Your guide to parastomal hernia prevention, support & management

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Introduction

The aim of this booklet is to:

• Raise awareness of the potential for developing a parastomal hernia.
• Outline the best measures for preventing the occurrence of a parastomal hernia.
• Provide practical advice on the non-surgical management of an existing parastomal hernia.

Information on the range of Omnigon Support Garments is included at the end. Scientifically tested, only Omnigon offers support garments tailored to suit your lifestyle. To suit different support needs and activities, Omnigon’s support garments are available in a waistband, pants and belts.

Two features are common to every Omnigon support garment:

**Comfort:** one of the primary considerations throughout the design, fabric selection and construction process has always been about comfort.

**Full Support:** every garment provides full, even support across the entire abdominal wall including the parastomal area. Omnigon does not produce support garments with a hole, so that the bag is not restricted. If a hole is cut, the support garment now mimics the situation that caused the hernia in the first place, so it cannot help to prevent hernias. For these reasons, Omnigon does not recommend that holes are cut in our support garments.
Understanding parastomal hernias

A parastomal hernia appears as an external bulge around or beside the stoma, as shown in the image below. The surgical incision made through the abdominal wall to form a stoma, creates an area of weakness in the abdominal muscles. Loops of bowel can protrude though that weakness lying in an abnormal position beneath the skin.
How common are parastomal hernias?

The largest review available (16,470 people with all types of stomas) conducted in the USA, found that 3 out of 10 stoma patients (30%) developed a parastomal hernia.³

Studies indicate that parastomal hernias are most common in end colostomies (up to 48%), followed by loop colostomies (30%). They occur in up to 28% of end ileostomies and up to 6% in loop ileostomies.

When is the greatest risk of developing a parastomal hernia?

The most likely time to develop a parastomal hernia is in the first 12 months following surgery, and can occur immediately following surgery.⁴ There is a strong case for ostomates to adopt the preventative measure of using a support garment as soon as possible after surgery.

How to recognise a parastomal hernia?

Parastomal hernias are often easier to see in a sitting or standing position.

If you increase the pressure inside your abdomen by coughing or sneezing you are more likely to see any existing hernia. While doing this, check if both sides of your abdomen are the same shape and size.

If there is a noticeable bulge around or near the stoma, lie on your back for a few minutes and see if the bulge goes away. If it does, it is called a reducible hernia. If the bulge does not recede into the abdomen cavity it is referred to as a non-reducible hernia.

What are the potential risks and complications of having a parastomal hernia?

Many parastomal hernias cause no symptoms and are barely noticeable, some are mildly uncomfortable, while others cause a dull ache, dragging or heavy sensation.

As a parastomal hernia grows in size, the skin around the stoma stretches causing the stoma to enlarge in size. Increases in the size of the opening of your pouch or even changing to another type of pouch may be needed. To ensure your stoma and hernia is managed well, please consult your Stomal Therapist.
In a small number of cases, the loops of bowel displaced into the hernia may cause blockage to the bowel. If you experience sudden onset of pain, nausea, vomiting, limited or no output from your stoma and / or have a swollen, tight abdomen please seek medical assistance immediately.

Preventing parastomal hernias

Some people are born with an inability to make a particular protein which repairs and strengthens muscle. These people may already have a history of other types of hernias and are more likely to develop a parastomal hernia.

People with a normal ability to produce muscle repairing proteins can have their effectiveness reduced by other external factors such as smoking, poor nutrition or infection. Seeking assistance to remedy these external factors will assist healing and reduce the likelihood of developing a parastomal hernia.

For all people, wearing a Diamond Plus waistband, unisex boxer or brief (rating 3, moderate support) as soon as it is comfortable to do so after surgery may be beneficial in reducing the risk of developing a parastomal hernia.

