

Travelling with confidence

For people with a urinary diversion

The good news is there's no reason for your urinary diversion to hold you back from travelling. The world can still be your oyster!

It's natural to feel a bit apprehensive though, which is why we want to help you feel well prepared. You may wish to start with a short stay in the UK while you get used to travelling again.

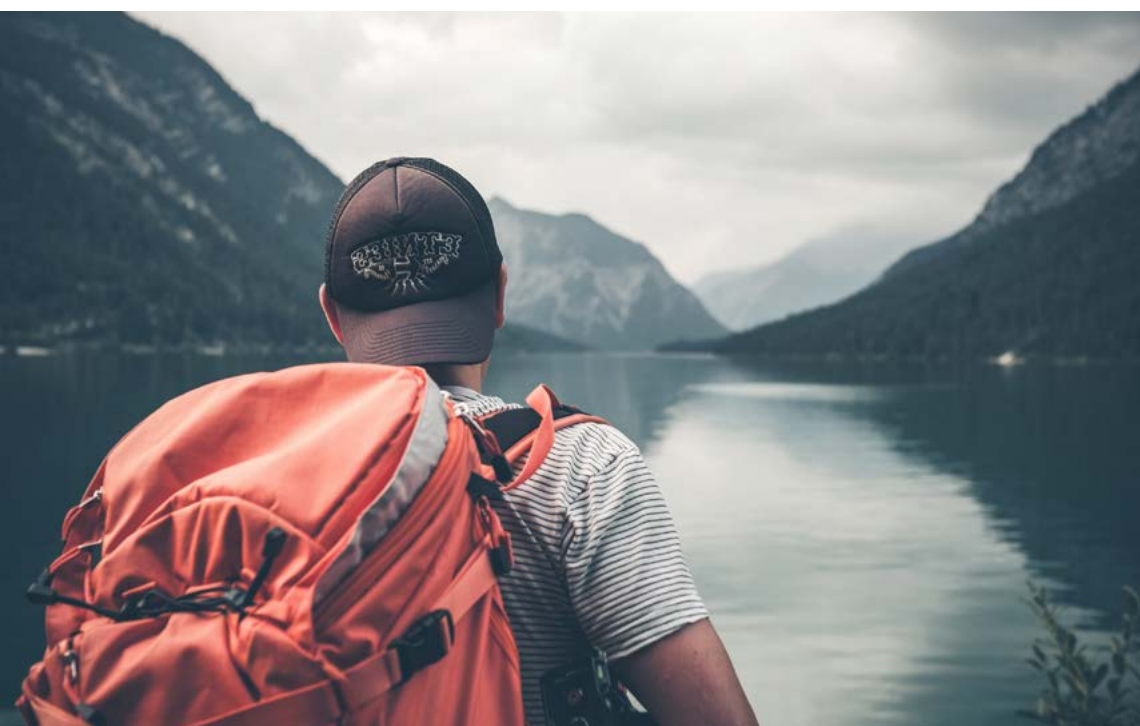
Please note: This leaflet is for information only. If you are in need of medical advice, please contact your stoma care nurse, consultant or GP.

Small travel kit

To deal with any eventuality, it's a good idea to have a small travel kit to hand, even if you're only travelling for a short while. This should contain items for a change of stoma appliance or catheter equipment, as required, plus wipes and a disposal bag.

Getting back to driving

After your operation, ask your consultant when it is safe for you to get back to driving. You must be able to do an emergency stop and reverse, and of course you must be alert for the whole time you are driving.



Motability

If you drive a Motability vehicle, you must inform your insurers about your operation to be sure you'll be covered should an accident occur. Your GP, consultant or stoma nurse will be able to advise if you are unsure about disclosing information to your insurer.

Seat belts

Having a urostomy does not exempt you from wearing a seat belt. If you find wearing one uncomfortable, you might want to buy a special attachment to make driving more comfortable. These release tension around your pouch, but tighten automatically when necessary. We have a list of suppliers on our website in our resources section, or you can request our suppliers leaflet.

Long car journeys

It's worth keeping a night drainage bag with you, particularly for journeys where you might get caught up in heavy traffic. Then you can still empty your pouch into the night bag, if it's difficult to find a toilet stop. You can put the night bag inside a carrier bag so no-one else can see it, and empty it at a convenient time. Another idea is to use an empty soft drink bottle, or a newly available type of container containing gel to solidify your urine.

Remember not to leave your stoma appliances in your car during hot weather as doing so can weaken the adhesive.

National Key Scheme

There's nothing worse than hunting for a public toilet, only to find one that's locked. This is where the National Key Scheme (NKS) comes in.

Everyone with a urinary diversion is entitled to a key to open any disabled toilet in the UK. You can get a key from our website for a small, one off fee: urostomyassociation.org.uk/shop. **Or you can order it by phone on 01223 910854.**

No Waiting cards

We all have times when we need to find a toilet urgently, so it makes sense to carry a No Waiting card, to which everyone with a urinary diversion is entitled. When you're out and about, it'll help you get speedy access to toilets in shops and petrol stations, where facilities are normally reserved for staff.

Cards are available from our website or by contacting us on the number above.



The Radar key and NO Waiting card

Medical identification bracelets

Wearing a medical alert bracelet when travelling brings you peace of mind. The bracelet, which can also come as a necklace, is designed to alert health professionals of your medical conditions and medications, plus next-of-kin and consultant details, in case of emergency.

