



## Prosthetic Frequently Asked Questions

Below are many of the Frequently Asked Questions regarding prosthetic patient care that we hear from our patients. Please feel free to contact us with any and all questions that you may have. We look forward to talking with you.

### **Will I need a physician's prescription?**

Yes. A prosthetic device is affecting your body in one way or another. Therefore, a physician's approval/prescription will ensure proper treatment of your physical condition and is needed by law. An initial consultation with our clinicians does not require a prescription.

### **Will my insurance pay for these services?**

Generally, most insurance carriers do pay for most prosthetic services. Our administrative staff is highly knowledgeable in the ever-changing health insurance industry, and we strive to get you the benefits that your policy includes, whether we are included as an in-network or out-of-network provider with your insurance plan. Under either approach, your prosthetist will work with you and our administrative team to determine all of your individual options.

### **Where can I find information regarding my insurance coverage?**

There is normally a phone number on the back of your insurance card so you can call to get information regarding your coverage. You can also call our POA Billing Specialist if you have any questions regarding your insurance.

### **I'm facing an amputation in the near future. Is it too soon to contact you?**

Absolutely not! One of the most important things that you can have during this time is peace of mind. By coming in for a tour of the facility, introduction to our staff, and a view of different options for componentry and materials, you may reduce some anxieties or concerns that you may have about the process after an amputation and during the fitting of your prosthesis. Our patients tell us that taking advantage of this opportunity made a very positive difference in their pre-and post-operative mindset.

### **How soon after surgery am I ready to be fit with a prosthesis?**

The person who ultimately makes that decision is your doctor. We are practitioners certified by the American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics and require a prescription from a medical doctor in order to begin fabrication of a prosthesis. Evaluations and consultations are always done free of charge. Our staff will take every opportunity to consult with your physician regarding your amputation, any medical precautions, and issues that may affect your options or expected outcome.

### **When can I be fit with a prosthesis?**

The fitting process can begin after your stitches or staples have been removed and you are fully healed. It is also recommended that some of the swelling has decreased before you are cast for your first socket.

### **How long will it take for me to get my prosthesis?**

The design, custom fabrication and fitting of your prosthesis will normally take 3-6 weeks. It takes an average of 3 or 4 visits with your prosthetist to get the right socket fit and to prepare you to use your



prosthesis. We understand that you are anxious to return to activities of daily living on your new prosthesis, so we do our best to deliver your prosthesis in as timely a fashion as possible.

### **Are the practitioners and facilities at POA certified by the American Board of Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics?**

Yes! All practitioners at POA are accredited in good standing with ABC. They are also given the resources needed to attain and maintain continuing education requirements. We consistently attend national meetings and/or seminars that concentrate on advances in the field of prosthetics that could prove beneficial to our clients.

### **How much will my lower limb prosthesis weigh?**

The weight of a lower limb prosthetic device will depend on the type of prosthesis it is designed for your specific needs. An average below knee prosthesis will weigh around 4 pounds and an average above knee prosthesis will weigh around 8-10 pounds. An upper limb prosthetic device will typically weigh 3-6 pounds.

### **Can I wear my prostheses in the shower?**

Most prostheses are uncovered and should not be worn in the shower. The water will rust the metal components and screws. The links below are for prosthetic shower covers:

- Allegro Medical [www.allegromedical.com](http://www.allegromedical.com) 800-861-3211
- MedGuard [www.medguard.net](http://www.medguard.net) 800-713-1133

### **How long will this prosthesis last? How long will my liners last?**

A prosthesis should last for several years, but the actual length of time will depend on the amount of time the patient wears the prosthesis and what type of activities the device is used to perform. Prostheses are designed to be very strong and durable. However, it is a good idea to have your prosthesis checked out by your clinicians every 8- 12 months to make sure it is in good working order. Liners will general begin to wear out in about 6-9 months, but they can last up to 12 months or longer. Just like the prosthesis, the longevity of the liner depends on amount of usage.

### **How do I get more supplies?**

If you are ever in need of new liners, socks or any other prosthetic supply, please contact your physician for a prescription. Once you have a prescription, you can call our office to order more supplies.

### **Can I wear my prosthesis to bed?**

It is not recommended that you wear your prosthesis to bed.

### **What do I do if I get stuck in my prosthetic socket?**

Remain calm and contact our office or your prosthetist immediately.

### **What do I do if I get a sore on my residual limb?**

If your limb becomes sore, discontinue use of your prosthesis immediately or limit the amount of time you wear it drastically. Contact the office or your prosthetist as soon as possible.



### **How long do I wear my shrinker for each day?**

Before you are fit with a prosthesis, you should try to wear the shrinker as much as possible during the day and night. Take the shrinker off to bathe. You should have two shrinkers to alternate while you're washing one. Shrinkers can be hand washed or put in the laundry with your other clothes. Once you receive your prosthesis and start wearing it on a regular basis, you don't have to wear the shrinker as much. It is still a good idea to wear the shrinker to bed to control any swelling over night, so that you can fit in to your prosthesis in the morning.

### **Do I need to see my physician before I can get a prosthesis or new supplies?**

You must have a prescription from a physician in order to get a prosthesis or new supplies. Most physicians need to have seen you in the past 6 months before they will write a prescription. We are able to work with you and your physician to request a prescription if you have seen them recently.

### **Will I be able to do the things I did before I got the amputation?**

The majority of people with amputations are able to return to the activities they were doing before the amputation. During your initial evaluation, your prosthetist will ask for your personal goals so they can make a prosthesis to help you achieve them.

### **How do I learn to use my prosthesis?**

As a part of the patient care services that we provide, we will assist you with initial gait and usage training with your new prosthetic device. Once you are fit with your definitive device, we strongly recommend you continuing your rehab training with a physical or occupational therapist. This can be done at an inpatient or outpatient basis.

### **Why do I sometimes still feel my limb that has been amputated? Is this common?**

Feeling your toes or fingers after an amputation is referred to as a "phantom" sensation. A phantom sensation is a feeling that seems to originate from a part of the body that is missing. Phantom sensation/pain can present in other ways, such as pain in the knee or ankle, itchy skin, or cramping of muscles. The cause of this phenomenon is not clearly understood. Some researchers believe that this sensation originates from a psychological source that indicates that the body has not adjusted to the removal of a body part. Other research indicates that phantom sensation originates from the nerves being severed at some mid-point. No matter the cause, phantom sensation is a very common experience for patients after an amputation. There are several techniques that people have found useful to treat the sensations and our clinical team will help you if you experience this type of feeling or pain. Often, we have found that the pain may lessen significantly after you have received your prosthesis.