Increased internal abdominal pressure can increase the risk of a parastomal hernia:

Heavy lifting
Lifting heavy objects, such as shopping or wet washing can increase abdominal pressure. If possible divide the load when lifting and make more trips. It is recommended that a support garment be used when doing any heavy lifting or playing sport.

Constipation (colostomy only)
Constipation can cause straining and increased pressure in the bowel. If your colostomy has not passed a bowel motion in three days, seek a review with your Stomal Therapist. Seek a review with your Healthcare Professional if your diet and fluid intake is not adequate to prevent constipation.
**Obesity**

Obesity puts additional strain on the abdominal muscles. Maintaining a healthy weight or losing weight reduces the risk of hernia development.

**Chronic respiratory conditions / smoking**

Coughing increases internal abdominal pressure. When coughing or sneezing support your stoma by placing your hands firmly over it. If you smoke seek assistance to QUIT.

**Allergies**

As sneezing increases abdominal pressure, promptly treat any conditions that lead to sneezing.

**Activity levels and returning to work**

Light activity such as walking should be resumed as soon as possible after surgery as this will improve your recovery. In your first month after surgery, you can progressively build up your exercise level to 30 minutes daily, as you feel comfortable.

Many people find the Diamond Plus (rating 3, moderate support) waistband, briefs or boxers useful when undertaking initial post-operative exercises. The briefs and boxers will support both the abdominal muscles and the stoma pouch, enhancing the feeling of security when exercising.

Recumbent exercises (done while you are lying down or reclining) are a good start point to re-commencing exercise. This position encourages any bulge or hernia to reduce, see the descriptions for pelvic tilting and knee rolling in this booklet (p. 9-10).

People who engage in regular exercise generally have stronger abdominal muscles however, the formation of your stoma will still increase your vulnerability to developing a hernia. Allow 6-8 weeks for the muscles to heal before gently re-commencing your exercise routine. When recommencing your exercise program, support your muscles by wearing a support garment. If you have a parastomal hernia, apply the garment, then exercise.

If you already have a small hernia, a Diamond Plus (rating 3, moderate support) may be adequate while exercising. Larger hernias will need stronger support such as Support Briefs for Her or IsoFlex Support belt (rating 4, intermediate support), Total Control or KoolKnit belt (rating 5, firm support).
Resuming normal activity after surgery

Lifting
Always use a correct lifting technique:

- Do not attempt to lift by bending forward. Bend your hips and knees to squat down to your load, keep it close to your body, and straighten your legs to lift.

- Never lift a heavy object above shoulder level.

- Avoid turning or twisting your body while lifting or holding a heavy object.

It is advised to avoid all heavy lifting for 3 months following surgery.3-5

Swimming
To avoid potential injury from currents and surf swimming in the sea should be avoided for 6-8 weeks. After this period, support garments can be worn under swimming costumes to provide support and security while swimming.
Sport
Even if you do not have a parastomal hernia it would be advisable to wear a support garment (rating 4, intermediate support, rating 5, firm support) when playing vigorous sports such as rugby, tennis, golf etc.

Returning to work
How soon you return to work depends on the type of work you do and should be discussed with your doctor. If it is physically demanding work then you may need to wait 6-8 weeks before re-commencing work.

If you regularly engage in hard physical work as part of your job or hobbies (for example carpenter, builder, cleaner, gardener) even if you do not have a hernia it would be advisable to undertake preventative measures by wearing a Total Control or KoolKnit belt (rating 5, firm support) during those activities.
Driving
Driving a car puts a strain on your abdominal muscles and should be avoided for at least a month after surgery. Total Control and KoolKnit belts (rating 5, firm support) are available in narrower widths that are ideal for support when driving.

Sexual activity
Many forms of sexual activity put a strain on your body and you may need to wait 6-8 weeks after your surgery before re-commencing sexual activity. If your surgery involved the rectal or vaginal areas it may take several months before the tenderness resolves and you are comfortable enough to recommence sexual activity.

