



# Welcome to me+™

You, your stoma, and  
your story are unique



# You're not alone. You've got me+™

me+™ is here to support you throughout your stoma journey. It's a complete support programme to help you recover and build a healthy bond between you and your stoma. It focuses on the areas of life people living with a stoma have told us were important to them.

"Tell people how to live with it – not just about the products."

Collected from real patient interviews

# me+™ answers

While some things will change, you can still live the life you want to lead. me+™ answers gives you the answers to the lifestyle questions you have. You'll learn about diet and nutrition, intimacy, exercise and sports, travel, and a host of other topics.

Here's a sample of the kinds of questions you can have answered.



## LIFESTYLE QUESTIONS

### Can I still eat spicy food?

While you may like spicy dishes, your stoma may not respond positively to them at first. So start with simple foods, add a small amount after a while, and see how it goes.

### Will I still be able to have sex?

Yes, you will. There's no 'right' time to resume sexual relationships; you shouldn't feel rushed. Take your time.

### Will I still be able to get pregnant after my stoma?

The good news is yes. If you were able to conceive before your stoma surgery then it should be possible afterwards. Talk to your doctor so you can understand your circumstances better.

### Will I be able to travel?

Travel is an enriching experience, and having a stoma doesn't change that. It just means spending more time planning and packing. If you've only just had stoma surgery, speak to your nurse to ensure you're ready to travel.

### Can I still hug people? Or will my bag burst?

Yes, you can. Just follow the guidance given for your pouch and feel free to hug people.

### Is swimming still an option?

Yes, you're still able to swim. If you're concerned about leakage, make sure to test the pouch out first at home. You may be self-conscious about your stoma pouch showing. Don't worry — there are accessories you can use that help to keep it compact and discreet.



## WHAT ELSE IS ON YOUR MIND?

### There are so many questions people living with a stoma have but are afraid to ask.

Don't be! We've heard them before, and we are happy to give you the answers you need.

# me+™ support

With clinical, customer care, and product specialists, our team is here for you — for whatever you need, whenever you need it. me+™ support will surround you with insights, inspiration, and ideas that will help you live with a stoma in your own way.

“They offer surgery, and you don’t think how it will affect you psychologically. Once the surgery’s over, that’s it. There’s no proper support once you leave hospital.”

Collected from real patient interviews



## SPOTLIGHT QUESTION

**If I feel anxious, is there anyone there to help?**

It’s natural to feel anxious at this point. And yes, our team of experts is only a phone call or email away for concerns you may have. And as you learn more about it, living with a stoma will become easier and part of your daily routine.





## SPOTLIGHT QUESTION

### How will I know if a one-piece or two-piece pouch is right for me?

The main thing to bear in mind is to find a product that you're comfortable using. Your nurse will recommend a one-piece or two-piece pouch depending on your needs. After surgery, you can try and test other system types at home to find the one that works best for you.

# me+™ product specialists

me+™ care provides you with products, accessories, and advice that will help you throughout your stoma journey. We'll give you the tools, resources, and product support to manage your stoma. And should you need them, we'll provide free samples for you to try out.



## SPOTLIGHT QUESTION

### What if I have no motivation after my stoma surgery?

Don't be alarmed, you've just had major surgery. Go at your own pace, but moving around and participating in activities is an important way to increase your energy levels. Doing so will help you feel more confident and make a positive difference to your well-being.

## me+™ recovery

**In the early days after stoma surgery, there's a lot to come to terms with. Everyone is different and recovers differently. It's important to listen to your body and be guided by how you feel.**

**"The advice you get after surgery is well meaning but it is often disabling and can be depressing. Try to focus on what you CAN do, rather than what you can't. A positive approach is so important."**

Collected from real patient interviews

The me+™ recovery series will guide you through your recovery after your surgery and beyond. It'll provide you with tips on what kind of movements and activities are best to start with.

Physiotherapists and stoma care nurses will recommend safe, appropriate, and gentle exercises as part of your healing and recovery process.<sup>1-3</sup> Get Ready is a set of two simple exercises you can do before surgery or afterwards to prepare for the full me+™ recovery programme. These exercises help to restore function and strength to your abdominal wall, inner core, and pelvic floor.<sup>1-4</sup>

To find out more about me+ recovery contact one of our specialists on

**UK 0800 467 866 / ROI 1800 721 721.**

DISCLAIMER: Speak with your physiotherapist or nurse before doing these exercises and ask them to show you how to do the movements correctly. If you've had very complex surgery, have an unstable hernia, or other complication, please check with your doctor or ask for a referral to a specialist physiotherapist.

# me+™ community

**Sometimes the best advice comes from someone who has already been where you are now.**

With me+™ community, you'll be part of a group of people who'll share their experiences and help you adjust. They'll reveal the highs and the lows, and how they coped with this change in their lives. They'll help you move back into the world and see the possibilities.

On the me+™ community page of our website, you'll find inspiring stories of people living with a stoma doing the things they love. And maybe one day, your story will be there too.

**"I needed a connection with someone who'd had one, who'd gone through similar things and made it through OK."**

Collected from real patient interviews



## SPOTLIGHT QUESTION

**Is it true that some people give their stoma a name?**

Some people do name their stoma. For some people, it helps them to adjust and makes it easier to deal with things when they go wrong. Others just think it's fun.



# Thank you for joining

Here are the benefits you will receive as a me+™ member



Access to our clinical specialists.



An expert team of customer care and product specialists.



Following registration, we'll give you a call to welcome you to the programme and explain the support available to you.



me+™ product specialists – products, supplies, and advice throughout your stoma journey.



me+™ recovery movement programme.



me+™ community – hear from others living with a stoma.



me+™ answers – a whole host of answers to frequently asked questions on everyday life, diet, lifestyle, and relationships delivered online and in booklets you can keep.

## References

1. Association of Stoma Care Nurses UK. ASCN Stoma care: National clinical guidelines. 2019, pp. 1–70.
2. Colostomy UK. Active Ostomates®: Sport and fitness after stoma surgery. 2019. <https://www.colostomyuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Active-Ostomates-Sport-and-Fitness-after-stoma-surgery-2019.pdf>
3. Thompson, Mary-Jo, and Bernie Trainor. "Incidence of parastomal hernia before and after a prevention programme." *Gastrointestinal Nursing*. vol. 2, 2005, pp. 23–27.
4. Hamasaki, Hidetaka. "Effects of Diaphragmatic Breathing on Health: A Narrative Review." *Medicines*. vol. 7, 2020, pp. 1–19.

**You don't have to figure it out alone.**

Let us help you get back to doing the things that make you, you.

Have a question? Contact us on

**UK 0800 467 866 / ROI 1800 721 721** today.

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