



**The Leeds
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust

The Prosthetic Limb Service

Information for
patients



Adult
Therapies

Working in partnership to provide a quality healthcare service.

This booklet has been compiled by the Multi-disciplinary teams of a number of hospital trusts in the West and North Yorkshire region. Feedback and reviews have been provided by patients and the Leeds Regional Centre User Group. We hope it will provide useful information for you and your relations / carers.

This booklet will provide a general introduction to the Prosthetic Service at Seacroft Hospital, Leeds. It will guide you through your first appointment and contains useful information for future reference. We hope it will help to reassure you and answer many of your questions.

Often in the text, we have referred to the loss of a limb through an amputation; however, much of the information is also relevant to those with a congenital limb absence.

Our aim is to provide a quality, caring service. The staff at the Specialist Rehabilitation Centre Seacroft are here to help you. If there is anything you do not understand or if you need assistance of any kind, please do not hesitate to ask.



Useful telephone numbers

You can get straight through to the departments listed below by dialling these numbers:

General enquiries and medical or prosthetic appointments:

9.00 am until 4.00 pm: **(0113) 2063866**

8.00 am until 4.00 pm: **(0113) 2063787**

Physiotherapy: **(0113) 2063639**

Occupational Therapy: **(0113) 2063729**

Nurse: **(0113) 2063830**

Clinical Psychologist: **(0113) 2065897**

Patient Affairs: **(0113) 2063204**

General information

Wheelchairs are available in the prosthetics reception area. All areas of the hospital are wheelchair accessible.

The disabled toilets are fitted with handrails. Baby changing facilities are available, please ask a member of staff.

In accordance with the Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust's policy, the hospital is a No Smoking area. Smoking is not allowed in any part of the hospital buildings. For the comfort and safety of other patients and staff, you are asked not to smoke during your visits to the hospital.

We advise that you do not bring anything of value with you to the Centre and only have as much cash as necessary. The hospital cannot accept responsibility for the loss of any valuables.

Artificial, prosthetic (limb fitting) department

The Prosthetic Department is open from Monday to Friday between 8.00 am and 4.00 pm. Telephone enquiries will be answered between 9.00 am and 4.00 pm. The department is closed on Bank Holidays.

If you have specific language, or communication needs, please contact General Enquiries prior to your visit. If you have any specific care needs, please contact the nurse. We attempt to ensure our services are accessible to all.

We have a separate children's waiting area, please supervise children at all times. There is also a designated children's treatment area. In order to comply with infection prevention policies, we have a small number of toys. It is advisable to bring your own.

There is a WRVS café by the main hospital entrance where you can buy food and drinks. Opening times are 9.30 am until 4.00 pm. The cafe sometimes offer a morning mobile trolley service within department. You may prefer to bring a drink and snack with you.

If you are diabetic and need to take insulin or tablets during the day, please bring them with you. You should also bring your own food, drink and glucose tablets in case you need them during the journey or whilst in the department.

Information relating to benefits, relevant organisations and services are displayed in the Prosthetic Department. If you cannot find the information you require, please ask the receptionist.

Please inform us if you change your address or General Practitioner (GP). If you move to a different area, you may wish to attend another limb fitting centre. We can give you the address of the centre nearest to your new home and your medical notes can be transferred.

Please ensure that you tell the receptionist when you arrive at the department and when you are leaving. The reception staff will book your next appointment, deal with travel claims, ambulance queries and issue visitor and pay & display permits.

Artificial (prosthetic) limbs

The Multi-disciplinary Team are responsible for your medical, emotional and rehabilitation needs. They will discuss with you your rehabilitation needs and ways to enable you to become as independent as possible. Not everyone who has an amputation will receive an artificial limb. Using an artificial limb requires more energy than walking with your own limb and can be very tiring. Some people are more independent using a wheelchair.

Cosmetic limbs can be supplied from Seacroft Regional Centre for those who are medically not suitable or do not wish to walk on an artificial limb. Cosmetic limbs have no moving parts but give the appearance of having a limb whilst sitting in a chair. These cosmetic limbs can be difficult to suspend from your body comfortably and often make transfers on and off the toilet more difficult. Your physiotherapist can discuss this option with you.