The Diamond Plus support waistband (rating 3, moderate support) not only provides support during sexual activity it also discreetly covers the pouch and minimises the possibility of the pouch being dislodged.

Exercises
The exercises on the following pages may assist in strengthening abdominal muscles and therefore potentially reduce the risk of developing a parastomal hernia. You may wish to consult your Physiotherapist or Healthcare Professional before commencing exercises.
Pelvic Tilt

Lie on a firm surface with knees bent up.
The following parts should be touching the floor:

- Soles of feet
- Bottom
- Mid/upper back and shoulders
- Head

Inhale (normally, not deeply) then as you exhale pull your tummy down and tilt your bottom upwards slightly while pressing the middle of your back down into the floor.

- Hold for 2 seconds
- Let go slowly
- Repeat 10 times daily

This is not a race. It is an opportunity for strengthening.

If you do not reach the floor the first time it does not matter, success is measured by progress.
Knee Rolling

Lie on your back with your knees bent up and feet on the floor.

- Pull your abdomen in
- Keeping knees together, roll them steadily from side to side
- Keep a smooth and gentle motion going within your comfort zone
- Repeat 10 times daily
- Mobility will improve with practice

Managing a parastomal hernia with use of a support garment

Some people find the discomfort of having a parastomal hernia increases as the day progresses and choose to only wear the support garment later in the day.

Wearing a support garment during physical activity is recommended.

To increase pouch security and prevent leaks you may need to consider changing your pouch type to one that is more flexible and has a larger adhesive area.

The addition of skin friendly Welland HydroFrame® with Manuka Honey extenders will more firmly anchor a pouch to your abdomen.

Do not be tempted to wear a tight support garment with a hole cut in it so that the bag is not restricted. If a hole is cut, the support garment now mimics the situation that caused the hernia in the first place, so it cannot help to prevent hernias.2

Complications

A small number of parastomal hernias can become complicated and cause concerns. Seek assistance from your Stomal Therapist if:

- Your pouching system is no longer working well, if irritation or pressure spots occur under your pouch.
- You start to have difficulty with colostomy irrigation. This may include difficulty introducing fluid, prolonged or incomplete evacuation. If this occurs cease irrigation.

One of the more serious complications involves trapping of bowel loops in the hernia. This can alter blood flow to the bowel tissue and is an emergency. Signs may include sudden and severe pain, reduced or no output from your stoma, vomiting, a tight and or swollen abdomen. Seek medical assistance immediately.
How to measure for an Omnigon support garment

You will need a tape measure and you may need assistance to ensure correct measurement.

Measuring your circumference:
• Lie flat on your back on a firm surface with your legs out straight and allow your abdomen to fully relax.
• Measure around your widest part including your pouch while breathing normally.

This will give you your circumference measurement.

For a support belt, you also need to measure your width:
• If you do not have a hernia, measure from your hip to your waist.
• If you have a hernia (picture below), measure approximately 5 cm below the hernia, up over the hernia, to your waist.

This will give you your measurement for the width (or height) of the belt.

Use your measurement(s) to check the size chart of the product. If you are in the last cm in the size, please order the next size up.
Omnigon’s Support Garment range, designed for all activity levels

Support garments are colour coded to match the support needed for your lifestyle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Garment Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Moderate 3 | • After surgery  
• Wear during light exercise  
• To prevent or to support a small bulge |
| Intermediate 4 | • Wear during daily activities as prevention (housework, shopping, golfing)  
• Support a more developed hernia |
| Firm 5 | • Wear during active work or sports as prevention  
• Support a more developed hernia |

- Men’s Support Pants  
  Diamond Plus Briefs & Boxers  
- Diamond Plus Support Waistband  
- Support Briefs for Her  
- IsoFlex Support Belt  
- Total Control Support Belt  
- KoolKnit Support Belt
Men’s Support Pants

- Tailored for a comfortable fit to body shape.
- All over support. Double front panel for extra strength.
- Traditional front opening for convenience.
- Black in colour.

