

Ostomy

WHAT IS AN OSTOMY?

An ostomy is a surgically created opening connecting an internal organ to the surface of the body. Different kinds of ostomies are named for the organ involved. The most common types of ostomies in intestinal surgery are an "ileostomy" (connecting the ileal part of the small intestine to the abdominal wall) and a "colostomy" (connecting the colon, or, large intestine to the abdominal wall).

An ostomy may be temporary or permanent. A temporary ostomy may be required if the intestinal tract can't be properly prepared for surgery because of blockage by disease or scar tissue. A temporary ostomy may also be created to allow inflammation or an operative site to heal without contamination by stool. Temporary ostomies can usually be reversed with minimal or no loss of intestinal function. A permanent ostomy may be required when disease, or its treatment, impairs normal intestinal function, or when the muscles that control elimination do not work properly or require removal. The most common causes of these conditions are low rectal cancer and inflammatory bowel disease.