

## Patient information

# Using your Prosthesis (Artificial Limb) at Home

## Therapies

### Taking your prosthesis home for the first time

You will be able to take your prosthesis home after you have been shown how to put it on and take it off and are able to operate it safely.

Your Physiotherapist may teach someone to help you with this.

Taking your prosthesis home is the next stage in your rehabilitation towards using it as part of your everyday life.

The instructions below should help you to start using your prosthesis safely at home.

### Putting your Prosthesis on

- Do this in the way you have been shown. Ask someone to help or stand by you if necessary.
- Use the sock(s) or liner provided. If the socket feels loose, try adding an extra sock. Use thinner or fewer socks if the socket feels too tight.
- If you are having difficulty with the fit of your prosthesis, speak to your Physiotherapist who will advise and liaise with your prosthetist.

### Wearing your Prosthesis

- It is advisable to wear your prosthesis for short periods of time initially to reduce the risk of skin damage.
- You will be advised how long to wear the prosthesis by your Physiotherapist.

### Checking your Skin

- Check your skin carefully for abrasions or marks.
- If you notice any skin breakdown, stop wearing your prosthesis and consult your Physiotherapist who will advise you what to do.
- If there are no problems with your skin, gradually increase the time that you wear your prosthesis, checking your skin regularly.

## **Using your Prosthesis**

- Your Physiotherapist will advise you about using your prosthesis safely at home.
- This may include putting your limb on and off, transferring or walking with an appropriate walking aid.
- If you do not feel safe using your prosthesis at home, for any reason, stop using it and contact your Physiotherapist who will be able to advise you.

## **Compression Socks**

If you have been issued with a compression sock (Juzo) you should continue to wear this whenever you are not wearing your prosthesis as this will help to control any swelling of your residual limb (stump)

## **Caring for your residual limb (stump)**

- Wash your skin daily using a mild soap and water, drying it carefully.
- Make sure that your skin is dry before applying your prosthesis.
- Use clean socks each day or, if you use a liner, clean this daily as you have been instructed.
- If your skin is dry, a gentle moisturiser may help. This is best applied at a time when you will not be wearing your prosthesis e.g. at night.
- **Do not** use talcum powder or surgical spirit on your stump.
- It may take some time for your stump to adapt to wearing a prosthesis so check your skin daily for any signs of pressure or rubbing.
- If you have any skin problems, contact your Physiotherapist or contact the Reception Desk to request an appointment with your Prosthetist.

## **Caring for your prosthesis (artificial limb)**

Modern artificial limbs are sophisticated devices that are constructed to quality and safety standards. They need to be looked after and require maintenance checks at least annually.

## **If there is a problem with your Prosthesis**

- If your prosthesis feels uncomfortable, is rubbing your skin or is noisy, contact the Centre immediately for advice.
- Do not attempt to alter, adjust, repair or lubricate your prosthesis yourself. This requires specialist equipment which is only available in the Centre.

## Hygiene

- When you remove your prosthesis clean the inside of the socket and soft liner (if it has one) with a damp cloth or alcohol wipe. Straps or belts may also be cleaned in the same way.
- Ensure your prosthesis is dry before re-applying.

## General use

- Your prosthesis should be kept dry unless it is specifically for water activities.
- Water, especially sea water, will corrode the mechanisms within your limb, restricting its movement and efficiency.
- The Centre can provide protective covers for your prosthesis to use during showering if necessary.
- If you have a stocking or PVC cover on your prosthesis this will need replacing from time to time.
- These can be posted out to you on request or you can ask at your next appointment at the Centre.
- If any underlying foam is damaged, you may need to leave your prosthesis at the Centre so that this can be replaced.
- Most repairs can be carried out while you wait but sometimes this can take a considerable amount of time.
- You may prefer to leave your prosthesis in the Centre and collect it when the work has been completed.
- Your Prosthetist will be able to advise you how long the repairs are expected to take.

## Shoes

- Your prosthesis will be aligned to suit the shoe which you provided when the limb was fitted.
- You can change shoes to one with a similar heel height without affecting your balance.
- If you wish to change to shoes with a different heel height, you will need to arrange an appointment with your Prosthetist to have the angle of the foot reset.

## Stump Socks

Most prostheses are fitted using stump socks worn next to the skin. This helps to protect your skin by providing some cushioning and absorbing perspiration.

A supply of socks will be provided when your prosthesis is issued. These can be replaced when necessary.

## **Types of stump sock**

- Stump socks come in different lengths (often identified by a coloured band around the top edge) and thickness.
- Your Prosthetist or Physiotherapist will advise you which socks to use.

## **Finding the correct fit**

You will be instructed how to use socks to achieve a satisfactory fit. The number or type of sock (s) required can vary if the size and shape of your stump changes.

This could happen in response to wearing your prosthesis, extremes of temperature or other medical conditions.

If you regularly need to wear 3 or more thick socks, please ask for a review appointment with your Prosthetist.

## **Care of your Stump Socks**

- Use clean socks daily.
- Wash your socks following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Avoid creases in your sock (s) which may irritate the skin.
- Do not pull your sock(s) up too tightly over the end of the stump as this may distort the shape of and cause pressure on your stump.
- Do not darn or mend your socks. Throw them away if they become hard, thin or have holes and use a new one.

## **Silicone and gel liners**

- Some prostheses are fitted with silicone or gel liners next to your skin instead of socks.
- If you have been given a liner, your Prosthetist will advise you how to fit and take care of it.

## **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future. Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## **Further information**

**If you have any questions, please contact the Physiotherapy Department in the Centre on Tel: 0151 529 8761  
Text phone number: 18001 0151 529 8761.**

**Alternatively contact Reception for other enquiries/information including problems with your prosthesis  
Tel: 0151 529 3033  
Text phone number: 18001 0151 529 3033**

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