

Maintain Socket Hygiene

Just as it's important to keep your skin clean and supple, it's equally necessary to wash the prosthetic socket regularly. This is best done at the end of the day. Because of its design, the socket naturally harbors bacteria, fungi, and discarded skin tissue. Above knee prostheses which include suction valves are particularly susceptible and require even greater attention.

Again, 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. After a lengthy rinse, the socket should be completely dried with absorbent towels and allowed to ventilate overnight. Make sure the socket is absolutely dry before wearing it since dampness may cause the skin to stick, rub, and become irritated.

Call If In Doubt

It is always best to contact your prosthetist if concerns arise about the care of your prosthesis and its components.

The staff at Fidelity Orthopedic is ready to answer your questions and eager to avert any problems before they interfere with the comfort and function that a custom-fabricated prosthesis is meant to provide.

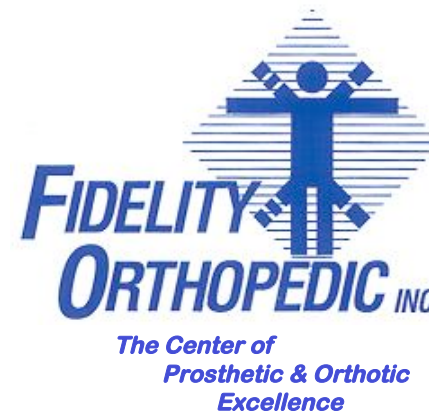
We're here to give you the best possible care, so don't hesitate to let us know how we may help you.

Thank You

In conclusion, we would like to thank you for selecting our services. Our team of skilled professionals is dedicated to providing you with the highest level of orthopedic care, and to designing the device best suited to helping you attain the greatest degree of function.

We trust you will be pleased with your new prosthesis. Following these suggestions should avert many problems; but if you have a concern, please notify us at once.

Wear your prosthesis in good health!



Serving Montgomery County at:

**8514 N. Main Street
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**Skin Care
Guide
for
Amputees**

Care Keeps Your Skin Healthy

The body's best protection against infection and disease is its largest organ – the skin.

Proper care of the skin is vital whether or not a person is an amputee. But for those who wear a prosthesis, consistent, thorough hygiene helps prevent disabling skin conditions and fosters a normal, active life.

The inescapable necessity of keeping the residual limb in a socket throughout the day presents its own set of potential problems. Confined in an airless chamber, your leg does not experience normal heat loss and retention patterns. Without air circulation, accumulated heat and trapped perspiration encourage fungal development and bacterial growth.

A combination of regular cleansing and the use of surgical scrub solutions (such as diluted Betadine, PhisoHex, etc.) will give 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 teeth brushing and hair combing. Cleansing is best done at day's end since damp skin inserted in a socket is more likely to swell and become irritated.

Thoroughly wash the skin with soap and warm water, using additional water to generate more lather. After the skin is completely cleansed, it should be fully rinsed, again in warm – not hot – water, since any remaining soap film contributes to skin irritation. Then towel dry gently, but completely.

After cleansing and drying, it is often advisable to apply a medicated skin lotion or cream to the entire stump area. Keeping the skin supple helps it better withstand the extensive pressures exerted on it by wearing a prosthesis. Using a softening lotion on a regular basis also diminishes the formation of calluses, abrasions, and extreme toughening of the skin.

If Skin Problems Arise...

Consistent, thorough hygiene and a well-fitting prosthesis should keep skin supple and healthy. However, it is not uncommon for skin irritations to occur when wearing a prosthesis. Closely monitor the appearance of your skin and, if a sore or abnormal condition develops, notify your physician without delay.

Care Guidelines

The following suggestions are only guidelines. Always contact your physician before a minor problem becomes a disabling situation.

Abrasions – Wash the area with soap and warm water, patting dry gently. Apply a medicated skin cream and cover with a sterile gauze pad. If abrasions happen often, make certain the socket is fully dry before wearing. Should an abrasion show signs of infection, contact your doctor.

Blisters – Use the same treatment indicated for abrasions if the blister is minor and not painful. For more serious and frequently recurring blisters, see your physician. Boils and abscesses should be treated by a doctor.

Bacterial Infection – Clean the area gently and thoroughly with soap and water. Keep the site dry and let air circulate freely. If the condition persists, contact your doctor.

Fungal Infection – Wash with soap and dry well. Apply a medicated skin cream and expose the infection to air as much as possible. Avoid further infection by keeping the socket absolutely clean and fully dry before wearing it again. Consult your physician if problems persist.

Care of Prosthetic Socks

An important protective barrier which also needs to be kept clean is the prosthetic sock. This garment serves as a cushion between the skin and the socket wall and contributes greatly to a comfortable, functional prosthesis. However, since the sock or socks worn absorb perspiration, a daily change is vital to skin health and hygiene.

Whether washed by machine or by hand, socks need a thorough cleansing in warm water, preferably using a sanitizing lotion soap or mild detergent. They should be well-rinsed in warm, clear water to remove any trace of soap residue which can irritate skin tissue. This is best done in the evening so the socks fully dry overnight or, if necessary over a period of several days.

When rinsing, excess water should be squeezed – not wrung – from the socks. If a prosthetic sock should dry in a distorted manner, insert a tennis ball to reshape it. Sock drying forms are also available.

The Sheath Needs Washing, Too

The prosthetic sheath is an interface between the skin and the prosthetic sock. It should be changed and laundered daily.

Like the socket and the prosthetic socks, the sheath should be lathered with a sanitizing lotion or mild detergent, using warm water. After a generous rinsing in warm, clear water, it should be squeezed, but not wrung out, and left to dry completely. Most sheaths are manufactured from artificial fibers, indicating delicate handling. The material air dries quickly and should be ready to wear the following day.

To prolong the life of prosthetic socks and sheaths, follow the manufacturer's washing and drying instructions.