This reduces the risk of mistakes being made. For example, you're unlikely to be given a drug you're allergic to if this is detailed on your medical jewellery.

Medical bracelets and necklaces are available to buy from companies such as Medic-Alert and Talisman.



Travelling by air

When booking a flight, it's worth requesting an aisle seat and noting the location of the toilets on board. Some airlines will waive the fee for booking seats in advance.

Many of us have either experienced our luggage getting delayed, or know someone who has. So, whenever you travel by air it's best to divide your supplies between your hand luggage and what you're putting in the hold, or you may want to put all your supplies in your hand luggage. Airlines should allow you an extra piece of hand luggage. This ensures that once you reach your destination, you can change your stoma pouch or use your catheter, no matter what happens.

The Urostomy Association can supply you with a Travel Certificate in several languages. Ask your GP to sign it. This will help explain your need for your supplies if your baggage is inspected as part of a security check.

Of course, if you have a urostomy and are called to one side and 'patted down' by security staff, it makes sense to mention that you're wearing an appliance. Encouragingly, most UK airports now operate the Sunflower lanyard scheme for people with hidden disabilities. Wearing this lanyard means that staff will be aware that you might need assistance and/or be carrying medical equipment. The lanyards are available for a small fee from our website's shop.

Don't forget, you can no longer pack scissors in what you take onto the plane – so pack them in your main luggage. If you have a urostomy, be sure to have a few pre-cut flanges in your hand luggage. It also helps to remove any appliances from their boxes and put them in polythene bags as this saves space and weight.

If you have a urostomy and are travelling abroad, take twice the stoma equipment you'd normally use. In hot climates, keep your supplies stored somewhere cool and remember you might need to change your appliance more frequently, if you are perspiring more.

Travel insurance

We carried out an internet search using a variety of key words such as urinary stoma, bladder cancer, continence, and reconstructive surgery in a search for suitable travel insurance.

After looking at a variety of websites and calling the individual companies, we have the following advice and suggestions. We asked for quotes for travel within Europe and world-wide on both single trips and annual multi-trip policies.

Remember that if you take out an annual multi-trip policy you must inform your insurer of any changes of circumstance or medical condition. The policy may be void if there is anything you do not declare.

Speak directly to one of the company agents to discuss your individual needs. They will then be able to look for a quote which will best suit your requirements. We recommend that you shop around, or go through a broker for the best rates.

If dealing with an independent company rather than a broker, do get a range of quotes before deciding which company to use. Most quotes will be held for you for a given amount of time and you can get back to them if you find them the most favourable.

If you're searching for a quote online, and the company asks when you last had a cystoscopy click 0 or find the section which says "bladder removed" and click on this. If you have difficulty with this step then call and talk to an advisor.

We also suggest that you compare single trip and multiple trip options. In some cases, single trip quotes may work out cheaper.

Below we've listed some companies you may like to try. This is not a definitive list, and inclusion on this list does not imply endorsement from the Urostomy Association.

If you've had great service from a travel insurance company then please do let us know and we can share with other urostomates heading abroad.



justtravelcover.com – 0800 294 2969

allcleartravel.co.uk – 0808 281 3305

staysure.co.uk – 0800 033 4902

goodtogoinsurance.com – 01279 621662

payingtoomuch.com – 01243 784000

saga.co.uk – online only, no telephone number given

About the Urostomy Association

This leaflet is just one in a series. You can see the full list on our website in the resources section. There you can also find our blogs, videos and webinars.

We know that sometimes you just want to talk things over, so we have specially trained buddies who have had their own urinary diversions and are happy to help. There is also a private Facebook group where you can ask questions and share your experiences with other people living with a urinary diversion.

We're also here to raise awareness of all matters around urinary diversions, and we run campaigns and appeals, liaising with like-minded organisations, policy makers and health professionals. Our aim is to build a supportive community around your needs.

Please remember that this leaflet is for information only, and you should contact your own stoma nurse about questions relating to your own care.

Lastly, we can only continue to support members of our community live their best lives, before and after surgery, thanks to charitable support.

Kind donations enable us to run our helpline and keep members up to date through our regular magazine, e-newsletters, group meetings, social media and fact sheets. Thanks to donors, we can inform and support stoma care professionals, increase awareness across healthcare and the general public, and influence urostomy policy and practice.

All of this, and much more, is possible because people choose to donate, fundraise and say thank you to our charity. If you would like to make a donation or support us in other ways, please visit our website at urostomyassociation.org.uk.

Get in touch



Postal address:

Office 205
No 9 Journey Campus
Castle Park
Cambridge
CB3 0AX

Help line:

01223 910854

Email:

info@urostomyassociation.org.uk

Website:

urostomyassociation.org.uk

Social Media:

Facebook, X (Twitter) and YouTube: @UrostomyAssn

LinkedIn: @urostomy-association

Closed Facebook Group: www.facebook.com/groups/158052257866449

Registered charity no: England & Wales 1131072 and Scotland SCO47740

We hope you find this information useful to you, whether you're 'staycationing' or venturing further afield. If you have any questions that are not answered here, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Further information

You can find lots of additional information on our website (urostomyassociation.org.uk) including top tips from other urostomates, and video advice from stoma staff and fellow travellers.

If you'd like to speak to a Urostomy Association volunteer buddy with personal experience of a urinary diversion, please contact us and we'll put you in touch.