



FlexiLearnHub

Knowledge Hub

Professional Resources for Care, Catering & Hospitality

FREE PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE

Stoma Care Awareness

A Practical Guide for Care Staff

Knowledge Hub Resource 053

Version 1.0

First Published: August 2026

www.flexilearnhub.com

Part of the FlexiLearnHub Professional Knowledge Library

Introduction

A stoma is a surgically created opening on the abdomen that allows waste to leave the body when part of the bowel or urinary system is no longer able to function normally. Individuals may require a stoma because of bowel disease, cancer, injury or other long-term medical conditions. Living with a stoma can involve significant physical and emotional adjustment, making compassionate, respectful support essential.

Care staff play an important role in helping individuals maintain their comfort, dignity and independence. Although some aspects of stoma care may only be carried out by appropriately trained staff, everyone involved in an individual's care should understand the basic principles of good stoma care, infection prevention and recognising when concerns need to be reported.

Providing sensitive, person-centred support helps individuals feel confident, respected and able to maintain the best possible quality of life.

Why This Resource Matters

Understanding stoma care awareness helps care staff to:

- Promote dignity, privacy and person-centred care.
 - Support individuals safely while respecting their independence.
 - Maintain good hygiene and reduce the risk of infection.
 - Recognise signs of complications or changes in the stoma.
 - Follow individual care plans and organisational procedures.
 - Report concerns promptly to the appropriate healthcare professional.
 - Improve comfort, confidence and overall wellbeing.
-

Key Message

Supporting someone with a stoma is about more than managing a medical condition. By providing respectful, compassionate and person-centred care, maintaining good hygiene and recognising changes early, care staff help individuals live comfortably, confidently and with dignity.

Understanding Stoma Care

A stoma is a surgically created opening that allows waste to leave the body through the abdomen. Depending on the individual's medical condition, a stoma may be temporary or permanent. There are different types of stomas, including colostomies, ileostomies and urostomies, each requiring individualised care and support.

Many individuals are able to manage their own stoma independently, while others may need assistance because of age, illness, disability or reduced mobility. Care staff should always encourage independence wherever possible while following the individual's care plan and respecting their preferences.

Good stoma care helps maintain skin health, reduce the risk of infection and leakage, and supports the individual's comfort, dignity and confidence.

Supporting Good Stoma Care

Care staff can help by:

- Respecting the individual's dignity, privacy and personal preferences at all times.
- Following the individual's care plan and agreed stoma care procedures.
- Maintaining good hand hygiene before and after providing support.
- Ensuring stoma equipment is handled hygienically and disposed of safely.
- Observing the stoma and surrounding skin for any changes.
- Reporting signs of leakage, soreness, bleeding or skin irritation promptly.
- Encouraging adequate hydration and a balanced diet where appropriate and in line with the individual's care plan.
- Supporting independence by encouraging individuals to manage their own stoma care whenever they are able.

Providing sensitive and respectful support helps individuals feel confident and maintain their quality of life.

Remember

A healthy stoma is usually pink or red, moist and free from excessive pain or bleeding. By observing for changes, maintaining good hygiene and reporting concerns promptly, care staff help reduce the risk of complications while promoting safe, dignified and person-centred care.

Professional Responsibilities

Every care worker has a responsibility to support individuals with a stoma in a safe, respectful and person-centred manner. Good stoma care helps maintain comfort, protect skin health, reduce the risk of infection and preserve an individual's dignity and independence. Care staff should always work within the limits of their training, competence and organisational policies.

As a care professional, you should always:

- Treat every individual with dignity, privacy and respect.
- Follow the individual's care plan and agreed stoma care procedures.
- Maintain good hand hygiene before and after providing support.
- Use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in accordance with infection prevention procedures.

- Observe the stoma and surrounding skin for any signs of redness, irritation, swelling or leakage.
- Dispose of used stoma equipment safely, following local waste disposal procedures.
- Record observations accurately and report any concerns promptly.
- Work within the limits of your role and seek advice whenever you are unsure.

