

# Upper Extremity Prosthetic Care Guide

## Off to a Good Start

Your new upper extremity prosthesis was carefully fit and designed to provide maximum function while ensuring comfort and durability. For best results, follow the donning instructions provided by your prosthetist or therapist and the wearing schedule established for you.

It is important that you notify us promptly if you experience any problems such as pain or skin irritation while wearing your prosthesis. Normal redness resulting from pressure should disappear within 10 to 15 minutes of removing the device. Should redness or other signs of rubbing last longer, contact us immediately to arrange an appointment.

## Personal Care and Hygiene

Proper care and cleaning are essential to maintaining healthy skin, especially that in contact with a prosthesis. Please follow these guidelines:

- Wash, thoroughly rinse, and completely dry the residual limb daily before putting on the prosthesis. Make sure potentially irritating soap film is removed completely before drying.
- Contact your prosthetist if minor skin disorders appear. Never use strong disinfectants, such as iodine or alcohol, which cause dry skin. Contact your physician if more severe skin irritation develops.
- Wear a fresh t-shirt daily (more often in hot weather) to cushion skin under the harness. Women often find a strapless bra more comfortable under a harness.

### Care of the Prosthesis

Regular cleaning and careful maintenance are also important to prolong the useful life of a prosthesis. We suggest you follow these procedures:

#### Socket:

- Wipe out daily with a damp cloth, using soap and water. Don't submerge since water could damage mechanical/electrical components.
- Dry thoroughly and let it air overnight; never place in a clothes dryer or use a hair dryer to hasten drying.

#### Harness:

- Cotton and synthetic harness straps should be scrubbed with a household cleaner containing ammonia. Clean whenever soiled since perspiration stains permanently mark harness straps.
- Lay the prosthesis on counter or drainboard, protecting it from water, and wash harness in sink without removing it from the prosthesis.
- Rinse and air-dry thoroughly before putting prosthesis back on.

#### Cable:

- Examine cable often for cut or worn areas. Report any damage promptly to your prosthetist.

#### Rubber Bands:

- Each rubber band applies approximately one pound of finger closure pressure to an object. You may wear as many

as you find comfortable.

- Cut off a worn-out elastic band with a scissors and replace it with a new one. Your prosthetist can obtain an applicator for you. Note: Grease and sharp objects can easily damage these elastic bands.

## Care of Battery-Powered Prosthesis

The prosthesis is not waterproof or water-resistant. Do not immerse it in water as this will damage the prosthesis and void the warranty.

There are two battery options: removable and internal.

- **Removable:** You are usually provided with two removable batteries. Keep one battery in the charger while you are using the other in your prosthesis. When one battery is low, place in the charger and insert the charged battery into battery holder on your prosthesis. Rotating the batteries on a daily basis is recommended.

- **Internal:** When charging the internal battery, you must remove the prosthesis. Move switch to off position, insert charger cable into charger port, then plug into the wall outlet.

For more details on charging, refer to the manufacturer's instructions.

## Maintaining A Cosmetic Glove

Your prosthetic glove is made of durable, strong material; it is meant to withstand most normal activities as well as exposure to many substances. Some, however, will cause permanent staining, stiffening, or shortened lifespan.

For best wear, follow these guidelines:

- **Wash Immediately** — A softening agent in the plastic of the cosmetic glove makes it vulnerable to permanent staining by the following substances:

- Ballpoint pen
- Duplicating ink
- Colored lacquers
- Fresh newsprint
- Mustard
- Shoe polish
- Carbon paper
- Indelible pencil
- New dark clothing

- **Avoid Contact** — Prolonged contact (over one minute) with the following solvents will weaken a glove and may cause stiffening:

- Gasoline
- Carbon tetrachloride (carbon, engine)
- Benzene
- Absolute ethanol and 90% ethanol liquid soap
- Kerosene
- Turpentine (paint thinner)

- **Rinse Promptly** — The following substances won't affect the glove permanently, but they should be washed off:

- Detergent mixtures
- Methanol (wood alcohol)
- Acetic acid (vinegar)
- Concentrated lye solutions
- Mineral oils
- Ethanol-water mixtures (beer, whiskey, wine)
- Fruit juices (darker juices may stain)
- Food condiments (ketchup, mayonnaise)

- **Washing the Glove**

Wash the glove once per day in a mixture of mild soap and lukewarm water. Excessive dirt or stains may be treated with a cloth moistened in wood alcohol or ethanol, rubbing the spot gently to remove stain. Hot water won't harm the glove but boiling water may weaken glove material and distort its shape. When cleaning the glove, avoid wetting the mechanism of the prosthetic hand. After rinsing, allow the glove to air dry, resting flat.

- **Storing the Glove**

When it isn't being worn, the cosmetic glove should be kept in a clean, dry, and preferably dark place. Avoid resting the glove too long on a lacquered surface since it will absorb the stain and possibly leave a mark.

## Overall Guidelines

Following a daily care and cleaning schedule for you and your prosthesis should extend the life of the prosthesis and enhance your comfort while wearing it. If problems occur, report them at once to your prosthetist and arrangements will be made for repair or replacement.

It's also a good idea to observe the following precautions:

- Handle the prosthesis by its harness rather than the cable. Store it in a safe, dry place when it isn't being worn.
- Avoid detergents since they tend to dissolve lubricating oils in the hook and wrist unit mechanism. Clean and oil stud threads and hook bearing after prolonged dishwashing.
- Never use the prosthetic socket or terminal device as a hammer or wedge.
- If a mishap occurs, don't try to fix it yourself. Sandpaper, files, knives, rasps, and saws will only cause further damage. Contact your prosthetist for adjustments.

## Follow-Up Care Schedule

During the first year you wear your upper extremity prosthesis, regular visits will be established to monitor your progress. Subsequent maintenance and function reviews usually follow on a biannual basis.

## We're Here To Help

The professional staff at Sampson's Prosthetic & Orthotic Laboratory is dedicated to providing you with the most appropriate and best quality upper extremity prosthesis. We are committed to providing individualized prosthetic care and we are sincerely interested in helping you reach your rehabilitation goals. If you should ever have a question about your prosthesis or treatment program, give us a call.

We look forward to a long and beneficial relationship with you. With practice, you will become adept in the use of your prosthesis. With appropriate use and care, it should serve you well as you realize greater dexterity and independence. Don't hesitate to call us if a problem arises.

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