

TRAVELING

Having a stoma is no reason for not traveling. Many ostomates travel around Australia and the world by car, bus, train and planes and do so with little fuss and a bit of preparation.

If traveling in Australia a good tip would be to take a copy of Ostomy Australia with you, as it has a directory of all the associations in Australia, that you can get supplies from if you need some in emergency. Having a copy of your entitlement Number is also important (If you don't know this, contact the Ostomy rooms).

The Government allows you to have one month's issue, in advance, to cover for holidays so it is important that you plan ahead and work out what you will need.

Storage of appliances when traveling is important, as you need to keep them out of damp spots, out of direct light and not allow them to sweat as they will lose their adhesion to some degree.

Before traveling abroad you should obtain from the Ostomy rooms an International Travel Certificate that explains in different languages, that the appliances that you are traveling with are for medical purposes.

When traveling it is a good idea to have a list of your appliances code numbers and manufacturer's name in case of emergency.

When traveling it is important that you take sufficient supplies for what you need, and then a bit more, especially if you are not close to another association (in Australia).

If traveling overseas talk to your Stomal Therapy Nurse and she will be able to direct you where to go if you need extra supplies etc, when outside Australia. But be aware that other countries do not have the same scheme in place as Australia and you may have to buy your appliances.

Always be prepared that you might have a reaction to food or water, especially if traveling overseas. Talk to your Stomal Therapy Nurse and she can help you with suggestions as to what to do if this occurs.

TRAVELING BY PLANE

When traveling by plane it is essential that you do not pack all your appliances in one bag and that you also carry a few in your hand luggage. Airlines are known to lose luggage and this way you will not lose all of your appliances.

Plane toilets are known to be a small flush, so paper in the bowl first helps to flush away your pouch contents easier.

Ask for an aisle seat when boarding, as it helps you get to the toilet easier without having to climb over other travelers.

Going Somewhere?

Don't put Limitations on yourself, just because you have a stoma.

Enjoy Yourself!



Geelong Ostomy Association Inc.
100 Lt. Myers Street, Geelong 3220
Ph: 5222 3168 Fax 5223 2659
E-Mail: goainc@ncable.net.au

GOING OUT & DOING IT!

Most people who have a stoma can return to their normal daily activities once they have recovered from the effects of the surgery.

Many ostomates return to work, continue with their sports, go out with friends, entertain and travel within Australia and abroad. Having a stoma should not limit you and you should take up the challenge and do all of these things and more, if your health allows it.

If you have any concerns talk to your STN.

PREPARATION

Preparation is one of the keys to achieving the lifestyle that you want and forward thinking is definitely something that ostomates need to do.

It is essential that you are prepared when you do leave the house whether for work or leisure, by having an emergency kit to take with you. This kit should contain a spare appliance, spare clip, disposable bag (for the used appliance), disposable cloths and any other items you need to change your appliance. A toiletry bag or makeup bag makes a good holder for all your needs.

As this kit will not be used everytime you go out, it is essential that you replace the appliance in your kit regularly to ensure that it is "fresh" .

TOILETS

The disabled toilets are the better toilets to use when out, as they are larger and give you more room to change your appliance if you need to do so. Just because you are not in a wheelchair does not mean you can not use these toilets.

If traveling by plane, you can dispose of your used appliance by wrapping it first and then placing it in the container for sanitary towels.

Also when flying don't wait until the last moment to use the toilet as there is always a long queue and if you need to change your appliance you will take longer than usual and make that queue longer and more frustrated.

GOING BACK TO WORK

Deciding when to go back to work is a decision that you, your Stomal Therapy Nurse and your Doctor should decide together.

Ask your Stomal Therapy Nurse about any suggestions that she may have for your returning to work.

It might be appropriate to carry a spare set of clothing in your work bag/car especially if you do physical work that could cause a problem, (just in case) . It never hurts to be prepared!

GOING TO HOSPITAL

It is advisable to take sufficient appliances with you if you are admitted to hospital, as the hospital probably will not stock your brand and size. With over 1,600 different appliances on the Stoma Appliance Scheme list, it is impossible for a hospital to stock everything.

It is also **highly recommended** that you ask to see the hospital's Stomal Therapy Nurse when you are admitted, as not all nurses are familiar with stoma care.

If you have been admitted for something completely unrelated to your stoma, it is still important to talk to the STN as medications and treatments can cause other issues.

When going to hospital it is always a good idea to tell someone else where your supplies are kept at home, so that in the case of an emergency admittance or if your stay in hospital is longer than expected, they will be able to collect some appliances etc, for you.

If you have serious medical problems that could mean a hurried admission to hospital a good tip would be to have an "Emergency Bag" to be collected at the last minute. This "Emergency Bag" would need to contain a few days appliances. If this is an option for you don't forget to renew your appliances periodically in this "Emergency Bag".