



Stoma
Skin
Soul



Hernia Hints & Tips

Nils, Crohn's Rebel

Introduction

Hints & Tips Hernia

This booklet offers guidance to the person undergoing surgery which will result in stoma formation or for those post-operatively who may be at risk of or perhaps already have developed a parastomal hernia.

Please discuss the content with your Stoma Care Nurse (SCN) if you require additional advice or support.

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The information contained in this brochure is provided as general information only and is not intended to be medical advice. Please see our website for the most up to date information, as guidance can and does sometimes change. Always follow product Instructions For Use and ask your health care professional for more information.

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What is a parastomal hernia?

A parastomal hernia is a common complication which can affect some people following stoma formation.

Research has shown that as many as 10-50% of patients may go on to develop a hernia.¹

During your surgery an incision is made through the abdominal wall and muscle. This can result in a weakness in the muscle surrounding your stoma which may lead to a noticeable bulge behind or around the stoma.

Parastomal hernia is not always painful but can often be uncomfortable and inconvenient. Some patients describe a heavy, dragging sensation in and around their stoma.

The risk of developing a parastomal hernia is more common within the first year of stoma forming surgery. Herniation may however develop many years after surgery.²

Please refer to the section Am I at risk?



Example of a parastomal hernia



Sideways view of a hernia formation



“I felt much more alive than what I did before the operation. I’ve done a lot of things I couldn’t do before the operation, like skydiving, sports, activities and all kind of things I couldn’t do when I was sick.”

Feeling comfortable
in your own skin

Nils, Crohn’s Rebel

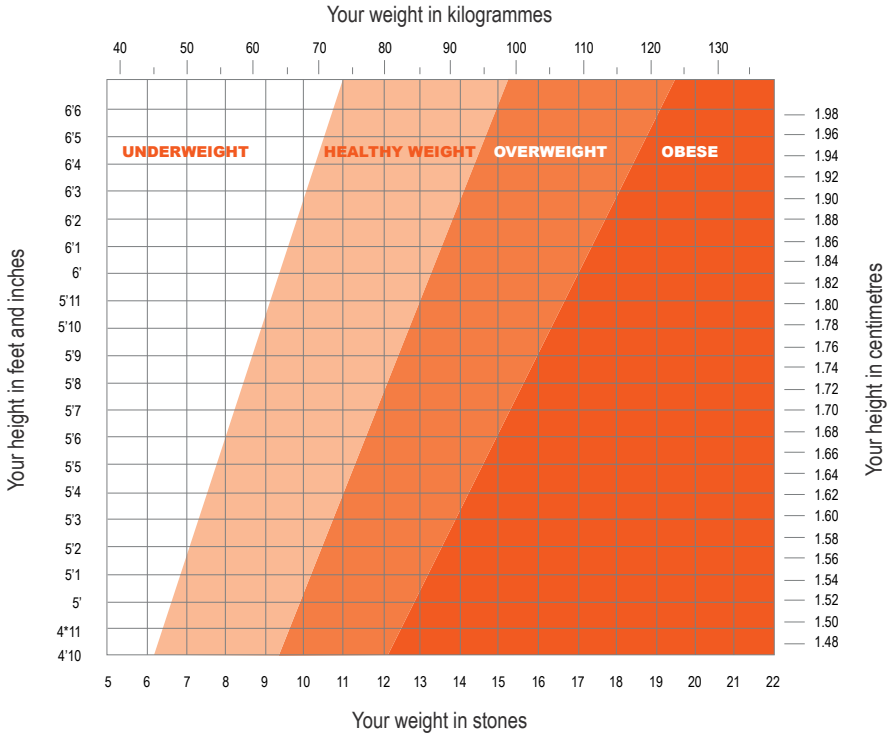
Am I at risk?



- Smoking significantly increases risk of herniation.³
- Chronic or excessive coughing.¹
- Previous history of hernia repair.^{1,4}
- Obesity.^{1,4}
- Muscles becoming weaker with age.¹
- Location of stoma.⁴
- Wound infection.¹

What is my ideal weight?

Height and weight chart⁷



What can I do to reduce the risk?



- It is important that you do not lift anything heavier than a full kettle for at least 8 weeks after surgery.⁵
- Manage your weight - Refer to ideal weight chart.⁶
- Try to maintain good posture at all times as this may help strengthen your core muscles.
- Coughing and sneezing may cause increased strain on your abdominal muscles. Place your hands against your abdomen, applying light pressure and support when required.
- Smoking causes a decreased rate of collagen formation. This is due to the effect of nicotine, which weakens the abdominal wall.³
- Research has shown that following a daily exercise plan can reduce the risk of herniation.
- Comfortable lightweight support garments may be worn postoperatively.⁵ These are readily available in high street department stores. Please do seek advice from your SCN for additional support garments if you feel you are at an increased risk.
- If you have had formation of a colostomy it is advisable to keep your bowel movements soft to avoid constipation.⁵

I think I have developed a hernia

- Seek advice and assessment by your SCN.
- You will require review of your stoma, skin and ostomy appliance as a parastomal hernia may alter the fit and security of your stoma product.
- Following assessment your SCN may recommend an alternative support garment more appropriate to your needs.
- If you irrigate your stoma (colostomy) you may experience some difficulty. Your SCN will advise accordingly.
- If experiencing abdominal pain or discomfort seek advice from your healthcare provider and discuss which analgesia is suitable to help provide relief.