**Size Chart – Men Support Pants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Circumference Measurement</th>
<th>Standard Waist</th>
<th>High Waist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>80 - 90 cm</td>
<td>MSP801</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>85 - 100 cm</td>
<td>MSP802</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>95 - 115 cm</td>
<td>MSP803</td>
<td>MSP803HW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLarge</td>
<td>110 - 130 cm</td>
<td>MSP804</td>
<td>MSP804HW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXLarge</td>
<td>120 - 140 cm</td>
<td>MSP805</td>
<td>MSP805HW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- After surgery
- Wear during light exercise
- To prevent or to support a small bulge
Diamond Plus Unisex Boxers

- Ideal for everyday wear after surgery and as you resume light exercise.
- Seamless knit technology providing maximum comfort, moving with the body.
- Diamond panel waistband provides extra support where it is needed.

Size Chart – Diamond Plus Unisex Boxers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Circumference Measurement</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>70 - 80 cm</td>
<td>P-MD15-1S-B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>85 - 95 cm</td>
<td>P-MD15-2M-B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>100 - 110 cm</td>
<td>P-MD15-3L-B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLarge</td>
<td>115 - 125 cm</td>
<td>P-MD20-4X-B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rating 3 Moderate Support

Diamond Plus Briefs

- Ideal for everyday wear after surgery and as you resume light exercise.
- Seamless knit technology providing maximum comfort, moving with the body.
- Diamond panel waistband provides extra support where it is needed.

Size Chart – Diamond Plus Briefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Circumference Measurement</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>70 - 80 cm</td>
<td>P-FD15-1S-B</td>
<td>P-FD15-1S-N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>85 - 95 cm</td>
<td>P-FD15-2M-B</td>
<td>P-FD15-2M-N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>100 - 110 cm</td>
<td>P-FD15-3L-B</td>
<td>P-FD15-3L-N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLarge</td>
<td>115 - 125 cm</td>
<td>P-FD20-4X-B</td>
<td>P-FD20-4X-N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- After surgery
- Wear during light exercise
- To prevent or to support a small bulge
Diamond Plus Support Waistbands

- Ideal for everyday wear after surgery and as you resume light exercise.
- Seamless knit technology providing maximum comfort, moving with the body.
- Can be worn discreetly, e.g. during swimming and public changing areas.

Size Chart – Diamond Plus Waistbands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Circumference Measurement</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Width</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>85 - 95 cm</td>
<td>B-WBDP-2M-B</td>
<td>B-WBDP-2M-N</td>
<td>30cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>100 - 110 cm</td>
<td>B-WBDP-3L-B</td>
<td>B-WBDP-3L-N</td>
<td>32cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>XLarge</td>
<td>115 - 125 cm</td>
<td></td>
<td>B-WBDP-4X-N</td>
<td>34cm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support Briefs for Her

- Ideal for activities (housework, shopping, golfing), providing a compromise between pants and a belt.
- Soft, silky lycra fabric all over.
- Hidden under the fabric is an IsoFlex band, providing firm yet comfortable support.

Size Chart – Support Briefs for Her

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Circumference Measurement Width 15 cm</th>
<th>Circumference Measurement Width 20 cm</th>
<th>Colour</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>70 - 80 cm</td>
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<td>SPH201N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>75 - 88 cm</td>
<td></td>
<td>SPH202N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>80 - 95 cm</td>
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<td>SPH203N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>80 - 95 cm</td>
<td>80 - 95 cm</td>
<td>SPH204N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLarge</td>
<td>90 - 110 cm</td>
<td>90 - 110 cm</td>
<td>SPH205N</td>
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<tr>
<td>XXLarge</td>
<td>105 - 120 cm</td>
<td>105 - 120 cm</td>
<td>SPH206N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Wear during daily activities as prevention
- Support a more developed hernia
IsoFlex Support Belts

- This belt can be adjusted, allowing wearers to find the correct balance between comfortable support and the proper function of their stoma.
- Made from a cotton based fabric allowing the skin to breathe in hot conditions. Sits flat with non-curved edging.
- Made to measure option.
- Neutral in colour.

