

Can I Swim - Snorkel or Dive?

The answer is "Yes – you certainly can."

Swimming as we all know is an excellent form of exercise. As soon as you are healed and fully recovered, swimming can be of real benefit to the ostomate. The water gives support and gently soothes the body leaving you feeling refreshed and invigorated. So why not give it a go!

Choosing swimwear... there are one or two things to remember about design which may help! Patterned fabrics hide secrets that plain ones expose. A good swimsuit lining or double layered fabric will support your abdomen and help to hide the pouch. If you are worried about your pouch becoming detached whilst swimming buy a specially made swimsuit or pair of shorts with a special security pouch included. Board shorts are also a popular choice for men who may opt to also wear biking shorts underneath for extra security.

You could try wearing a smaller stoma bag under your swimming costume or trunks as these can be more discreet. Filters on your appliance can work poorly or not at all once they're wet or damp. Some ostomates tape the flange edges, some don't. If you have a filter on your appliance this should be taped so water doesn't damage the filter. If you've changed your flange before swimming it's a good idea to wait an hour before going swimming to make sure it has adhered properly.



Your stoma care nurse will be able to advise on the many different varieties of

appliances available. If

you are worried about damaging your stoma whilst swimming, although this is unlikely to happen, you could try wearing a stoma shield.

Remember that the great majority of 'normal' people have lumps, bumps and imperfections on their bodies - very few of us are model - perfect in the first place - and nobody is going to be staring at you.

(NB: It is recommended to avoid swimming in artificial pools, spas and the sea for at least six to eight weeks or until your wounds are completely healed because of possible infection.)

Swimwear Specialist Suppliers:

Bybonnesen.com

Frederiksberg Alle 92, 6.tv.
DK-1820 Frederiksberg C
Email: info@bybonnesen.com
Web: www.bybonnesen.com

Comfizz

Ladies and Gents swimwear designed by an ostomate.
Contact: 0113 289 6876
Web: www.comfizz.com

Cui Wear

Call for full colour brochure.
Contact: 0800 2792050
Web: www.cuiwear.com

Ostomart

Ladies and Gents swimwear.
You can order by phone or on line.
Contact: 0800 220300
Web: www.ostomart.co.uk

Vanilla Blush

Contact: 0141 556 1035
Web: www.vblush.com

White Rose Collection Ltd

'White rose collection' and 'Just Men' catalogues available.
Contact: 01202 854 634

Web: www.whiterosecollection.com

Woman Zone

Contact: 01925 768992
Web: www.woman-zone.co.uk

Readers' Experience: I am so looking forward to the Summer Holidays, when I shall be spending 10 weeks in Brittany, just 20 mins from my favourite beach. When the weather is kind, I like to spend a couple of hours or so on the beach in the morning, reading, wandering and swimming, before most people arrive. Failing that, I go for a quick dip late afternoon, as the French are all leaving to go home for supper. I wear a 2-piece Tankini Swimsuit (I'm on my 3rd. from White Rose) and a tiny waterproof Braun Mini-Pouch, I take a towel (to sit on in the car, when I'm wet) and a skirt (to slip on for the journey) and never have to change on the beach. If I do have to change, it's easy enough in a 2-piece, under a towel! I can't wait – why don't you try the sea this year? Judith (aged 66)

Kind thanks go to the Swimwear companies for their contributions to this article.