

# Travel Advice

Having a colostomy  
should not prevent  
you from travelling  
at home or abroad

Freephone helpline  
**0800 328 4257**

colostomy  association

[www.colostomyassociation.org.uk](http://www.colostomyassociation.org.uk)

### Travelling in the UK

Having a colostomy should not prevent you from travelling at home or abroad, whether it is for business or pleasure.

The only difference from being in your home to travelling is that you need to plan ahead and be prepared.

Whether you are travelling by car, ferry or train take plenty of supplies with you and always make sure that when you go out you carry a travel kit - a small bag similar to the one pictured below containing emergency supplies so that you can change your pouch should the need arise.



**Disposal** - One of the concerns of colostomates when staying away, or when going out and about, is disposal of the pouch. If staying with family or friends you have a couple of options. An appliance with a flushable inner liner may be one answer. However, if you are not able to wear a flushable appliance then there are a few other options.

You could empty your pouch contents down the loo and then place the empty pouch into a disposal bag and place that in the bathroom bin or place the full pouch into a disposable bag, double bag it for safety, and place in the outside bin.

Some colostomates prefer to use a drainable pouch when away from home for ease of use. By using a drainable pouch you won't have to change the pouch as often as with a closed pouch but you will still have to deal with its disposal at some point.

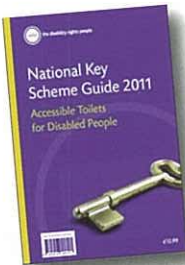
If booking an Hotel or B&B for a holiday or overnight stay you might want to check that the accommodation includes en-suite facilities, most bathrooms will include sanitary disposal bins.

For men, disposal can be a problem as gents' lavatories often lack disposal bins. If this is the case try to identify a suitable lavatory before your journey. You may find the following information helpful.

## Disabled Lavatories and National Key Scheme (NKS) - RADAR Key - The

National Key Scheme (NKS) offers access to locked disabled/public toilets around the country. Toilets fitted with National Key Scheme (NKS) locks can now be found in shopping centres, pubs, cafés, department stores, bus and train stations and many other locations in most parts of the country. If you are out and about in the UK a RADAR key can open the door to 9,000 disabled lavatories. The benefit of the disabled loo for men certainly is that they have somewhere to dispose of clinical waste.

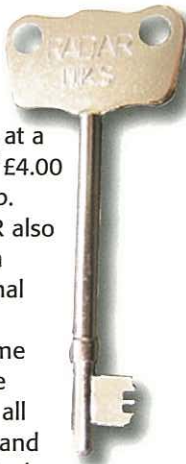
The RADAR key is available from the Colostomy Association at a cost of £3.50 including p&p. Alternatively you can obtain one from



RADAR at a cost of £4.00 inc p&p. RADAR also have a National Key Scheme Guide

which lists all

9,000 disabled lavatories and costs £16.99 inc p&p. Both the RADAR key and the National Key Scheme Guide can be bought together for £20.00 inc p&p. Write to RADAR at Unit 12, City Forum, 250 City Rd, London, EC1V 8AF, or telephone 020 7250 3222 or visit: [www.radar.org.uk](http://www.radar.org.uk).



Most councils also offer the RADAR key from about £3.00. There is also a software application (app) for the iPhone, iPod touch and iPad for £4.99 go to <http://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/radar-national-key-scheme-app/id490642425?mt=8>

## Colostomy Association Identity Card -

The Colostomy Association have produced a photo identity card that can be carried with you so that if you are ever challenged about your use of a disabled lavatory you can provide proof of need. The card displays the Disability Rights UK logo and explains that the cardholder has a medical condition and needs urgent access to disabled facilities. Contact CA head office on: 0118 939 1537 for further details.



**Remember** - getting out and about is good for your well-being! So, prepare in advance however short your journey, as this will give you the confidence to enjoy your trip - you may even find you want to venture further afield!

## Travelling Abroad

If you are planning your first trip abroad and have recently had surgery check with your consultant or GP prior to booking your holiday to ensure you are able to travel. Seek medical approval for a trip if you have been in hospital during the last six months.

