Colorectal Nursing Department

Discharge advice: Holidays
Information for patients
This leaflet has been written to give you information and tips for going on holiday when you have had colorectal surgery.

**Holidays**

When you have sufficiently recovered from the surgery, you may start to think about going on holiday. It is a good idea to go away for the odd weekend first, before planning a world tour!

**Top tips:**
- Make sure that you have adequate holiday insurance, which covers you for *existing medical conditions*.

  The Ileostomy Association can supply details of insurance companies that regularly insure people with stomas.

  Tel: 0800 0184 724
  Website: [www.iasupport.org/faq/travel-insurance](http://www.iasupport.org/faq/travel-insurance)
  Email: info@iasupport.org

  Macmillan Cancer Support also has information and advice on travelling and insurance if you have had bowel surgery for cancer.

  Tel: 0808 808 00 00

- If you are travelling abroad, make sure that you carry all your stoma supplies with you in your hand luggage, as it would be extremely stressful for you if your suitcase went missing with all your supplies in. Take twice the amount of supplies that you would normally need, so that you don’t have to worry about sourcing more when you are away. If you use scissors to cut out your bags, do not carry them in your hand luggage, as you will not be allowed to take them through security.
• In hot climates, you will need to store all the equipment somewhere cool, to prevent the adhesives from becoming too tacky. You could take a cool bag as your hand luggage.

• Ask your Advanced Nurse Practitioner or Specialist Nurse Practitioner for an official hospital letter which states that you have a medical condition and have to carry appliances in your hand luggage. This is not essential but may help if anyone questions what you are carrying.

• If you are travelling by air, avoid fizzy drinks and alcohol, as these will increase the amount of wind you produce and will make the pouch swell up. Similarly, avoid foods that you know give you excessive wind. Perhaps request an aisle seat so that you can easily get out to the toilet.

• If you are a ‘closed’ pouch user, take a couple of drainable pouches with you, in case you suffer with diarrhoea while you are away. This will save your skin from getting sore from repeated changing of bags.

If you have a colostomy bag, remember to ask your Advanced Nurse Practitioner or Specialist Nurse Practitioner about mini closed pouches, which are ideal for swimming.

• If you have a two-piece system and are planning on swimming a lot, either in the sea or a chlorinated pool, it may be necessary to change the flange/bag more frequently, as the water can cause the adhesive to dry out.

• It is best to take some Dioralyte (rehydration salts), or a similar mixture with you, in case you suffer with an upset tummy.

• It is also essential to drink plenty of water while you are away, to avoid becoming dehydrated. In countries where the tap water is not suitable for drinking, it is strongly recommended that you drink bottled water. Avoid ice cubes, as you won’t know whether they are made from tap water or how old they are!
• Some of the appliance manufacturers produce a travel certificate, which explains in different languages what you have had done. This can be very useful in case a medical emergency arises, or if you are stopped at customs. Your Advanced Nurse Practitioner or Specialist Nurse Practitioner will give you information about this, if you are interested.

**Most importantly of all, RELAX and ENJOY your holiday!**

### How to contact us

If you have any questions about your diet or concerns about what to eat, please contact the Advanced Nurse Practitioner or Specialist Nurse Practitioner.

Tel: **01865 221 839** or **01865 235 367**
(9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday)

Email: [colorectal.nursing@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:colorectal.nursing@ouh.nhs.uk)

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email [PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk)

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