

Some basic rules:

- Wash socks, nylon sheaths, bandages, and shrinkers daily. See the guidelines: Care of Your Stump Socks, Bandages, and Shrinkers
- Massage regularly to reduce scar adhesions and improve circulation. Remove all residual creams and lotions after massaging so your skin is dry.
- Once the adhesions are reduced, use softening lotions only if the skin is at risk of cracking or peeling. This is because it is better if your skin toughens up once the scar is mobile and swelling reduced.
- Wash the stump daily (or more often if you sweat a lot) with mild or antibacterial soaps. Rinse well and dry thoroughly before putting on your prosthesis or bandage. This is because damp skin is easily irritated and can cause germs to grow.
- Do not shave your stump, as there is a risk of ingrown hairs, which provide a source for infection.
- Do not use alcohol based cleaning products, deodorants, methylated spirits, or perfumes, as they can dry the skin and lead to cracking.
- Do not use talcum powder on your stump as the powder can act as an abrasive between your stump and prosthesis, and damage your skin.
- You may find an increase in perspiration, particularly in warmer weather, because your stump is enclosed in the prosthesis. This may cause your skin to soften and crack, or bacteria may grow in the warm, moist environment. Do not use powders to soak up perspiration. Try a roll-on antiperspirant, and change your stump socks regularly for clean, dry socks. If you use a silicon or urethane liner, wipe it dry regularly. Consult your prosthetist, physiotherapist, or doctor for further advice.
- Do not remove scabs. Do not open blisters. Seek medical advice on the management of wounds or blisters. *It may be necessary to stop using the prosthesis, until reviewed by your physiotherapist or prosthetist for correct fit.*
- If you must use your prosthesis, and there is a wound that requires a dressing, use the thinnest possible. Bulky pads or dressings will cause an increase in local pressure inside the artificial limb. *Note that generally you should not use your prosthesis if you have blisters or wounds. See your prosthetist or physiotherapist as soon as possible.*
- Consult your doctor, physiotherapist, or prosthetist about managing wounds or ulcers on your stump. Do not apply sticking plaster or band aids as they can irritate your skin and create more damage.
- Adding padding to reduce pressure areas will actually have the opposite affect, causing increased pressure inside the artificial limb, and risk skin damage. See your physiotherapist or prosthetist if the fit of your artificial limb is not satisfactory.
- If skin damage is occurring while using your prosthesis, or you are concerned that it will occur, you should not use your prosthesis until it has been reviewed and modified by the prosthetist or the physiotherapist.



If you have any questions, contact your health professional:

Physiotherapist: _____

Phone: _____

Prosthetist: _____

Phone: _____

Rehab Doctor: _____

Phone: _____

Care of Your Stump and Skin

Learning to care for your stump is vital in producing a well shaped, healthy residual limb, ready for wearing an artificial limb, or prosthesis.

Stump care involves trying to reduce the swelling in your stump, which you do through using bandages or a stump shrinker, and looking after your skin.

Skin care is important for all amputees, not just vascular amputees. Cracks, blisters, ulcers, pimples, or tethered scars can not only be painful, but may mean a period where the prosthesis cannot be worn as wounds heal.

Cleanliness is important. The stump is often fully enclosed in bandages / shrinkers, or within the prosthetic socket, making evaporation of sweat difficult. Bacteria thrive in moist environments, and if there is a wound or skin tear, infection can occur.

- Carefully monitor your skin, and the fit of your prosthesis. Small changes in stump shape or volume can be managed with additional stump socks, but larger changes require modification by the physiotherapist or prosthetist.
- Monitor changes in body weight, as they will affect the fit of the socket, particularly vacuum or suction sockets. If you lose weight, the socket may become loose. If you gain weight, the socket may become too tight.
- Use a mirror to inspect your stump daily. If you cannot see your skin, ask a friend or relative. This is important because sometimes with poor circulation, sensation is affected and you cannot always feel blisters forming. You should also always check for changes in colour which may indicate rubbing or pressure from your prosthesis.