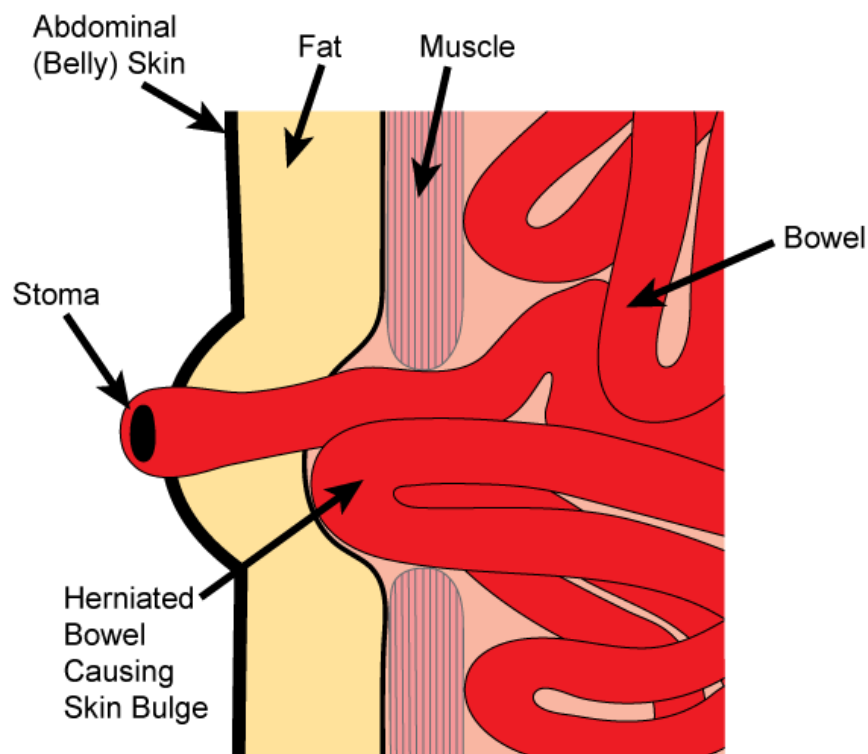


Parastomal Hernia Management

What is a parastomal hernia?

A **parastomal hernia** happens when a loop of bowel bulges through an opening in the muscle the surgeon made for the **stoma** (an opening created in your bowel) to pass through. Parastomal hernia is one of the most common problems after stoma surgery.



How would I know if I have a parastomal hernia?

Most people with a parastomal hernia notice a bulge around the stoma. If you think you might have a parastomal hernia, contact your healthcare provider for a check-up. Other possible signs of a parastomal hernia include:

- Stomach pain or pressure in the area around the stoma
- Having a hard time passing stool (particularly for patients who had a colostomy or ileostomy)

- Not being able to keep a good pouch seal
- Changes in the stoma shape (if it becomes flatter or larger)
- Increased skin irritation (redness, open areas on the skin, sores, or skin tears) around the stoma

When should I contact my surgeon?

Most parastomal hernias don't require surgery, but if you have any of the symptoms listed below, call your surgeon:

- Severe stomach pain in the area around the stoma
- Redness, swelling, or warmth in the skin around your stoma
- Nausea or vomiting
- There's no output from your stoma
- Changes in stoma color (particularly if it becomes darker in color, like burgundy or black)

How do I manage a parastomal hernia?

The type of treatment for parastomal hernia is based on how much pain or discomfort the symptoms are causing you. Repair surgery for hernias is only used rarely, because the hernia often comes back anyway. Usually you can manage a hernia by avoiding activities that might cause the hernia to increase in size and by providing support to the stomach muscles around the stoma.

Activities that increase stomach pressure or strain the stomach muscles can cause the hernia to get bigger. Some suggestions to help prevent the hernia from increasing in size are listed below:

- Avoid weight gain, as this increases stomach pressure.
- Whenever possible, avoid lifting anything heavy. If you must lift, use good body mechanics (positioning your body for safe and effective movement). Place your feet apart (one foot in front of the other), keep

your back straight, and bend your knees. Keep the object you are lifting close to your body.

- Avoid straining your stomach muscles when possible. Actions like holding your breath, bearing down, and heavy weightlifting can cause stomach strain.
- Avoid constipation (having few or difficult bowel movements) if you have a colostomy or urostomy. Drink plenty of fluids and eat a healthy diet to keep having regular bowel movements.
- If you feel a bulge around your stoma when you cough, sneeze, or throw up, place your hand over the stoma to provide some counter-pressure.
- Wear a support garment, such as a custom-made hernia belt. This belt can help support the area around the hernia and prevent it from increasing in size. You would put the belt on while lying down (usually before getting out of bed in the morning), and you can remove it at bedtime. Your healthcare provider can make a referral to the outpatient ostomy nurses for a fitting.
- A healthy lifestyle is important. Practice good eating habits, keep yourself at a healthy weight, and avoid smoking.

How might a parastomal hernia affect my ostomy appliance fit?

A parastomal hernia can change the fit of your ostomy appliance. If you're having pouch leakage or skin irritation, you may need to adjust (change) the size of the opening on your appliance or wear a style that fits your belly shape better. You may need to see your ostomy nurse to have your ostomy supplies checked.

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