



# Prosthesis Care Guide

## **Personal care**

Daily cleansing of your residual limb is an important part of personal hygiene. It is also advisable to wipe the inside of the prosthesis daily with soap and water, and dry thoroughly.

## **Heel Heights**

Your prosthesis was designed for wear with shoes of a specific heel height. Always check with your prosthetist before switching heel heights. Remember that your prosthesis should not be worn without shoes.

## **Your prosthetic socks**

The prosthetic socks you receive with both your temporary and permanent prostheses are an integral part of proper fit and comfort. The right number of socks worn, the varying of ply, and the care of the prosthetic socks can make the difference between wearing the prosthesis properly or developing irritations.

## **Adjusting for a better fit**

As you get accustomed to wearing your prosthesis, you will notice some fluctuation in the volume of your limb. In the case of slight swelling, generally in the morning, decrease your sock ply.

## **Ply changes**

Different ply socks are provided to control volume fluctuations. Since these differences can occur daily, or even from morning to night, it is very important that you know how to master proper fit as your volume changes. by subtracting one thickness at a time. For example, you are wearing a three-ply sock, remove and put on two one ply socks. Continue until you fit into the socket comfortably without the limb feeling loose. It's a good idea to keep several ply with you since you may need to add thickness during the day. To increase number of ply, start by increasing one thickness at a time.

## **Your New Prosthesis**

For best results, start wearing your new prosthesis on a gradually increasing basis. Notify our office at once and discontinue wearing the prosthesis if any redness (pressure marks) lasts longer than approximately 10 to 15 minutes, particularly during this introductory period, or if you experience pain other than the normal pressure of wearing a prosthesis.

## **Care Keeps Skin Healthy**

The body's best protection against infection and disease is its largest organ, the skin. For those who wear prosthesis, consistent care thorough hygiene is especially important as it helps prevent disabling skin conditions and fosters a normal, active life. Because the residual limb is in the socket's airless chamber throughout the day, the leg does not experience normal heat loss and retention patterns. Without air circulation, accumulated heat and trapped perspiration could encourage fungal development and bacterial growth.

A combination of regular cleansing and the use of surgical scrub solutions will provide the skin the protection it needs to stay healthy.

### **Clean skin is basic**

A daily cleansing of the residual limb should become as routine and second nature as brushing your teeth. Cleansing is best done at day's end, when the prosthesis will be removed for several hours, since damp skin inserted in a socket is more likely to swell and become irritated.

Thoroughly wash the skin with warm water and soap. Fully rinse the limb in warm water, since any remaining soap film contributes to skin irritation. Then towel dry gently, but completely. After drying, it is advisable to apply a medicated skin lotion or cream to the entire stump area. Supple skin can better withstand the extensive pressures exerted by prosthesis and diminish the formation of calluses and abrasions.

### **Maintain socket hygiene**

Just as it's important to keep skin clean and supple, it's equally important to wash the prosthetic socket regularly before going to bed. Using soap and warm water, thoroughly wet, lather, scrub, and rinse the entire surface of the socket. In appliances with a valve, force soapy water into and around the area of the valve, rinsing well with warm, clean water. The socket should be completely dried with absorbent towels and allowed to ventilate overnight. Make sure the socket is absolutely dry before wearing since dampness may cause the skin to stick, rub, and become irritated.

### **Care of prosthetic socks**

Changing the prosthetic sock(s) daily is vital to skin health and hygiene. After machine or hand washing in a mild detergent, excess water should be squeezed, not wrung, from the sock to help maintain its shape. If a prosthetic sock should dry in a distorted manner, insert a tennis ball to reshape it.

### **Sheath needs washing too**

The prosthetic sheath is an interface between the skin and the prosthetic sock. It should be changed and laundered daily. If skin problems arise closely monitor the appearance of skin and, if a sore or abnormal condition develops, notify your physician without delay to prevent a minor problem from becoming a disabling situation.