce the amount of bulk and help rest and settle your bowel.
- A low fibre diet includes white bread, white pasta and white rice. Potatoes (mashed, boiled, roasted and chipped.) Root vegetables (carrots, turnip, butternut squash and swede). Meat, poultry and fish.
- Start Loperamide (also known as Imodium) 2mgs half an hour before meals. It is important to take prior to meals as Loperamide slows the gut down and allows more water to be absorbed as the stool passes through. If taken with or after food it does not always have the desired effect.
- As your output settles to a thicker consistency introduce your normal diet and reduce the Loperamide as your output dictates.

If you are in the **RED** Zone

- Please note the signs and symptoms of dehydration: Headaches, dizziness, thirst, reduced urine output, dark coloured urine, cramps and tingling - you may have one or more of these symptoms.

Please contact your Stomal Therapy Nurse for advice or Doctor if out of hours.

What you can do to help rehydration:

- Reduce your tea and coffee intake and make up the rehydration solution using the following recipe:
- 6 level teaspoons of glucose powder
- Half teaspoon of sodium bicarbonate
- 1 level teaspoon of salt
- 1 litre of tap water
- This often tastes better if it is cold and you add some squash for flavour. Try to drink the whole litre throughout the day.
- Your body needs the correct balance of water, salt and sugar for its general health and wellbeing. Rehydration solutions help replace body fluids which are lost as a result of a watery ileostomy output.
- You may very well feel thirsty, however if you drink plain water it will flush straight through and your ileostomy output will continue to be high.

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