The doctor will consider your general health, medication and the condition of your operated limb and remaining limb. They will also consider your emotional needs as losing a limb is commonly associated with a period of emotional adjustment, which may include feelings of low mood and depression.

If you are going to be fitted with an artificial limb, then you will be allocated a prosthetist. They are the professionals who are responsible for prescribing, measuring and fitting of your artificial limb. Measuring, casting / scanning and making of the artificial limb normally takes 10 working days. After your appointment for fitting and delivery of the limb, you will be able to take the limb to your physiotherapist for training. In future months and years, you may regularly see the prosthetist for adjustments or monitoring of your artificial limb.

The Nurse is available to change dressings and advise general health issues. A Care Assistant is available to look after your personal needs and to give you any assistance you require.

Few people are able to use an artificial limb correctly without training. Your local physiotherapist will instruct you on a general exercise programme and muscle strengthening as required. They will teach you how to use the artificial limb correctly for walking. If appropriate, you will progress to walking on slopes, uneven ground and climbing stairs.

If you have not received any physiotherapy input after your initial surgery please contact the Rehabilitation Centre Physiotherapist on: **(0113) 2063639**.

The occupational therapist (OT) will work with you in enabling you to achieve those activities and occupations which are important to you i.e. accessing the kitchen. This may involve liaising with social services, schools and housing regarding adaptations and equipment to increase your independence.

Upper limb service

The doctor, occupational therapist, physiotherapist and upper limb prosthetist work with patients of all ages, who have an upper limb absence or amputation. When you receive your first artificial limb, or if you change the type of prosthesis, the occupational therapist will give advice and training in its use.

The occupational therapist and upper limb prosthetist run clinics in order to assess your upper limb needs. They are able to provide a range of upper limb prostheses and advice on managing a range of daily activities. The team with you will look at your current occupational needs and determine what type of upper limb prosthetic would best suit your needs. In some cases, a limb will not be needed.

Getting your first artificial limb

Your first appointment (Primary)

You are welcome to bring a relative or friend with you to your prosthetic appointments. If you are coming by ambulance, there are certain circumstances in which the relative or friend may travel with you. Provision of ambulance transport is regularly reviewed by the lead clinician in line with the Leeds Teaching Hospital Trusts transport policy. Please contact the appointments department to discuss your requirements.

When you arrive at the main hospital, please report to the Prosthetics Reception and at the end of your visit, please inform the receptionist you are leaving. If you have travelled by ambulance, you will need to wait in the reception area.

At your first Primary appointment, you will be seen by the Prosthetics team appropriate for your needs. Please bring a list of your medication and any medical details relevant to your assessment. Continue to take your normal medication on this day, particularly any diuretics. Failure to take your diuretics may result in swelling in your residual limb (stump) and delay in casting for your artificial limb. Continue to wear your compression garment as prescribed.

Many factors affect whether an artificial limb will enhance your independence. These include heart and chest problems, arthritis and neurological problems including strokes. The doctor will ask you about your medical history and any pain you may be experiencing including phantom limb pain.

The team will want to know about your lifestyle, housing, leisure pursuits and work, as these can influence the type of artificial limb appropriate for your needs.

Your prosthetist will be responsible for casting or measuring you for your artificial limb. There are different types of artificial limb for each level of amputation and these are individually made. The prosthetist will take a plaster cast, measurement or use a computer scanning system to produce your individual socket.

Fitting and delivery of your artificial leg

Your next appointment will be for the fitting of your artificial leg in around 2 weeks after your primary appointment. Please bring a pair of comfortable well fitting shoes.

The prosthetist will ask you to try your artificial limb on and walk between parallel bars to check the fit and comfort. Some adjustments may be required. Your first artificial leg may seem large as it takes time for the amputated site swelling to reduce. The prosthetist can answer any questions you may have regarding the artificial leg.

Never adjust the artificial limb yourself as this may make it unsafe.

You may take your prosthesis home after the fit delivery appointment but **do not use** until you have seen your physiotherapist. They will assess safety issues and provide appropriate walking aids for your use.

