

Blowouts

This is a general term for epic pouch failure, from any cause, resulting in the contents spilling out. It's the stuff of ostomy nightmares, and can also be the subject of some hilarious stories (blowouts tend to be much funnier in hindsight). Ostomates rarely get together without swapping blowout horror stories.

General information

There are many causes of blowouts. Your pouch can fill up with gas or output to the point that it's pushed off, or leak so much that it loosens the baseplate, or the bottom of your drainable pouch might suddenly open and spill its contents down your leg and onto the floor. That sort of thing.

Sometimes it's the result of an accident, like a baseplate being yanked off by an exuberant dog. But often we can look back and see where we might have been a little more vigilant. Like being too tired to empty a half-filled pouch during the night, or forgetting to properly secure the bottom of a drainable pouch. Lesson learned.

It can happen anywhere - in bed, in a board meeting, or in the grocery store. The only common element is a mess. And probably swearing.

That's why we carry emergency kits and keep changes of clothes at the office or in the car.

If you're prone to blowouts, a waterproof mattress pad can be a lifesaver. So can incontinence pads that go on top of the bottom sheet.

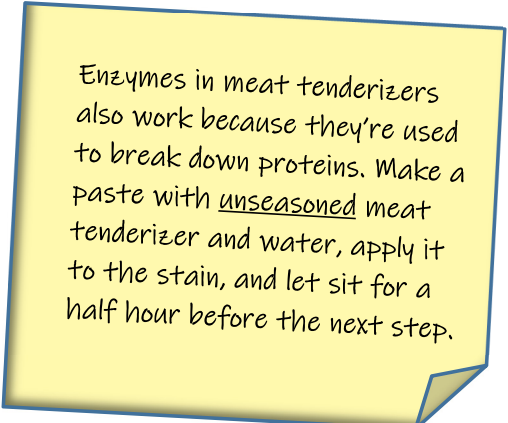
Be prepared but not scared. Although it's not uncommon, there are people who've never had a blowout. Ever. Not even after decades with an ostomy.

Cleanup

If it does happen, don't panic or be hard on yourself. As all ostomates know, s***t happens. Just focus on cleaning up. Have a shower. Change your appliance. And then tackle the debris field – clothing, floor, sheets, furniture, the dog, whatever got soiled.

Clothing and sheets can be cleaned by rinsing off anything you can, then soaking for several hours in cold water.

You can pre-treat with a stain remover (like a mixture of 1 part lemon juice or vinegar and 2 parts water, or a paste of cream of tartar and water), and/or add detergents containing enzymes to the soaking water. An enzyme called protease is best for protein stains. It's found in laundry products like TIDE® Liquid Coldwater detergent, BIZ® stain remover, and WISK® detergent.



Enzymes in meat tenderizers also work because they're used to break down proteins. Make a paste with unseasoned meat tenderizer and water, apply it to the stain, and let sit for a half hour before the next step.

After pre-treating and/or soaking, wash in cold or warm water with some bleach added. Chlorine bleach is ok for white fabrics, and an oxygen bleach like OXY CLEAN® is best for colors. You can add baking soda (bicarbonate of soda) or washing soda to boost the effect of either bleach.

Don't use chlorine bleach and a detergent with enzymes together. It won't do any harm, but the chlorine deactivates the enzymes, so you should use them separately (like one in the soak, and one in the wash). Oxygen bleach is ok to mix with enzymes.

Drying washed fabrics in direct sunlight will help bleach out stains even more.

Pet stain removers can work well on carpets and upholstery, and even mattresses.