Simon



Managing a parastomal hernia

Conservative management with a support garment

This is often the primary management of parastomal hernia and is achieved by wearing support garments.⁸

A wide range of garment options are available, both on the high street and on prescription. Appropriate selection depends on the size of your hernia and your own individual preference and needs. It is important with the help of your SCN you find a comfortable garment that you are happy to wear all day, everyday whilst providing you with the necessary abdominal support.⁸

Two types of support garment are commonly used:

- Hernia Support Belts. These come in several widths and designs. This depends on the size and shape of your abdomen.
- Control Top Garments. There are many types including brief, boxer and vests.

All of these garments need to be expertly fitted by your SCN or a qualified garment fitter.

Support garments rarely interfere with stoma function, however occasionally a hole is required to accommodate the stoma pouch. Your SCN will advise.

Surgery

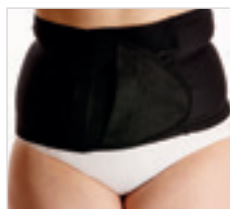
- Most parastomal hernias do not require surgery. However, if the hernia is causing pain and/or becoming unmanageable, surgery may be considered. As with all operations that require an anaesthetic there are associated risks.
- Having a hernia repair does not guarantee it will not reoccur.
- Discuss options with your SCN and surgeon.



Female



Male



Support belt

Exercise hints & tips



- Preparing your body before surgery is important to reduce the risk of developing parastomal hernia.
- Slowly build your activity level as you feel fit, aiming to return to the active life you enjoyed before surgery.
- Walking is a great way of keeping fit. Don't overdo it and remember to listen to what your body is telling you.
- If your work or leisure activities involve heavy lifting or strenuous exercise it is important that you seek advice from your SCN.
- Most important is to take one day at a time and pat yourself on the back for every accomplishment - no matter how little it might seem!
- Set yourself a target each week to increase the amount of exercise you take.

Training and exercise

Having a stoma should not prevent you from exercising or from being as physically active as you were before your operation. Talk to your doctor/stoma care nurse about contact sports or very heavy lifting; apart from that you should be able to enjoy the same type of physical activities you enjoyed before your surgery.

Remember, even light exercise is good exercise - for your heart, your joints, your muscles, your lungs, and for your general sense of well-being. You will need to allow some recovery time - and walking is a great place to start. Postoperatively, just walking around the house or to the end of your garden is fine. Set yourself small exercise goals each week to improve your strength and stamina gradually, such as walking for ten minutes and then fifteen minutes, or measure it by distance. One thing to bear in mind is that there is more to getting back in shape than running a mile or playing a set of tennis. Thirty minutes of walking every day is very good for you.



Pia



When aiming to participate in more strenuous activity it is important to build your strength and ability gradually.

Lifestyle examples



- Golf
- Gardening
- Fishing
- Football
- Tennis
- Hill climbing
- Gym activities
- Skiing
- Scuba diving

If you have any doubts on what exercise or activity you can or cannot do, your stoma care nurse is there to help advise you.

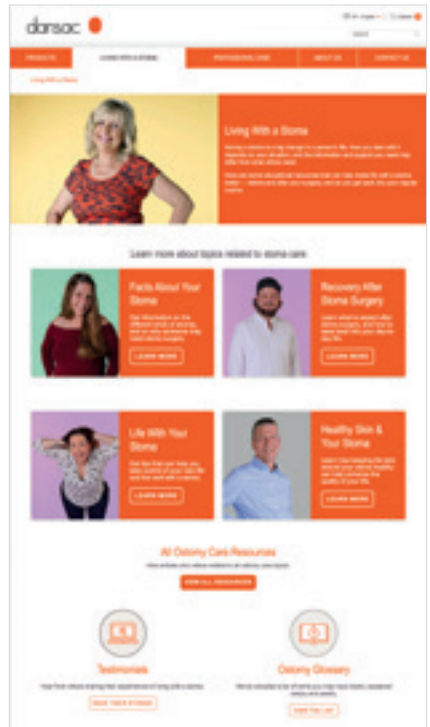
Other helpful advice & links

For more sources of information from Dansac, please go to:

www.dansac.com.au or

www.dansac.co.nz:

- Living with a stoma
- Contact us



Hernia Hints & Tips

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