Fitting and delivery of your artificial arm

At this appointment, you will usually be seen by the prosthetist and occupational therapist. They will give you the opportunity to practise using the artificial limb and answer any questions you may have. Arrangements will be made for you to see the occupational therapist again for further practice and to discuss how you are managing everyday tasks.

Follow-up appointments

During the first year following your amputation, you will be seen regularly by the prosthetics team. If you are having problems and require an extra appointment, please contact the appointments section on: **(0113) 2063866**.

After the first year, we usually leave it up to you to contact the department when an appointment is required. It is recommended that you attend once per year for the artificial limb to be checked out. Regular medical reviews will continue for all children and those who are having on-going medical problems.

If you are unable to attend an appointment, please contact the Centre to re arrange. If you fail to attend appointments on two occasions and do not contact the Centre, no further appointment dates will be sent out. It will be your responsibility to contact the Centre for any future appointments.

If you are late for an appointment, the doctor or prosthetist may not be available, and may need to make an alternative appointment with you.

Please do not arrive at the department without an appointment or without contacting us first. Please ring and appointments & arrangements will be made for you to be seen as soon as possible.

Always bring your artificial limb when attending any appointment at the Centre.

Care of your residual limb

It is important to keep your residual limb (stump) clean when wearing an artificial limb. Small amounts of perspiration may build up causing spots or a rash. Wash your residual limb daily and make sure it is well dried, especially before putting on your artificial limb.

Check your residual limb daily for signs skin breakdown or rubbing. Contact either your therapist, district nurse, GP or any member of the prosthetic team at Seacroft Centre if you have any concerns.

If your residual limb becomes dry, apply a gentle cream or lotion after washing. Stroking and handling your residual limb regularly will help the circulation and to identify any changes.

Your residual limb will change in shape and size during the first few months. When this happens, the socket of your artificial limb may not fit properly and adjustments may be required. Please contact your prosthetist to arrange an appointment.

If the socket is loose or poorly fitting, do not try to pad the socket but wear an extra sock temporarily. If the socket is still uncomfortable, great care should be taken when using your artificial limb until the necessary adjustments have been made. A badly fitting socket may damage your residual limb.

If your residual limb becomes more swollen or you develop any other problems, please arrange an appointment with the consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine or prosthetist.

Care of the artificial limb (Prosthesis)

The socket should be wiped out daily, using a damp cloth or non-alcohol based wipes and allowed to dry. If the foot or any other part of the artificial limb becomes wet, remove the shoe and sock and allow to dry naturally. Never use direct heat to dry the socket as this could alter the integrity of the material.

If the artificial limb becomes noisy or difficult to use, contact Seacroft Centre to arrange an appointment. If there are no problems with the comfort of the socket, postal repairs can be arranged.

Residual limb socks are worn to help protect your skin and make your artificial limb comfortable. Change and wash the socks daily or more frequently if required. Do not darn or mend them when they are worn. A wide variety of socks are available free of charge by contacting the Centre.

General advice

Regular exercise is important for good health and your local physiotherapist will advise on what will be suitable for you.

Excessive weight gain or loss will affect the fit of your artificial limb. Eat regular healthy foods and if you require any dietary advice, ask the Seacroft Centre Nurse.

You should seriously consider stopping smoking. The effects of smoking can damage your general health and may result in vascular disease progressing in your remaining leg. The team at Seacroft Rehabilitation Centre would be happy to give you support and advice.

Common questions answered

Do I have to pay for my artificial limb (prosthesis)?

No. All limbs are supplied by the NHS via the Specialised Rehabilitation Centre. The type of limb you receive will be the most appropriate one for you.

What happens if I move to another area?

If you change your address, let the Centre know and we will inform you of your nearest Centre.

What happens if my limb needs repairing when I am away?

There are Prosthetic Rehabilitation Centres all over the UK. They should be able to carry out any necessary emergency repairs. You will need to contact them before you go to let them know you have a problem. Ask the reception staff where the nearest centre will be before you travel.

If you are abroad, you may be able to have emergency repairs carried out by the National Health Care scheme. Some countries may expect you to pay a contributory cost. For further information, leaflet SA30 is available from your local Social Security Office.

