

DECISION MATRIX

	<i>Regular</i>	<i>Extended wear</i>
<i>Gentle on skin when removing</i>	More gentle ✓	Less gentle
<i>Firmer stool</i>	Yes ✓	No
<i>Loose/watery stool</i>	No	Yes ✓
<i>Wear time</i>	Shorter	Longer ✓

Choosing a pouch

The pouch attaches to the baseplate. You have 6 basic choices here.

1. Drainable or closed/non-drainable?

Drainable pouches have an opening at the bottom so you can empty the contents into the toilet, then close it up again and go on your way.



They're good for more liquid stool, which is easier to drain out of the bottom opening and makes it easier to clean the opening afterwards. After emptying, you typically roll up the bottom then close it with either a plastic clip or a VELCRO®-type hook-and-loop fastener. Drainable pouches are more convenient when you're out and about, as you can empty them in a public toilet, close them up again, and you're done. You don't have to worry about disposing of a used pouch.

Drainable pouches can be more cost effective too. Even though they tend to cost more per unit, you can empty and re-use them frequently so they don't have to be changed as often as closed pouches.

Closed pouches are not drainable. They're meant to be discarded with the contents and replaced every time. Of course, you can always empty the contents through the stoma hole at the top of the pouch (in a 2-piece system) and re-use it, but that can be pretty messy. Discarding and replacing a closed pouch is a faster process than emptying, cleaning, and resealing a drainable pouch. It's also an easier process for more fully-formed stool, which would have to be squeezed out of a drainable pouch.



A closed pouch is a good choice for ostomates who use bag liners (in a 2-piece system), and therefore don't need to drain their pouches. You can use liners with either type of pouch, of course, but closed pouches are smaller and simpler. Finally, closed pouches provide more peace of mind for people who worry that the bottom of a drainable pouch might open unexpectedly.

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	Drainable	Closed
<i>Firmer stool</i>	Messier	Tidier ✓
<i>Risk of bottom opening</i>	Slight risk	N/A ✓
<i>Time emptying/changing</i>	More time	Less time ✓
<i>Using bag liners</i>	Nothing to drain	Smaller, simpler ✓
<i>Cost per unit</i>	More costly	Less costly ✓
<i>Cost over time</i>	Less costly ✓	More costly
<i>Can empty & re-use</i>	Yes ✓	Not as easily
<i>Convenience in public places</i>	More convenient ✓	Less convenient
<i>More liquid stool</i>	More convenient ✓	Less convenient

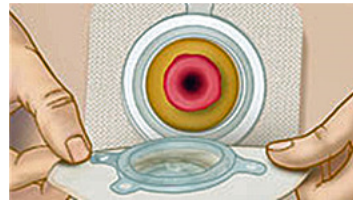
2. Adhesive or mechanical coupling?

This refers to how a pouch attaches to the baseplate in a 2-piece system.

Adhesive – Both the pouch and the baseplate have adhesive strips, so the pouch simply sticks on. This is a breeze to do, so it's a great choice for folks with limited manual dexterity. It's also good for anyone concerned about visible bulges under clothing, because it has a very low profile (not bulky). Some people might be nervous that a poop-heavy pouch could fall off (though that's never been a problem in my personal experience). And it's not ideal if you can't see what you're doing, because you generally have to line up the adhesive strips on the pouch with the "landing strips" on the baseplate. You can't use bag liners or burp the pouch (at least not very often), and you can't take the pouch on and off as many times as you can with a mechanical coupling, because at some point the strips will lose their adhesion. This means you'll go through more pouches.



Mechanical – This system is bulkier but provides a stronger sense of security that the pouch won't fall off. You either press/snap it onto the rigid protruding ring ("flange") around the hole on the baseplate, or you press it securely onto the flange and then click a locking mechanism that keeps it tight. Because it can be a bit "finicky," at least until you get the hang of it, and requires strong pressure from the fingers, it's not the best choice for those with limited manual dexterity or tender abdomens (e.g., if they've just had surgery). It's a good choice for people with limited vision, though, because they can "feel" what they're doing. And it's the only choice for those who want to use bag liners.

