

# STOMA CLOSURE

## What is a stoma closure or reversal?

When the bowel that is used to form the stoma is reconnected to the remainder of the bowel.

## Right timing:

The best time to have the reversal operation is usually between 3 and 12 months after the stoma was first formed. This is to allow time for your bowel to heal properly.

## After your stoma is reversed:

In the days and weeks following your surgery, it is likely that you will have to re-establish a new bowel routine. This will vary from person to person and there is no way to predict how long this will take. It is important not to expect too much during these early days and allow time for your body to settle.

### Common problems

- Increased frequency of bowel movements
- Increased urgency – little or no warning of when to go
- Diarrhoea or loose bowel motion
- Pain in your rectum on passing a bowel motion
- Passing small amounts of bowel motion, frequently
- Unable to control your bowel
- Increased wind, being unable to distinguish between wind and bowel motion
- Bowel movements at night, which may disrupt sleep.

### Helpful things to do

- Chew your food well
- Eat slowly
- Try smaller meals, little and often, 5–6 times per day
- Start with low residue (fibre) diet, gradually increasing the amount and variety you are eating progressing to a normal, well balanced diet. Refer to dietary advice from Dieticians
- Large meals and eating later in the day may cause problems with your bowel patterns
- Jelly sweets, marshmallows, bananas and mashed potato are good for firming up watery bowel motions. Limit culprits such as very high fibre vegetables, cereals, spicy or very fatty foods, some fruits, red wine and beer until faeces firm up
- Aim to drink about 2 litres of fluid per day
- Take regular rests and gradually build up activity levels, gentle walking will aid your body functions
- Avoid heavy lifting for approximately 6–8 weeks as it affects your abdominal muscles.

**Your continence team is available for support and guidance.**

**Call us on 06 869 0500 ext 8135**