Is the first limb a temporary limb?

No. The first limb you are issued with is custom made for you. As your residual limb matures and changes shape, you may need to be re-cast / re-scanned for the socket. The type of limb may also be changed to suit your needs.

How long does it take to make an artificial limb?

Your first artificial limb should be made in 10 working days. If this will take longer you will be informed.

How does the limb stay on?

There are a number of ways of doing this. It may be a strap, sleeve, belt or suction, whichever is the most appropriate for you.

Will the bone in the bottom of my residual limb take the weight?

The socket is designed especially for you. The level of your amputation will determine where the pressure is taken. Every effort is made to ensure the comfort and protection of your residual limb.

Can I change the shoes I wear?

Yes, this is usually possible. Please ask your prosthetist to explain this.

Why is the leg so heavy?

It is as light as we can make it, but it needs to be strong enough to support your weight. It is probably no heavier than your own leg.

Can I wear my artificial leg in bed?

No. You may damage your residual limb or other leg. Remove it at night to check your skin.

Can I swim in it?

No. Certain components within the limb should not be put in water. It is better to learn to swim without a limb. There are artificial limbs designed to be used in wet areas, please discuss with your prosthetist.

How long can I wear my limb for?

Everyone's tolerance varies. You need to discuss this with your physiotherapist or prosthetist and closely follow the advice given.

Why are the bones in my residual limb becoming so prominent?

The muscles in your residual limb that used to move your lower leg are no longer required and start to reduce. This makes the bone appear more prominent. It is not usually a problem.

What will I be able to do with my artificial limb?

Anything you want to do and are able to do. This will depend on your general health and fitness. You may also be limited by the amount of pressure the skin on your residual limb can tolerate.

Can I drive with my artificial limb?

This will depend on many things. You may need to make adaptations to your car. Please discuss this with your local physiotherapist / occupational therapist or the team at the Centre.

I am struggling emotionally with what has happened to me, can I get any extra support?

Yes. There is a clinical psychology service within the Seacroft Centre you can be referred to. If you think this may be helpful, speak to any member of the team about accessing this service

Troubleshooting for artificial limb wearers

Loose fitting limb, goes on to easily	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Try an extra sock. 2. If you are having to use 3 socks, ring for an appointment.
Limb too tight	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decrease the number or thickness of the sock you are wearing. 2. Wear your compression sock for 30 minutes, then try again.
Painful residual limb	Phone the Centre and ask to speak with a member of the team.
Persistent red marking and blistering residuum	Do not wear the limb. Contact the Centre.
The limb clicks, squeaks	Arrange an appointment.
Worn straps on the limb	Ring the Centre for replacements. You will need to bring the limb in.
Stiff knee lock	Ring the Centre and make an appointment to have it checked.
If the limb gets wet	Remove shoe and sock and allow to dry naturally.
Loose or too tight compression sock	Contact your local physiotherapist or the Centre for a replacement.

Travelling to the Centre

By Train / Bus

Trains to Leeds City Station. A number of buses stop near to the hospital, including bus number 56 (Metro, turquoise line) from Eastgate. For further details, please ring the Metro bus information line on: **(0113) 2457676**.

If you need assistance from the main gate to the prosthetic department, please ring prosthetics administration on: **(0113) 2063787**.

By Car

Parking is available outside the Specialist Rehabilitation Centre. If you require any assistance from your car, please ring enquiries on: **(0113) 2063787**.

By Ambulance

Hospital transport is available for people who have a medical need in line with the Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust transport policy. Where an ambulance has been booked for you, this will be stated on your appointment letter. Should your transport be delayed, we will still do our best to see you in the prosthetic department or another appointment may be required. Your entitlement for an hospital transport will be regularly reviewed.

Travelling expenses

Some people can get help with the cost for travelling to the Centre. Further information is given in the Department of Health leaflet '**Help with health Costs**' (HC11). Forms for reclaiming travel expenses are available from Patient Affairs. If you receive a War pension because of your amputation, you can clarify the amount which you can claim by contacting **Patient Affairs** on: **(0113) 2063204**.

Glossary of terms

Artificial limb / prosthesis An artificial replacement of a body part.