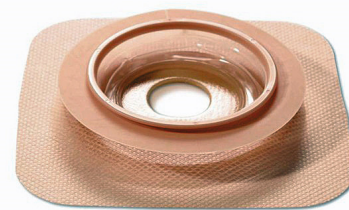


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	<i>Adhesive</i>	<i>Mechanical</i>
<i>Profile</i>	Lower/less bulky ✓	Higher/bulkier
<i>Limited manual dexterity</i>	Easier ✓	More difficult
<i>Tender/painful abdomen</i>	Less pressure ✓	More pressure
<i>General ease of use</i>	Easier ✓	Less easy
<i>Sense of security</i>	Lower	Higher ✓
<i>Vision limitations</i>	No	Easier ✓
<i>Frequent burping/emptying</i>	Limited	Unlimited ✓
<i>Can use bag liners</i>	No	Yes ✓

3. Regular or floating/accordion flange?

The flange is the round, rigid ring on a baseplate that the pouch attaches to in a 2-piece mechanical coupling system. Regular flanges have a pretty low profile. That means you can't slip your fingers under them to help press the pouch on. Instead, you press down hard against the flange (and your abdomen) from the top. But with a floating or accordion flange (pictured), you can slip your fingers under it, so you can grip and squeeze it from the top and bottom. It's a good choice for someone with limited strength or dexterity in their hands or for someone whose abdomen is tender (e.g., following surgery). Some of these flanges have a higher profile, so there might be more of a bulge showing under some clothing. And they tend to be more expensive than regular flanges.



Accordion flange

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	<i>Regular</i>	<i>Floating</i>
<i>Profile</i>	Lower/less bulky ✓	Higher/bulkier
<i>Cost</i>	Less costly ✓	More costly
<i>Limited manual dexterity</i>	More difficult	Easier ✓
<i>Tender/painful abdomen</i>	More pressure	Less pressure ✓

4. Filters– yay or nay?

Many pouches come with a built-in filter (usually charcoal) that allows gas, but not odors, to pass through. This is so the pouch doesn't inflate like a balloon. There's mixed success with these filters. If they get wet (from the inside or outside), and particularly if they get clogged on the inside, they'll stop working. But if you have a lot of gas, it's better than nothing.

They usually come with adhesive tabs that you can stick over the filter on the outside of the pouch if you want to block it. You might choose to do this if you're not particularly concerned with gas building up, but more concerned about keeping a little air or space inside the pouch for your output to drop into.

So it really comes down to being sure to order baseplates with a filter if gas buildup is a concern, and just covering up the filter if you don't need it – since most pouches come with the filter anyway.

5. Size - mini, midi or maxi?

Pouches are available in a range of sizes, holding different volumes of output. And you can get them in different sizes to fit the same baseplate.

After your body has adjusted to your ostomy, you'll probably settle into a predictable rhythm and volume of output and get to know what size pouch is best for you normally. Probably a regular, or midi size, for most of us.

People with higher output stomas often wear large or extra-large pouches every day, or at least overnight, so they can sleep with less interruption.

You may want to wear a small pouch temporarily, like for swimming or having sex, particularly if you expect to have little or no output during that time.

And ostomates who irrigate regularly might only need a small or even micro-sized pouch most or all of the time.

After you've established your regular size, you might want to have a few samples of other sizes stashed away, in case the need arises.

6. Transparent or opaque?

This simply refers to whether or not you want to be able to see what's happening inside your pouch. If so, order pouches that are clear or transparent. If you don't care about seeing inside, order opaque pouches. That means they're covered in a light material you can't see through - usually beige. They often have a flap that you can lift up to see the stoma area if the need arises, though, through a transparent window. Both are easy to come by. All or almost all brands carry both clear and opaque pouches.

WORKSHEET

You can complete this worksheet to keep track of your choices, then record the product numbers that fit your needs underneath it. If you're using a 2-piece appliance, be sure to order the baseplates and pouches from the same manufacturer, so they fit together. Most manufacturers have toll-free numbers where you can call to discuss the products they have that meet your needs.

Type	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-piece	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-piece	
Baseplate	<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-cut	<input type="checkbox"/> Cut-to-fit	<input type="checkbox"/> Moldable
	<input type="checkbox"/> Flat	<input type="checkbox"/> Convex	<input type="checkbox"/> Concave
	<input type="checkbox"/> Belt tabs	<input type="checkbox"/> No belt tabs	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular wear	<input type="checkbox"/> Extended wear	
Pouch	<input type="checkbox"/> Drainable	<input type="checkbox"/> Closed	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adhesive	<input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular flange	<input type="checkbox"/> Floating flange	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Filter	<input type="checkbox"/> Not necessary	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini	<input type="checkbox"/> Midi/regular	<input type="checkbox"/> Maxi
	<input type="checkbox"/> Transparent	<input type="checkbox"/> Opaque	

Manufacturer: _____

1-piece: Product # _____

2-piece: { Baseplates: Product # _____
 { Pouches: Product # _____

