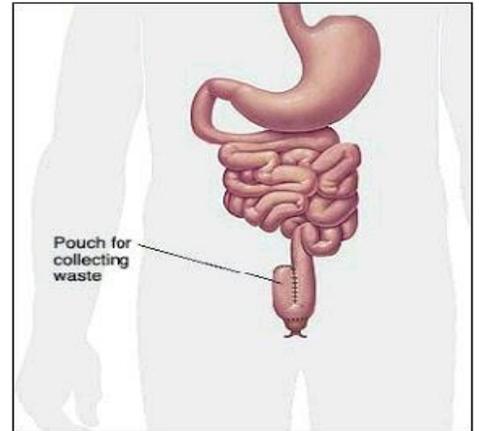


## Frequently Asked Questions Following Formation of a J Pouch



### **How often should I expect to go to the toilet?**

Initially you can expect your pouch to function 8 -15 times in 24 hours. As you start to eat and drink as you did before and as the small bowel starts to absorb more water you will go to the toilet less often. Eventually it is expected that your pouch will function between 3 - 7 times in 24 hours. The number of times you go to the toilet depends on the capacity of the pouch, its compliance and your eating & drinking habits as well as your lifestyle. As eating resumes, the capacity of the pouch increases and its function will improve. It may be necessary to develop confidence in not rushing off to the toilet as soon as the urge is there to do so. Therefore by holding on to the motion this will help the pouch to stretch, in the long term the pouch will have the ability to hold more.

### **What should be the Normal Consistency of faeces from my pouch?**

Most commonly, porridge-like with some undigested food visible, but it may be looser depending on how much you drink and types of food you enjoy.

### **Will I have to rush to the Toilet?**

Generally No. Most people with pouches can hold on to their waste for an average of 50 minutes or more. Be mindful if you hang on too long it may cause pouchitis.

### **Will I be Incontinent?**

Incontinence is uncommon however it can occur in the early stages of your pouch working, at night or during strenuous activity.

### **How can I get rid of Wind?**

Firstly consider what you eat. Remember to chew your food well, especially fibrous foods. Eat slowly trying not to gulp and swallow excess air. Try not to talk when eating. Eat regularly and don't skip meals. Avoid Fizzy drinks or allow them to stand for 10 minutes before drinking Get to know the foods that cause excessive wind.

### **What about feeling Bloating, especially at night?**

Try eating your main meal of the day at lunchtime or earlier in the evening and consider the types of foods you are eating and their effects.

## **Could I become Dehydrated?**

Generally, no. Dehydration is a state of low water and salt levels in the body. The large colon is the organ that helps us reabsorb water and salts from our waste. Although your ability to absorb water and salt is reduced, your waste remains in your pouch for a much longer time compared to when you had an ileostomy. There is a small risk of dehydration during summer months and/or in very hot weather and also whilst participating in sport or exercise.

## **How do I know I am Dehydrated?**

Your skin and mouth will feel dry. You will feel thirsty. You may feel light headed and tired. You will pass very small amounts of urine, which will be dark in colour. You might experience "cramp-like" pains in your stomach and/or hands and feet. Your pouch will probably have high, watery output.

## **What can I do to stop getting Dehydrated?**

You should drink the equivalent of 8-10 average glasses of fluid a day (2 litres). It is important to add extra salt to your food each day, Hydrolytes or Gastrolytes can be added to water. Excessive alcohol causes dehydration. Separating your drinks from your meals can help conserve fluid and salt.

## **What is Pouchitis?**

This is inflammation inside the pouch. Its cause is not fully understood yet, but research is continuing in this area. It appears to be prevalent in those individuals who previously suffered from ulcerative colitis, suggesting the underlying cause maybe a change in the auto immune system. Some people may never have an episode of pouchitis whilst others have several.

## **What is the Treatment for Pouchitis?**

Treatment consists initially of an antibiotic i.e. metronizadole (flagyl). If inflammation persists, other antibiotics can be given followed by steroids.

## **How do I prevent a Sore Bottom (peri-anal soreness?)**

It is important to understand that the waste from the pouch is much more liquid because of the reduced ability to reabsorb water following removal of the colon. This waste contains enzymes which are more acidic and corrosive. So if the skin around your anus comes in frequent contact with this waste it is at risk of breaking down. This can be difficult with the frequent bowel motions from the pouch.

- Keep the area clean by washing after very bowel action.
- Avoid rubbing with soap or a rough washer. Soap remaining in the crevices can be very irritating.
- Keep the area dry, do not rub.
- Avoid excessive moisture. Wear cotton pants not nylon.
- Avoid tight jeans or clothes that may rub on the area.
- Barrier creams can be used i.e. Calmoseptine, Zinc & castor oil, Lanolin, Penaten.
- Try to establish a regular bowel habits
- Be aware that some foods can cause increase itching and burning e.g. citrus fruits.

## **Can I Travel Overseas?**

YES! You may wait for a short while after surgery to gain confidence and a feeling of control over your pouch. Be aware that hot weather, change of diet and surroundings can lead to unpredictable pouch function and hydration.

### **BE PREPARED**

- Take medications including anti diarrhea, a course of Flagyl and rehydration fluid, consult with your doctor.
- Supplies for skin care.
- Request an aisle seat on the plane to allow easy access to the toilet
- Increase salt and fluid intake if you think you are perspiring, particularly in hotter weather

## **When is it safe to have Sex Following Pouch Surgery?**

After any major surgery it is not uncommon to have low sex drive. This can be for a number of reasons, from tiredness and weakness to lack of self confidence and altered perception of 'ones' body image. Anxiety about incontinence and also fear of causing damage during sex are other reasons. Support from your partner, self help groups, your stomal therapy nurse or sometimes a counselor can be useful.

For females vaginal dryness due to anxiety can lead to pain as can an altered angle of the vagina following pelvic surgery. Lubrication can help as can experimenting with different positions.

For males illness and major surgery can have a physical and psychological effect on the erection and ejaculation, which might take some time to return.

***This document has been revised in August 2017 by two members of YOU Inc. that have had J Pouches for many years.***