The primary aim of this article is to identify the self-care strategies that patients use to manage bowel symptoms experienced following sphincter-saving surgery for rectal cancer. Comparisons will be made with self-care strategies used by patients to manage chronic fecal incontinence and the bowel symptoms associated with other chronic bowel diseases, such as irritable bowel syndrome and inflammatory bowel disease. Published studies and conceptual literature from 2000–2010 were the data sources. Three major themes emerged from the literature reflecting the self-care strategies used by patients to manage bowel symptoms: functional self-care strategies (e.g., taking medication), social activity-related self-care strategies (e.g., planning social events), and alternative self-care strategies (e.g., complementary therapies). An analysis of studies highlighted that, through the process of trial and error, patients learned the strategies that were most effective in the management of their bowel symptoms. Knowledge of such strategies will be beneficial to healthcare professionals when educating patients about effective management of bowel symptoms following sphincter-saving surgery.