**Supplies** - Ostomates need to make additional preparations for their comfort both whilst travelling and at their destination. Travelling abroad needs special care and attention, after all you may be swimming, you may be in a hot country, your skin will perspire and your diet will change so you may need to change your pouch more often than usual and therefore you need to take enough supplies with you. Expect to use more than you would at home.

You need to make sure you have ordered enough supplies before you go as it may not be possible to obtain certain products overseas so make sure that you order additional supplies in plenty of time before your departure.

How much to take with you? There is no real answer to this but if you double up on the quantity you use at home that should usually be enough. Remember to double up on the number of wipes, tissues, and disposal bags as well as the pouches (one piece) or flanges and pouches (two piece).

The Colostomy Association recommends that you advise your GP or supply company that you are going on holiday when you order your supplies as this will explain why the size of your order has increased.

What if you run out when abroad? It is always advisable to take a note of your product/s name and product code (this information can be found on your prescription) with you as well as the telephone number of your stoma supply company so that if you have a problem you can contact them; they will do their best to get supplies to you. There have been instances when supplies have been couriered into deepest Africa. Be aware some countries may impose import tax.

**Travel Certificate** - A travel certificate is available from the Colostomy Association. The certificate explains to travel authorities, their staff/security officials that you have a medical condition and are wearing an ostomy appliance. It also explains that there may be an urgent need to use toilet facilities. Should staff/security officials deem it necessary to search or examine your appliance this should be carried out in a private room in the presence of a



qualified medical practitioner. The Colostomy Association travel certificate covers information relevant to travelling with stoma and this information is translated into most European languages, plus Arabic, Hindi, Mandarin, Thai and Vietnamese. A form is included for you to fill in - it includes a section for your GP's details and their signature plus an area for the practice stamp. Take it with you when you have a scheduled appointment and ask them to sign it, this way it probably won't cost anything. Remember also to ask them to stamp it with the practice stamp. Your GP may charge you for this if you just leave the travel certificate with the receptionist at the surgery.

Other travel certificates may also be available from your stoma supply company. Again these need to be signed by your GP and carry the practice stamp. (You may also request a letter from your GP stating your medical condition and requirements; this may attract a cost but is worth the investment). Carry your travel certificate at all times when abroad. To obtain your FREE Colostomy Association Travel Certificate contact CA head office on: 0118 939 1537 well in advance of your journey.

**Travel Insurance** - The Colostomy Association have a special arrangement via the Bournemouth Insurance Group (BIG) who provide a range of policies suitable for ostomates and anyone with pre-existing medical conditions. These are administered by Peter Martin, an ostomate and long standing volunteer of the Association, who is a qualified insurance practitioner. The CA can provide a factsheet detailing a selection of insurers including BIG that cover pre-existing medical conditions; this is available on our website or from CA head office contact: 0118 939 1537.

When asking for insurance make sure you declare everything. Declare the stoma and the medical condition that resulted in your stoma. And don't forget to declare any **other** pre-existing medical conditions. If you fail to do this you may invalidate the insurance.

It is important that the correct level of cover is selected and YES you do need to read the small print. Age, time since surgery or treatment, destination and length of stay plus having other pre-existing medical conditions are the main factors in determining the level of premiums and cover offered. For example, if you decide to travel 11 months after your treatment it might be worth delaying this until 12 months have passed as you may well benefit from a better premium. There are normally 3

rating areas ranging from the cheapest to the most expensive as follows: Europe; Worldwide excluding the Caribbean, USA and Canada; Worldwide including the Caribbean, USA and Canada. Also make sure your policy provides adequate cover for any extra costs incurred in obtaining emergency supplies.

**European Health Insurance Card** - If you are travelling in the European Economic Area (EEA) you should always carry a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which replaces the old E111, as well of course as your travel insurance. (You should allow at least three weeks for your EHIC card to be delivered).

The EHIC allows you to benefit from reciprocal health agreements in EEA countries and will entitle you to free or reduced cost medical care in the country you are visiting. However you may have to pay for certain things at the time and then claim the money back later.



