

## How can I prevent a Peristomal Hernia from developing?

- Avoid activities that strain or increase “intra-abdominal pressures” such as lifting greater than 10lbs, coughing, sneezing, vomiting and bearing down (as with constipation or straining to pass urine).
- As coughing and sneezing are often unavoidable, try bracing or splinting your abdomen with a pillow or your hands to “hold things in”.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Strengthen your abdominal core muscles. Consult a Physiotherapist for an individualized plan of core bracing and stabilization exercises.

## What can a hernia belt/binder do for me?

Wearing a hernia belt does not prevent the development of a peristomal hernia however it offers support to the heavy feeling of the abdomen and eases overall discomfort.

## Are ostomy hernia belts covered by medical?

Hernia belts are not covered by the BC Medical Plan or Pharmacare Program. Belts may be benefits under some private plans. DVA may cover hernia belts with a doctor’s prescription.

## What do I do now?

If you have a Peristomal Hernia or would like to learn more about prevention:

- Call us for an appointment with one of our Enterostomal Therapy (Ostomy) Nurses to discuss options that are available to you. We carry several types of custom hernia belts, binders and garments to accommodate different body shapes, support needs and activity levels.
- As your stoma/abdomen changes with a peristomal hernia, the way your ostomy appliance fits may also change. Call for an appointment to see one of our Enterostomal Therapy Nurses if you have any concerns.
- Call us to book a private session with our Registered Physiotherapist to learn individualized abdominal core exercises. The cost per session may be covered by your extended health care plan.
- Visit our website for more information [www.ostomycareandsupply.com](http://www.ostomycareandsupply.com)



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**WHAT I NEED TO KNOW  
ABOUT  
PERISTOMAL HERNIAS**

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## What is a Peristomal Hernia

It is the protrusion of the intestine (usually the small bowel) through the abdominal muscle wall. A peristomal hernia looks like a bulge under a stoma.

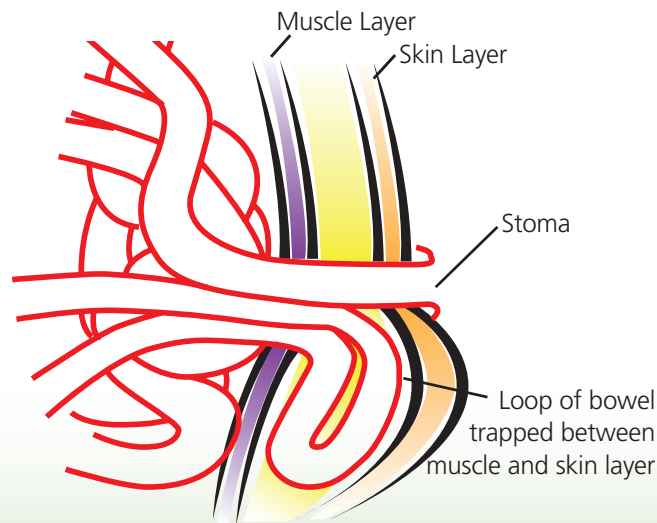


## Why am I at risk for developing a Peristomal Hernia?

Your surgeon has pulled the bowel through the abdominal muscle layer to stabilize and create your stoma. By doing this, the muscle is forever weakened. There is a 20-50% chance of developing a peristomal hernia after ostomy surgery. Factors which increase the risk include: steroid therapy, poor nutrition, post operative wound infection, smoking and previous history of hernias.

## What are the SIGNS and SYMPTOMS?

- A swelling or a bulge of the abdomen around your stoma. It can look like your stoma is "sitting on an orange".
- A dull ache or heavy or "dragging" feeling around your abdomen particularly when standing.
- The size of the bulge (hernia) may reduce in size when you are lying down and get larger when standing up.
- The size of your stoma may increase over time if the hernia enlarges.



Picture courtesy of Omnigon Ltd.

## How long can it take to develop a Peristomal Hernia?

The incidence of developing a peristomal hernia is highest in the first year after surgery however it can happen at any time. Many individuals have reported the sudden onset of a "bulge" after a sneeze or similar one-time event. Unfortunately, once a peristomal hernia is present, it will often enlarge over time and the size of the "bulge" will vary from person to person.

## Are there any risks to having a Peristomal Hernia?

A peristomal hernia is more visually distressing than it is a "medical problem". Sometimes peristomal hernias are not surgically repaired due to the high rate of recurrence even after hernia surgery. In a rare number of cases, the bowel which protrudes through the abdominal muscle wall may become twisted, trapped or kinked. This can affect the blood supply to the bowel or create an intestinal obstruction causing intense pain. If this occurs, immediate medical attention is needed.