

Care for an Amputation

General Information

The first few months after surgery will be the most challenging as you regain your strength.

Activity

- Follow the exercise program you learned in physical therapy.

Incision Care

- Do not get the incision wet until your doctor says it's OK.
- Do not put powder or lotions on your incision.
- Change your bandages and stockings every day to keep sweat from irritating the incision. You may change them more than once every day, if needed.
- Clean the incision area every day once your doctor tells you it's OK. Rinse the area well with warm water and pat dry.
- Look at the incision area once a day for increased redness, swelling and/or drainage. Use a mirror to help see the entire area.

Discomfort

- You may feel sensation and/or pain from your missing limb. This condition is not completely understood, but it may occur because the areas of your brain that "feel" the missing limb remain. These sensations should lessen and disappear with time.

- If you are bothered by the discomfort in your amputated limb, try rewrapping it or put gentle pressure on the end of it.
- Take pain medicine as directed.

When To Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor if:

- you have a temperature of 100 F or higher
- you notice drainage from the incision
- you notice the incision is more swollen, warm, red or painful
- your incision opens
- you have bright red bleeding from the incision
- you have discomfort that is not relieved by pain medicine
- you have pain in your chest with or without deep breathing
- your affected limb is cool to the touch, gray in color or both.

Follow-up Appointment

Call your doctor for a follow-up appointment in 2 weeks.