The EHIC doesn't cover you for any medical treatment you have planned in advance, only for medical emergencies, although it will cover you for continued treatment for an on going illness while you are abroad, such as regular injections. You can apply for a card by phone on: 0845 606 2030 or online go to: [www.ehic.org.uk](http://www.ehic.org.uk)

### **The European Economic Area EEA -**

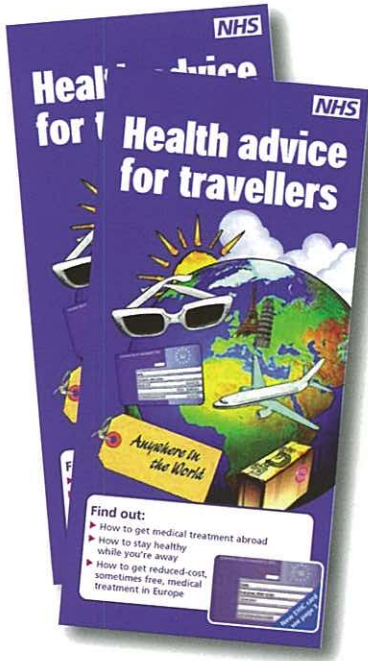
Countries included are; Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland\*, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein\*, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway\*, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and United Kingdom.

\*Part of the EEA but not part of the European Union EU. Additionally while Switzerland is not in the EEA, Swiss nationals have the same rights as EEA nationals.

Please be aware that reciprocal health service agreements do not always cover the full cost of treatment. They do not cover the cost of getting you home in an emergency, for instance.

It is always advisable to have travel insurance even when travelling around the EU. But you'll still need a European Health Insurance Card because your insurance company may not cover the cost of treatment that the card covers.

If you try to claim in full, they may say you should have had a card! Always read the small print. You can find out about these health agreements in the 'Health Advice for Travellers' booklet pictured opposite, available online from the Department of Health as a PDF download. Go to: [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_4123441](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4123441)



### Where to pack your stoma supplies?

If you want complete peace of mind, always pack your entire stock of supplies for the holiday in your hand baggage and keep this with you at all times. Carriers, whether they be airlines or ships do lose baggage. So if you pack half the supplies for your holiday in your hand baggage and half in your luggage which goes in the hold and your luggage gets lost, this means that you only have half the supplies you need.

Note: Cabin/Hand baggage is luggage that you carry on the plane with you, while hold baggage is luggage that you check-in. All baggage items, including hand baggage, must be screened, regardless of

size. You should always check size limits with your airline and airport before you travel. Airlines may also have their own rules about the number of bags you are allowed to take on the aircraft. It's best to contact them if you have any questions.

Further information can be found at [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Publictransport/AirtravelintheUK/DG\\_078179](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Publictransport/AirtravelintheUK/DG_078179)

Liquids may only be carried in hand baggage in containers up to 100ml. These containers must be brought to the airport contained in a single, transparent, re-sealable plastic bag, (approx. size 20cm x 20cm). The contents of the plastic bag must fit comfortably and the bag must be sealed. Each passenger may carry only one such bag of liquids. The bag must be presented for examination. Note: Some airports/airlines may provide a clear re-sealable plastic bag.

Liquids in containers over 100ml that can not be placed inside the re-sealable bag must be packed in your hold luggage.

Sharp objects e.g scissors must be packed in your hold luggage. Make sure you pre-cut some of your flanges to size in advance.

**ALWAYS Remember...**to check in advance with the **airline/airport for their current rules on the size of cabin baggage allowed, liquids and sharp objects.** (NB: The information above is correct at the time of going to print).

If you are travelling for a long period and need to take more supplies than you can fit into your standard hand baggage allowance, contact the Airport Security Manager at your departure airport well in advance of your flight he/she may issue you with a dispensation letter allowing extra hand baggage on medical grounds. Before applying, ask your GP for a letter confirming these needs and carry the letter with you abroad in case you are using internal flights in another country. Do this well ahead of your departure date. You will need to itemise to the Security Manager ALL the supplies to be contained in that bag. Alternatively you can pack as much as possible within the limits of your permitted bag, and perhaps persuade your travelling companions to carry some supplies for you as well.

