

Reversal of a Stoma



What is reversal of a stoma?

This is an operation where the loop or piece of bowel used to form a stoma is rejoined to the remainder of the bowel.

Will I be able to have my stoma reversed?

This will be decided by your surgeon who will determine the following:

- That the bowel left in place following your operation is healthy.
- That any narrowing of the bowel (stricture) is out-ruled.
- That there is no bowel disease.
- That the suture line has healed where the bowel is joined together (known as the anastomotic site).
- That you are physically fit to have an operation.

How will the surgeon know if I am suitable to have my stoma reversed?

To determine this you will need special examinations of the bowel such as

- Rectal examination (*An examination of your back passage*)
- Colonoscopy (*Involves an examination of the bowel with a colonoscope. This is a long flexible tube which is inserted into the bowel via the back passage/anus*)
- X-ray studies e.g. a barium enema where a dye is inserted into the bowel via the anus and x-rays are taken

Why would I not be suitable for stoma reversal?

- If you have been informed by your surgeon that your stoma is permanent
- If your back passage was removed during your initial surgery
- If you are not physically fit for surgery

Are there risks involved in stoma reversal?

This is a major operation which can carry risks such as:

- Problems with joining the bowel together
- Fistula formation (*this is an abnormal opening between two different internal body structures*)
- Wound infection
- Bowel obstruction (*where the bowel blocks after surgery and may require further surgery to correct it*)

How can I prepare for the surgery?

- Eat a balanced diet
- Drink at least 8 small glasses of water a day as well as other drinks e.g. tea
- Keep as active as possible
- Practice your pelvic floor exercises at least 5-10 times a day. The exercises will help tone the muscles around the back passage which are not in use when you have your stoma. Instructions will be given on these by the Stoma Care Nurse/Colorectal Nurse or Physiotherapist
- Prepare yourself psychologically for the operation

When will the surgery be performed?

- The surgeon will decide when you are ready for the surgery.
- If you are undergoing chemotherapy or radiotherapy then surgery cannot be performed until the treatment is finished.



