



← David Moffat

# Managing Sensitive Peristomal Skin and Allergies to Adhesives

**Colostomy UK volunteer, David Moffat is allergic to most stoma bag products. Here he shares his personal experiences and his top-tips for what to do if you are reacting to your stoma care products.**

Like most ostomates, David Moffat started off using the stoma bags that he was given at the hospital following his stoma surgery. 'These were fine... initially', he tells me. But after a couple of months, the area around his stoma began to get inflamed and itchy.

David contacted his stoma nurse who identified a lotion to reduce the inflammation, before embarking on a process of trial and error to find a product that wouldn't react with his skin.

**The issue in question is often the type of glue used in skin baseplates (also known as 'wafers') which adhere to the sensitive peristomal area, as different stoma bag manufacturers use different ingredients and formulas in their adhesives.**

Hence the best way for ostomates to find the best products for sensitive skin is to sample different

brands to find what works best for them. This initial process can take some patience, as it may take a few weeks for the skin to decide if it does or does not respond well to the latest adhesive base tested, meaning the process may need to be started over with a new product.

With so many products now available, however, it should only be a matter of time before you find one to suit your skin. As was the case with David, who settled on an older, drainable, one-piece bag. There may be newer designs on the market, but for David the fact that his bag works perfectly with his skin is the most important factor.

One thing David has noted from his time on Colostomy UK's helpline is that there is something of a 'postcode lottery' when it comes to accessing stoma care supplies across the UK. In some areas, people receive excellent support, while in others, ostomates feel their supplies are almost subject to rationing.

## David's top tips for managing sensitive peristomal skin

If your skin becomes red, moist and/or itchy, and your bag no longer holds to your skin properly, you may have become allergic to the glue used to stick your bag to your skin. If this is the case, please consider the following:

- » Speak to your stoma nurse straight away. They will be able to advise you if you are allergic and give you something to help settle your skin.
- » While your skin is settling down, use flange extender strips or tape to make a bigger area for your bag to stick to.
- » Contact various stoma product suppliers and ask for some samples of alternative bags.
- » Cut off small sections of the baseplate being tested and stick it on a different part of your stomach. Then you can see if it irritates your skin, without risking worsening the skin around the stoma.
- » Once your skin has settled down try different bags to see if you can find one that doesn't irritate your skin.
- » Keep in touch with your stoma nurse to monitor your skin condition as you may have to try multiple bags before you find one that works.
- » If things don't settle down, ask for a referral to see a dermatologist.

