

Colon Surgery - Overview

A diagnosis of colorectal cancer is challenging and we understand this. We would like to make the process of care as easy and understandable as possible for you. Please feel free to ask us any questions you may have throughout the course of your care. We also encourage you to read through some of the information found in this website and some specialty patient resources listed here. You can share this information with your family members as well, since they will likely have questions.

You have been diagnosed with colon cancer and would like more information? Please see this patient resource book from the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN):

<https://www.nccn.org/patients/guidelines/colon/70/>

Other recommended colon cancer resources can be found here:

American Society of ColoRectal Surgery (ASCRS): <https://www.fascrs.org/patients/disease-condition/basic-facts-about-colorectal-cancer>

Canadian Cancer Society: <http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-type/colorectal/colorectal-cancer/?region=on>

What to expect after your colon/bowel surgery:

After your surgery, you will be admitted to RVH until your bowel function returns, your pain is controlled with oral pain medications, you're eating, and you're able to walk around sufficiently to be at home. We will encourage you to eat, chew gum, and walk around the day right after your surgery. There is scientific evidence that your bowel recovers faster with this type of approach. The name of this post-operative recovery strategy is "Enhanced Recovery After Surgery" (or ERAS) bowel pathways. For more information on what your recovery after bowel surgery will be like, please follow this link:

<https://www.fascrs.org/patients/disease-condition/enhanced-recovery-after-surgery>

What is an ostomy?

While speaking with you about the implications of colon surgery, we have likely mentioned the potential (or likely) need for a temporary or permanent ostomy. It is quite a significant life change to live with an ostomy, however there are many people who do it for many years and live quite normally.

A stoma (or ostomy) is formed when a surgeon creates a hole in your abdominal wall skin and attaches a loop of large or small intestine to your abdominal wall. Therefore your stool will pass out of this hole and into a bag on your abdominal wall. An ostomy is necessary when the bowel or bladder no longer functions effectively, or to protect a new surgical join made in the intestine after a colon cancer or diverticulitis surgery. Speak with us about whether your ostomy is temporary or permanent if we have not mentioned this clearly yet.



Types of Ostomies:

Colostomy: A surgical procedure where a part of the large intestine or colon is brought up through an opening in the skin to the surface of the abdomen. A person with a colostomy has no control over bowel movements, so a pouch is worn over the stoma to collect formed stool.

Ileostomy: A surgical procedure where a part of the small intestine or ileum is brought up through an opening in the skin to the surface of the abdomen. A person with an ileostomy has no control over bowel movements, so a pouch is worn over the stoma. The small intestine contents are more liquid, since they have not yet had a chance to flow through the large intestine and have water removed from them. Therefore an ileostomy puts out more liquid, less smelly, output and needs to be emptied more frequently than a colostomy.

For more information about ostomies, please see this trusted website:

<https://www.fascrs.org/patients/disease-condition/ostomy-0> or the expanded version:

<https://www.fascrs.org/patients/disease-condition/ostomy-expanded-version>

We will do our best to connect you with a specialty “Stoma Care Nurse” (sometimes called an enterostomal therapist) who will be able to educate you regarding where to get ostomy supplies and answer common questions such as: Can I swim with an ostomy? And Is there a change in diet? Our post-operative care floor nurses will also help you become accustomed to emptying your stoma appliance and help you change it while you are in hospital.

Please follow this link to a great Handbook for New Ostomy patients made by the Renfrew County Ostomy Support group: <https://renfrewcountyostomy.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Renfrew-County-Ostomy-Handbook.pdf>

There is a grant currently provided by the Ontario Government for patients with ostomies to help them pay for their supplies. The grant application can be found online and needs to be signed by a physician (either Dr. Carver, Rekman, or your family doctor). If you would like more information on how to apply for this grant and receive approximately \$800 per year, we can help you with this.

Here are some links to stoma care support groups and suppliers:

1. Renfrew County Ostomy Support Group: <https://renfrewcountyostomy.ca/ostomy/>
2. Home Health Medical Supplies (right around the corner from RVH): 200 Bruce St Renfrew. <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Home+Health+%26+Medical+Supplies/@45.4861588,-76.680567,13.61z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x0:0x13858e967ac7ef05!8m2!3d45.4808348!4d-76.6949825>
3. The Renfrew County Ostomy Support Group has an excellent website of contacts, including stoma nurses found here: <https://renfrewcountyostomy.ca/partners/>