Providing safe and compassionate stoma care helps individuals remain comfortable, confident and independent while supporting their overall health and wellbeing.

When to Raise Concerns

You should report concerns immediately if:

- The stoma changes colour, becoming pale, dark, purple or black.
- There is persistent bleeding from the stoma or surrounding skin.
- The skin around the stoma becomes sore, broken, swollen or shows signs of infection.
- There is repeated leakage from the stoma appliance despite correct application.
- The individual experiences severe pain, discomfort or abdominal swelling.
- There is little or no stoma output when this is unexpected, or a sudden significant increase in output.
- The individual develops signs of dehydration, fever or a sudden deterioration in their condition.

Prompt reporting allows healthcare professionals to assess the individual quickly and provide appropriate treatment or support.

Good Practice Reminder

Stoma care should always be delivered with kindness, professionalism and respect. By maintaining good hygiene, protecting privacy, encouraging independence and recognising changes early, care staff help reduce the risk of complications while promoting safe, dignified and person-centred care.

Summary

Stoma care is an important part of delivering safe, compassionate and person-centred care. By supporting individuals with dignity, maintaining good hygiene and observing for

signs of complications, care staff help promote comfort, confidence and independence while reducing the risk of infection and skin damage.

Care staff play a vital role in recognising changes in a stoma or the surrounding skin, following individual care plans and reporting concerns promptly. Working within your role and following organisational policies helps ensure individuals receive safe, respectful and high-quality care.

Stoma Care Awareness Checklist

- ✓ Treat every individual with dignity, privacy and respect.
 - ✓ Follow the individual's care plan and agreed stoma care procedures.
 - ✓ Maintain good hand hygiene before and after providing support.
 - ✓ Use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where required.
 - ✓ Observe the stoma and surrounding skin for changes or signs of irritation.
 - ✓ Encourage independence wherever the individual is able to manage their own stoma care.
 - ✓ Record observations accurately and report concerns promptly.
 - ✓ Never carry out procedures beyond your training, competence or authorised role.
-

Further Information

For further guidance on stoma care, visit:

NHS – Colostomy, Ileostomy and Urostomy

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/colostomy/>

Colostomy UK

<https://www.colostomyuk.org>

IA (The Ileostomy & Internal Pouch Association)

<https://iasupport.org>

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

<https://www.cqc.org.uk>

Continue Your Learning with FlexiLearnHub

Knowledge Hub

<https://flexilearnhub.com/knowledge-hub/>

Professional Online Courses

<https://flexilearnhub.com/courses/>

Related Knowledge Hub Resources

- Resource 023 – Hand Hygiene Best Practice Checklist – A Professional Awareness Guide for Care Staff
- Resource 024 – Safe Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in Care Settings – A Professional Awareness Guide for Care Staff
- Resource 030 – Infection Prevention & Control – A Quick Reference Guide for Care Staff
- Resource 051 – Continence Care Awareness – A Practical Guide for Care Staff
- Resource 052 – Catheter Care Awareness – A Practical Guide for Care Staff

Related FlexiLearnHub Courses

- Infection Prevention & Control Awareness
- Person-Centred Care Awareness
- Safeguarding Adults Awareness
- End of Life Care Awareness

Copy Right & Disclaimer

© 2026 FlexiLearnHub. All rights reserved.



<https://flexilearnhub.com>

This resource has been produced by FlexiLearnHub to support awareness and continuing professional development within the health and social care sector. It is intended for educational purposes only and should not replace formal training, professional judgement, organisational policies or current UK legislation. Care staff should always follow their employer's procedures and seek advice from a senior colleague or appropriate healthcare professional where necessary.

This resource may be downloaded, printed and shared in its full original, unaltered format for personal, educational and workplace training purposes. It must not be modified, reproduced for commercial gain, sold or republished without prior written permission of FlexiLearnHub.

Information contained within this guide is intended for general awareness only and should always be used alongside current legislation, organisational policies, professional guidance and individual care plans where applicable.