Size Chart – IsoFlex Support Belts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Circumference Measurement</th>
<th>Width 20 cm</th>
<th>Width 26 cm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>75 - 90 cm</td>
<td>BOM101</td>
<td>BOM201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>90 - 105 cm</td>
<td>BOM102</td>
<td>BOM202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>105 - 120 cm</td>
<td>BOM103</td>
<td>BOM203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLarge</td>
<td>120 - 135 cm</td>
<td>BOM104</td>
<td>BOM204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2M</td>
<td></td>
<td>BOM110</td>
<td>BOM210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Total Control Support Belts

- Unlimited adjustment. The closure will grip anywhere along the belt, allowing wearers control over the amount of support required.
- Much easier to get the correct size (no more ‘between’ sizes).
- Made to measure option for circumference and width (2 to 5 panels).
- Neutral in colour.

Size Chart – Total Control Support Belts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Circumference Measurement</th>
<th>Width 15 cm</th>
<th>Width 22.5 cm</th>
<th>Width 30 cm</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>60 - 90 cm</td>
<td>TCB701</td>
<td>TCB801</td>
<td>TCB901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>80 - 110 cm</td>
<td>TCB702</td>
<td>TCB802</td>
<td>TCB902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>TCB704</td>
<td>TCB804</td>
<td>TCB904</td>
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<td>M2M</td>
<td></td>
<td>TCB710</td>
<td>TCB810</td>
<td>TCB910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Wear during active work or sports as prevention
- Support a developed hernia
KoolKnit Support Belts

- Vented fabric, allowing the skin to breathe (recommended for hot and humid conditions) and will also dry quickly.
- Thinner fabric that moulds to the body, providing firm and comfortable abdominal support.
- Discreet with a low profile.
- Made to measure option.

**Size Chart – KoolKnit Support Belts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Circumference Measurement</th>
<th>Width 17 cm</th>
<th>Width 21.5 cm</th>
<th>Width 26 cm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>75 - 90 cm</td>
<td>KKB401B</td>
<td>KKB401N</td>
<td>KKB501B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>90 - 105 cm</td>
<td>KKB402B</td>
<td>KKB402N</td>
<td>KKB502B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>105 - 120 cm</td>
<td>KKB403B</td>
<td>KKB403N</td>
<td>KKB503B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLarge</td>
<td>120 - 135 cm</td>
<td>KKB404B</td>
<td>KKB404N</td>
<td>KKB504B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2M</td>
<td></td>
<td>KKB410N</td>
<td>KKB510N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scientifically tested, only Omnigon offers support garments tailored to suit your lifestyle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Moderate</th>
<th>4 Intermediate</th>
<th>5 Firm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Support Pants</td>
<td>IsoFlex Support Belt</td>
<td>Total Control Support Belt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Plus Briefs &amp; Boxers</td>
<td>Support Briefs for Her</td>
<td>KoolKnit Support Belt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Plus Support Waistband</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- After surgery
- Wear during light exercise
- To prevent or to support a small bulge
- Wear during daily activities as prevention (housework, shopping, golfing)
- Support a more developed hernia
- Wear during active work or sports as prevention
- Support a more developed hernia

For best results, support garments and belts should be applied while lying down flat on your back if possible. This allows your hernia to reduce (drop back inside) and ensure a more comfortable fit. Further detailed fitting instructions can be found in the garment packaging.

Australian Stoma Appliance Scheme: 6 support pants or 3 belts per calendar year or a combination (1 support belt = 2 support pants)

1 Etal 6675OMN

For assistance contact our Customer Service Team
AU 1800 819 274 | NZ 0800 440 027 | info@omnigon.com.au | www.omnigon.com.au