



**WESTERN CAPE
ASSOCIATION FOR
PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES**
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adding
value
to
lives

Focus on...

Since there are different types of amputations, the exact care instructions you'll follow will depend on which body part was amputated. Following your amputation surgery, your surgeon, nurses, and other health care professionals will teach you how to properly care for your particular amputation stump. Even so, there are certain amputation aftercare instructions that apply across the board. These include instructions regarding dressings and bandages, cleaning the stump, and developing proper skin care and hygiene practices. Depending on the situation, you might also be instructed on how to help prep your stump for an amputation prosthesis.

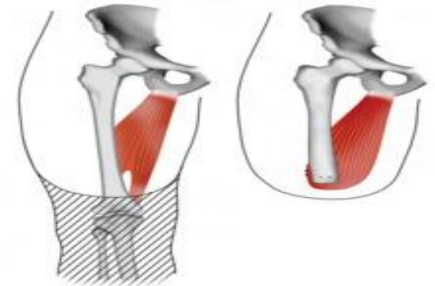
Generally, there are two kinds of dressings for an amputation stump. The first is a typical wound dressing to protect the incision area. The second dressing usually applied on top of the first, is to keep the swelling to a minimum and prepare the stump for an amputation prosthesis. The exact method for applying these bandages, and how much skin on your remaining limb they should cover, depends on your specific amputation. General rules include keeping the limb straight while bandaging, making sure the bandages aren't too tight or too loose, and rebandaging the amputation stump as many times per day as ordered by the doctor.

Depending on the situation, your doctor might recommend you wear a sock-like bandage called a shrinker. This bandage is designed to fit over your amputation stump like a sock would fit over your foot. Although shrinkers aren't always as effective as regular bandages, they're generally easier to use. When wearing a shrinker, you must make sure to keep the top of the fabric from rolling, as this can decrease the blood circulation to your stump. Consult your doctor immediately if the shrinker begins to feel too loose or too tight.

Your doctor will instruct you on how long you must wait after an amputation before you can start washing your stump, but usually patients start this process once the stump has healed. Wash the amputation stump at least once a day with warm water and mild soap. During baths, avoid soaking the stump because this can cause the skin to soften and increase your chances of injuries. Refrain from using any product with harsh chemicals, as they can cause drying and prevent your skin from replacing its natural oils.

Simple, unmedicated talc powders can help

How do I Care for an Amputation Stump?



Myodesis of Adductor Muscle in Reconstructive Transfemoral Amputation Surgery. Illustration courtesy of Prosthetics Research Study, Seattle, Washington.

absorb perspiration and keep the stump dry. As the years pass, it's just as important to practice good skin care and hygiene habits as you did immediately following the amputation surgery. The skin on and near your amputation stump isn't as tough and resilient as the skin on other parts of your body, and it's more susceptible to irritation, injury, and infection. This is especially true for stumps that bear the continual stresses of wearing an amputation prosthesis. Many health and medical supply stores cater to skin care products specifically for different types of amputations. Treat any abrasions or irritation as your doctor directs, but be sure to contact your doctor if they don't improve within a reasonable time.

Tips for New Amputee and their families and friends

Each amputee goes through their own personal struggle. Whether the amputation is a result of trauma or illness, the feelings are the same. Anger, denial, depression – leading eventually to acceptance.

Some of us work through these feelings and are able to move on, while some of us face a harder struggle to find peace.

Most of our members at the National Amputation Foundation have been living with amputation for the better part of their adult lives.

You are not alone. We understand the fear and uncertainty that you face.

Over the years, we have drawn on our own resolve, taken strength from our loved ones and moved forward to create full and productive lives.

These tips come from our own experiences, as well as the experiences of recent amputees, our soldiers recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Centre in Washington DC.

These soldiers have drawn on their own personal experiences to help us get the word out....That there is indeed life after amputation!