

Colorectal Nursing Department

# Why check the size of your stoma?

Information for patients



It is normal for your stoma to change in size and/or shape, especially during the first 6-8 weeks after your surgery.

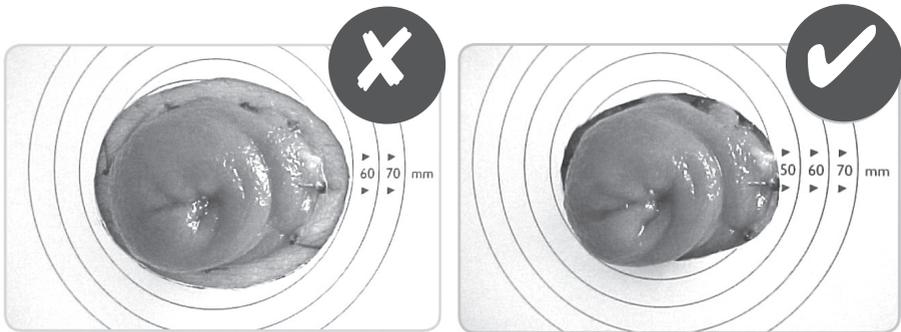
The initial swelling in your stoma will usually have settled before you leave the hospital. During the 4-6 weeks after you are discharged, your stoma may shrink further in size. You should check the template size for the hole (through which you put your stoma to attach your appliance) about once a week during this time.

Further reasons why your stoma may have changed in size or shape, including changes to your weight, are explained in our separate leaflet called 'Common concerns for people with a stoma'. We also have another leaflet called 'Possible stoma complications', which describes hernias and retraction of the stoma.

## How to check the size of your stoma

We will give you a template (cutting guide) to use, or you can peel off the backing paper from your appliance to use as a template. It is always a good idea to keep one of these in with your stoma care supplies, for future reference. Write the date on the new template when you make one, so that you know which is the most recent.

Place the template over your stoma. If you see any skin showing, you will need to adapt your next cutting out of the appliances to be slightly smaller.



The template needs to fit snugly around the edge of your stoma, not on the stoma itself, as this could cut into it and make your stoma sore. If this happens, then the hole size needs to be cut slightly larger.

It is often difficult to see the underside of your stoma, so you might want to use a small mirror (a cosmetic mirror is good) to help see this area of your stoma. If you have a partner or member of your family who has been involved in your stoma care before, perhaps you could ask them to check the template sizing.

## How to contact us

If you have any problems, please do not hesitate to contact your Advanced Nurse Practitioner or Specialist Nurse Practitioner, who can check this for you.

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

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)**

Author: OUH Stoma/Colorectal Nursing Team  
June 2016  
Review: June 2019  
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
Oxford OX3 9DU  
[www.ouh.nhs.uk/information](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/information)