Remember – that you can buy books and magazines for your journey airside and therefore use your hand baggage before security check for essentials only.

**Airport Scanners** - Colostomates and those with stomas travelling through International Airports are especially concerned with the full body image scanners that have been introduced; thinking that they will show their full naked body. This is not the case.

The Government and Airport Security Departments are well aware of the potential concerns regarding the invasion of privacy of the traveller.

In 2010 a group of ostomates from the Colostomy Association, IA (the Ileostomy and Internal Pouch Support Group) and Urostomy Association (UA) visited Manchester Airport and met with security officials and management to take a closer look at the full body image scanner. The following is an excerpt from an article published in Tidings Magazine Spring Issue 17 2010...

The full body image scanner is managed by security personnel. Staff are sited at the scanner and remotely in a secure room away from passengers and other members of Airport staff.

The on-site security officer activates the scanner and the data is transmitted to the remote security officer. The remote officer is responsible for operating the imaging software, reviewing and analysing the data received. An algorithm is applied which lessens image definition, resulting in a blurred chalky white representation of a human figure with no recognisable personal features. It is this image that is analysed. At no time will you or any other member of the public be able to see the scanned image; the remote operator has no contact with the person being scanned. In exceptional circumstances where a screener believes there is a viable threat to the safety of passengers or staff, an additional appropriate security screener may be required to view the image.



There is no method of copying or transferring images. Data is never retained but is deleted. The scanner can highlight anomalies, but it is unlikely that stomas or empty ostomy appliances will appear on the scan. However, appliances that contain some liquid matter may show up as a faint grey area.

Note: The outcome of the visit to Manchester Airport revealed to ostomates that the body scanner is a security tool to aid passenger safety. A copy of the Tidings article 'Ostomates take a closer look at the body scanner' is available as a PDF file from the Colostomy Association. Contact CA head office on: 0118 939 1537 for further details.



Scanning and Reviewing Procedure...

Before going through security, it is always advisable to change your pouch at the last minute to ensure the pouch is empty. Security staff are duty bound to investigate any anomalies. This is why it is important to have with you; either a travel certificate, and/or a letter from your Doctor stating you have a medical condition.

If you are asked to step aside, as the operator has seen "something", it is done discreetly and if you are able to show your documents, this should then answer any questions they may have. If a security official deems it necessary to search you or examine your appliance you are entitled to request a private room and to be attended by a qualified medical practitioner. Security officers are trained to deal with issues of this nature, recognising ostomy pouches, understanding them and dealing with them empathetically.

Remember – if a passenger refuses to enter the scanner – they will not be permitted to fly.

For further information go to: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/information-on-the-implementation-of-security-scanners>

### On the holiday

**Leaks** - Worried about leaks? No one wants to have a leak but they do occur. At home we deal with them but staying in a hotel, on a cruise or at a friend's house we need to be as careful as possible. Some stoma supply companies provide complementary disposable bed pads. Ask your supply company about these.

**Fluids** - Fluids are very important. If we are in a hot country we will perspire therefore fluid needs to be replaced. When you feel thirsty you are already partially dehydrated so drink plenty of water is what we are told by the nurses. Avoid drinking very cold water. This takes a long time to be absorbed into the body and stays in your stomach, giving you the impression that you are no longer thirsty, even though your body still needs it. Bottled water will be safest in countries where the tap water is not necessarily 100% pure. Important -check that the seal on the bottle has not been broken.

Remember – If you irrigate and the tap water quality is questionable make sure you irrigate with bottled water.

**Useful medication** - It is worth taking some Dioralyte with you in case you become dehydrated or an electrolyte replacement solution. To counter the potential effect of eating local food you may need Loperamide or Imodium to firm things up or Movicol to loosen and then you have all eventualities covered.

#### How to help yourself

- Watch what you eat – especially the day before you travel. You will know the sorts of foods that give rise to problems so be careful to avoid these before travelling. Try to avoid skipping meals too, as this can cause excess wind and fluid.
- Remember - even in Britain a change of water can alter your bowel habit so it goes without saying that you should be cautious with food and drink abroad.
- If your stoma is in an awkward position buy a protector so that your pouch will not be trapped or rubbed by the plane's safety belt. If you are on a long journey and there is turbulence you might be strapped in for quite a while!
- If you can 'check in' online you can usually get a seat that suits you best - look for seat maps. If not, try to arrive for 'check in' early so that you are at the front of the queue. This way, you can

request an aisle seat near the toilet. You may also be able to request this in advance from your travel agent.



