

What if...

you get an ileostomy blockage or obstruction?

What is an ileostomy blockage or obstruction?

This is a blocked or obstructed portion of your bowel which prevents your stoma functioning normally.

What causes a blockage or obstruction?

- A lump of undigested food that blocks an ileostomy. This type of blockage is normally relieved by the sudden and often explosive passage of that lump of food.
- Adhesions. These are interrenal bands of scar tissue which can sometimes cause internal organs to stick together. Adhesions can kink, twist or pull the bowel causing an obstruction.

Signs and symptoms of a blockage or obstruction:

- Bloating and/or swollen tummy
- Abdominal pain and/or cramp
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- No waste from your stoma
- Watery output from your stoma
- Swollen stoma
- Signs of dehydration

What to do if you develop signs and symptoms of a blockage or obstruction:

- Stop eating solid food.
- Increase your intake of fluids. Drink cola or sports drinks as well as water.
- If your stoma is swollen, remove your pouch and replace it with one larger opening.
- Massage your tummy and try to relax.
- Soak in a warm bath. This will relax your abdominal muscles and may relieve the blockage by allowing the passage of an undigested lump of food.
- Do not take a laxative.
- Do not insert anything into your stoma unless instructed to do so and under the supervision of a healthcare professional.
- Do not eat or drink if you are vomiting, not passing anything from your stoma, or both of these.

It is important to speak to your doctor or stoma care nurse if your symptoms persist for over 8 hours, OR if you have symptoms of dehydration such as dry mouth, headache, dark concentrated urine or a decrease in the amount of urine passed. Hospital admission may be required.

Foods that may cause blockage or obstruction:

- Sweetcorn, nuts and seeds
- High fibre vegetables and the pith of citrus fruit
- Dried fruit or vegetables, coconut, popcorn
- Mushrooms, onions
- Beansprouts, bamboo shoots
- Celery, peppers, lettuce
- Asparagus, pineapple, melon
- Tomato or fruit skin