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## **PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR WEARING AND CARING FOR YOUR PROSTHESIS**

### **General Information**

Your custom made Prosthesis is fabricated and fit specifically for your residual limb and is designed to return you to walking with assistance from rehabilitation professionals. Walking with a prosthesis can be a difficult and sometimes challenging experience and each person responds to these challenges at their own pace. You may experience slight discomfort as you adjust to the new prosthesis and due to the rapid change of your residual limb over the next several months, you will need to see your prosthetist on a regular basis to address these issues. The adjustment period from an initial prosthesis to a long-term device can take up to or longer than one year.

The following wearing and care guidelines will help you be as comfortable as possible during this time.

### **Wear Time**

Unless otherwise instructed by your prosthetist, start slowly. Adjusting to a new prosthesis not only stresses the residual limb but is difficult because you are learning balance skills and how to walk again. Wear your prosthesis 30 minutes on the first day and limit yourself to low activities such as standing and walking in a safe environment. Gradually increase your wearing time by one hour each day. You may leave your gel liner on for longer periods to control swelling without the prosthesis but check your skin regularly. You should also increase your activity level during this transition period after consulting with your physical therapist. Soon you will be comfortable wearing your prosthesis all day. You will achieve the greatest long-term benefits when you consistently wear your prosthesis every day.

### **Pain**

Remove your prosthesis if you experience any pain or discomfort. Check your skin for areas of irritation. Some pinkness is expected in areas of maximum contact or support. However, redness should disappear within 20 minutes after the prosthesis and gel liner/socks are removed. Try wearing the prosthesis again after waiting for one or two hours. If you feel sharp, or jabbing pressure over bony areas, or if skin redness lasts longer than 20 minutes, make an appointment with your prosthetist at Seacoast Prosthetics for an adjustment as soon as possible.

### **Skin Care**

Wash your residual limb every day with mild soap and warm water. Rinse your skin well with clean water. Towel dry your skin thoroughly.

Wash your gel liners daily with mild soap and water and use the drying stands to air dry. Rotate you liner wear daily. Disinfect your liners weekly with a bleach solution. You will have a liner care instruction sheet from your prosthetist reviewing these washing instructions.

Check your residual limb carefully every day for any red or tender areas. Such areas could indicate that your prosthesis is not fitting, or your residual limb has changed in volume or shape and your prosthesis needs an adjustment.

### **Shoes**

Select good shoes with proper support, this will help your sound side. Your prosthetist will discuss your shoe selections when picking out the correct foot for your prosthesis. You will need to stay relatively consistent with the heel height of the shoes you wear as increases or decreases in heel heights will change the stability of your prosthesis.

### **Care**

Your new prosthesis is made from state-of-the-art materials. With typical moderate use and proper care, your new prosthesis should last several years. Changes in your residual limb might necessitate fabrication of a new socket. Inspect your prosthesis on a regular basis. Check for signs of wear and tear, cracks, or noises. Contact your prosthetist immediately if you notice anything that concerns you.

### **Remember...**

Never attempt to repair or adjust your prosthesis yourself. Your prosthetist will schedule periodic visits to make sure your prosthesis is fitting and functioning properly. Contact Seacoast Prosthetics whenever you need help or have any questions. Your practitioner will work closely with you and your physician to ensure the best prosthetic treatment possible.