

# Care of your stump and remaining leg if you have diabetes, poor circulation or numbness in the foot



**Information for patients**  
Prosthetics



**PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST





All people with amputations need to take special care of their stump (residual limb) and remaining leg but it is especially important if you have diabetes. This leaflet has been written to give you advice on how to do this.

## Care of your stump

- It is important to keep your stump clean. Perspiration may build up causing little spots or rashes, which can get uncomfortable. You should wash your stump as often as required but at least daily. Make sure it is completely dry, especially before putting on your artificial limb (prosthesis).
- Every time you remove your limb, carefully inspect your stump to make sure that there are no rubs or sore areas. You may have reduced feeling in your stump and not realise when you have a sore area so it is worth getting into the routine of checking your stump regularly. If necessary, use a mirror to check the areas you cannot see easily. If you have any difficulty, ask someone to help you check.
- If you do discover a sore area, clean it carefully and apply a simple dry dressing and telephone the M&SRC to speak to the nurse for advice. The number can be found at the back of this leaflet. You can also get in touch with your District Nurse or GP. Try to avoid wearing your artificial limb during this time as it may make the sore worse. It may be necessary to telephone the M&SRC receptionist to make an appointment with your prosthetist.
- If you find that the skin on your stump is very dry, apply a moisturising cream or lotion, such as Vaseline™ or E45™, at night.
- Massaging and handling your stump regularly will help your circulation and will help you to identify any sore spots or changes.
- You should wear clean stump socks every day and make sure that there are no wrinkles or creases in the socks. Never mend or darn them as these seams can cause damage to your stump.

- Do not use talcum powder.
- Sweating is common and is normal. However, if this is causing a problem, talk to the nurse or your prosthetist. They will be able to recommend suitable antiperspirants and how to use them on your stump.

## **Care of your remaining leg**

It is important that you look after your remaining foot, especially if you have diabetes or poor circulation. Diabetes can cause poor circulation and some loss of feeling and this can lead to increased risk of further foot problems.

## **Daily foot and nail care**

- Check your foot daily and look between your toes for any red or broken skin. If you have difficulty with this you can use a mirror or get someone else to help you. Tell your doctor, district nurse, the diabetic foot clinic or your chiropodist/podiatrist about any sores, swelling, cracks, corns or damage that you see.
- Do not try to treat hard skin or corns yourself. Go and see a state registered chiropodist/podiatrist regularly to have your toenails cut and to have your foot checked.

If you have diabetes, this service is free when you are referred by your GP.

## Shoes and socks

- Never walk around bare footed. When you are walking you should wear shoes or slippers at all times to avoid hurting your foot.
- Choose shoes with good support. They should be broad, long and deep enough for you to be able to wriggle your toes. If you have a problem with this, please ask for advice from your GP, prosthetist, podiatrist or nurse, as you may need to be referred for specialist footwear.
- Check the inside of your shoes daily to ensure there are no stones, wrinkles in the fabric lining or nails coming through. Always wear shoes that are well fitting. Tight shoes will put unnecessary pressure on your foot.
- Wear well fitting socks. Make sure that they are not tight around the ankle as they can reduce circulation. Choose socks without ridges or seams or wear them inside out. Change your socks daily. You can buy “diabetic socks” and, if you would like to get some of these, ask at the M&SRC for advice on where to buy these socks from.

## Things to avoid

- You need to avoid extremes in temperature.  
If you have poor circulation or diabetes it is possible to burn your feet without realising it.
- Avoid very hot baths. Put cold water in the bath first and then the hot. Test the temperature before you get in. You can buy cheap thermometers designed for baths. Ask the nurse for advice on where to buy one if you are unsure.
- Avoid sitting close to radiators or fires.
- Avoid using hot water bottles.  
Bed socks are a much better choice.

## **Prevention is the better thing**

If you have poor circulation and loss of feeling in your foot, you can help yourself by:

- Stopping smoking
- If you are diabetic, make sure your blood sugar levels are well controlled (between 6-10mmols) and have your foot checked regularly at the diabetes clinic or with a state registered chiropodist/podiatrist.
- Eat a healthy diet and take regular exercise.
- If you are unable to do any of these things for yourself and you need some help, please ask the nurse for advice.
- If you have any problems with your remaining leg or stump then report them immediately to your doctor, district nurse, the M&SRC or to the diabetic foot clinic at your local hospital.
- If you think that you have a problem with your foot, get someone to check it but please don't wait to do this until your foot hurts, as you may have damaged it without realising it.

If you have further problems or queries please telephone the M&SRC Reception on:

- **0114 271 5566**



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