- Try to wear loose fitting clothes for a long journey as the reduction of cabin pressure can cause swelling of the feet, ankles and waistline. Drink plenty of water and walk around when you are able to.
- Avoid ice in drinks unless the cubes have been made using bottled water and watch out for salads, which may have been washed in local water. Ice cream can also be made with unclean water so it is best avoided. With uncooked food many people say 'if you cannot peel it do not eat it.'
- If in doubt use bottled or previously boiled water to clean around your stoma.



## Travel Check List

**On top of all the normal precautions...like making sure your travel documents are in order, taking copies of important documents with you in case the originals get lost or stolen...the ostomate needs to remember to:**

- Take sufficient supplies for your stay
- Take all supplies and travel stoma kit as hand luggage
- Ask the airline in advance if you need extra hand baggage for your supplies.
- 'Check in' online 24 hours before departure to secure your preferred seat.
- Avoid food and drink the day before you are to travel that are likely to cause upset or excessive wind.
- Carry your Travel Certificate with you especially when passing through immigration or security areas.
- Take medication to firm up or loosen output.
- Take some form of electrolyte replacement solution in case you become dehydrated.
- Drink bottled water in foreign countries, avoid ice in drinks and use bottled or boiled water to clean around your stoma area.
- Store your supplies in a cool place, out of direct sunlight.

**Don't forget your  
FREE Travel Certificate  
contact general enquiries:  
0118 939 1537**



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: Will my bag blow up because of the variations in cabin pressure?**

**A:** NO. Your bag will behave the same as before you entered the plane – however eating and drinking sensibly will lessen the chance of wind in your bag.

### **Q: Do I have to tell the airline that I have a colostomy?**

**A:** NO. It serves no useful purpose to disclose that you have a colostomy.

### **Q: What if I have to change my pouch while on the plane?**

**A:** Change it in the same way you do at home – empty the contents down the toilet, wrap the used pouch well in the disposal bag and dispose of the bag in the sanitary disposal unit, or use a drainable or flushable pouch.

### **Q: What if I lose my luggage?**

**A:** Ensure every piece of luggage/baggage is labelled inside and out.

Each item of checked baggage/luggage will be given a destination tag showing your flight number. A receipt portion will be attached to your boarding pass or ticket. Important - retain the receipt as this has information about your flight details, airline, etc., and will help track your baggage/luggage if it is delayed or misplaced. If you are travelling on a tour, inform your tour rep immediately and ask them to investigate straight away. If you are travelling independently, go directly to the airline desk at the airport with your ticket receipt. If your luggage is not found obtain a 'lost baggage/luggage' form from the airline with the necessary information for you to make a claim on your insurance. However, baggage/luggage is usually tracked down and sent on to you at your destination a few days later.

### **Q: Can I buy replacement supplies while abroad?**

**A:** You may be able to buy supplies from a pharmacy but there is no guarantee.

(Always take a copy of your prescription with you for reference). The same products that you use in the UK may not be available abroad they will almost certainly have different code numbers. You will probably have to pay at least a proportion of the cost, because you will not be registered in that country as having a chronic condition. Remember to keep your receipts, as they will form part of your travel insurance claim when you return home. If you are unable to find a pharmacy that can offer you supplies, visit the main hospital where you are staying. If they do not have supplies themselves they may know where to obtain them.

**If you plan carefully you shouldn't experience any problems during your journey or holiday. Above all, relax and make sure you have a great time!**

## Useful Information

### European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

EHIC Enquiries  
PO Box 1114  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE99 2TL  
Tel: 0845 605 0707  
Web: [www.ehic.org.uk](http://www.ehic.org.uk)

### NHS Choices

Information on travel and the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) and healthcare abroad.

Web: [www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx)

### Foreign & Commonwealth Office UK

Foreign & Commonwealth Office,  
King Charles Street,  
London.  
SW1A 2AH

General enquiries: 020 7008 1500.

Travel Advice: Phone: 0845 850 2829  
(24hrs/7 days a week)

Email:  
[TravelAdvicePublicEnquiries@fco.gov.uk](mailto:TravelAdvicePublicEnquiries@fco.gov.uk)

Web: [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

### DirectGov - Journey Planner

Web: [directgov.transportdirect.info/Web2/Home.aspx](http://directgov.transportdirect.info/Web2/Home.aspx)

### National Rail Enquiries:

Contact: 08457 48 49 50  
Web: [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

### Public Transport

Web: [www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/PublicTransport/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/PublicTransport/index.htm)

### Fit for Travel

Health information for people travelling abroad from the UK, provided by NHS Scotland.

Web: [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

### Passports

For help, call the IPS Passport Adviceline on: 0300 222 0000.

The Adviceline is open:

8.00 am to 8.00 pm Monday to Friday  
9.00 am to 5.30 pm weekends and public holidays

Web: [www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Passports/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Passports/index.htm)

### Travel and Transport - Air Travel

Web: [www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Foreigntravel/AirTravel/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Foreigntravel/AirTravel/index.htm)

### Foreign Travel

Web: [www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Foreigntravel/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Foreigntravel/index.htm)

### **Motability**

Web: [www.accessibleguide.co.uk/useful-contacts/useful\\_contacts.html](http://www.accessibleguide.co.uk/useful-contacts/useful_contacts.html)

### **Looseeker**

Web: [www.looseeker.co.uk](http://www.looseeker.co.uk)

### **Changing Places Toilets**

Searchable map by UK postcode for toilets

Web: [www.changing-places.org](http://www.changing-places.org)

For all enquiries in England, Wales and Northern Ireland contact

Telephone: 020 7696 6019

Email: [ChangingPlaces@mencap.org.uk](mailto:ChangingPlaces@mencap.org.uk)

For all enquiries in Scotland contact

Telephone: 01382 385 154

Email:

[PamisChangingPlaces@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:PamisChangingPlaces@dundee.ac.uk)

### **ABTA - The Travel Association**

Web: [www.abta.com/consumer-services/worry\\_free\\_travel](http://www.abta.com/consumer-services/worry_free_travel)

If you want to speak to someone, you can call Consumer Affairs on 0901 201 5050 (UK calls only). This line is open from 9.00 am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays.

### **VisitEurope**

Web: [www.visiteurope.com/Plan/how-to-travel.aspx](http://www.visiteurope.com/Plan/how-to-travel.aspx)

### **Help2Travel**

Web: [www.help2travel.co.uk](http://www.help2travel.co.uk)  
Traveline: 0871 200 22 33

### **Clothing Specialists - Swimwear**

The following is a list of ladies and gents swimwear suppliers:-

#### **ComFizz**

Tel: 01757 229 531  
[www.comfizz.com](http://www.comfizz.com)

#### **CuiWear**

Tel: 0800 2792050  
[www.cuiwear.com](http://www.cuiwear.com)

#### **Glitter Beach**

Tel: 01505 843306  
[www.glitterbeach.co.uk](http://www.glitterbeach.co.uk)

#### **OstoMART**

Tel: 0800 220300  
[www.ostomart.co.uk](http://www.ostomart.co.uk)

#### **White Rose Collection Ltd**

Tel: 01202 854634  
[www.whiterosecollection.com](http://www.whiterosecollection.com)

#### **Vanilla Blush**

Tel: 0141 7630991  
[www.vblush.com](http://www.vblush.com)

**NB: All the information contained in this booklet is correct at the time of going to print.**



## How to contact us...

colostomy  association

**Write to:**

2 London Court, East Street  
Reading RG1 4QL

**General Enquiries:**

Tel: 0118 939 1537

**Freephone Helpline:**

0800 328 4257

**E-mail:**

[cass@colostomyassociation.org.uk](mailto:cass@colostomyassociation.org.uk)

**Website:**

[www.colostomyassociation.org.uk](http://www.colostomyassociation.org.uk)

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