Casting The process of using plaster of paris bandages on the residual limb to make a mould of the residual limb.

Clinical psychologist Health professional who is concerned with how people's emotions, thoughts, relationships and behaviour affect their rehabilitation.

Compression sock A sock designed to reduce swelling and help the shape of the residual limb.

Congenital An abnormal condition present at birth.

Doctor A doctor that has specialist training in rehabilitation after injury or amputation.

Early walking aid Temporary, practice limb to use in physiotherapy.

Multi-disciplinary team (MDT) A group of healthcare professionals who are involved with your care.

Nurse Health professional who is concerned about any sores, blisters and pressure areas to your residual limb.

Occupational therapist Health professional who is concerned with the functional, everyday tasks and environmental aspects of rehabilitation.

Orthotist Health professional responsible for providing your orthotic needs and specialised footwear.

Phantom sensations Sensation of the limb which has been removed.

Physiotherapist Health professional who is concerned in the physical aspect of your rehabilitation and walking training with your prosthetic limb.

Podiatrist Health professional who is concerned with the care of your remaining foot.

Prosthetist Health professional who prescribes, measures, casts or uses a computer scanner to make your prosthetic limb. They are also responsible for your on-going care regarding your artificial limb, whilst you continue to be a limb wearer.

Residual limb The remainder of the amputated limb, often known as your stump.

Your feedback

If you have any positive or negative suggestions, please complete a comments card available at reception or talk to a member of staff. A private room is available for confidential discussions or examinations.

If you have a complaint, please discuss the matter with the person you are seeing in the Department. Should you prefer to talk to someone else, please ask to speak to the Clinical Manager. The Rehabilitation Services Manager is also available to discuss any areas of concern but this may need to make an appointment for this.

Complaints can be raised and processed through the Trust complaints procedure **PALS** (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) on: **(0113) 2066261**.

Useful contacts

Seacroft Specialist Rehabilitation Centre

Seacroft Hospital, York Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS14 6UH

Tel: **(0113) 2063866** Email: leedsth-tr.p-admin@nhs.net
www.leedsth.nhs.uk

Limbless Association

Support to individuals of any age or background, whether they are about to have an amputation or are already living with congenital or acquired limb loss. They also offer help and advice to carers, family and friends.

Unit 10, Waterhouse Business Centre,
2 Cromar Way, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2QE

Helpline: **(01245) 216670** www.limbless-association.org

Diabetes UK

Wells Lawrence House, 126 Back Church Lane, London E1 1FH

Tel: **(0345) 1232399** www.diabetes.org.uk

British Limbless Ex Service Men's Association (BLESMA)

The national charity for limbless serving and ex-servicemen & women and their dependants & widows.

185 -187 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford,
Essex, RM6 6NA

Tel: (020) 8590 1124 www.blesma.org

REACH

Association for children with hand and arm deficiency.

Tavistock Enterprise Hub, Pearl Assurance House, Brook Street,
Tavistock, PL19 DBN

Tel: (0845) 1306225 www.reach.org.uk

William Merritt Disabled Living Centre

Aire House, Town Street, Leeds, LS13 1HP

Tel: (0113) 3508989 www.wmdlc.org

DVLA (Drivers Medical Group)

DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1TU

Tel: (0300) 7906806 www.direct.gov.uk

STEPS

Association for children with lower limb deficiency.

The White House, Wilderspool Business Park,
Greenall's Avenue, Warrington, WA4 6HL

Tel: (01925) 438090 **Email: info@steps-charity.org.uk**
www.steps-charity.org.uk

Disabled Living Foundation

Unit 1, 34 Chatfield Road, Wandsworth, London, W11 3SE

Tel: (020) 7289 6111 (9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday - Friday)

Email: info@dlf.org.uk www.dlf.org.uk

Age UK

Tavis House, 1 - 6 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9NA

Tel: (0800) 055 6112 www.ageuk.org.uk

Limb Power

Unit 20, Kingsmill Business Park, Chapel Mill Road,
Kingston Upon Thames, KT1 3GZ

Tel: (020) 8789 6565 www.limbpower.com



What did you think of your care?

Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft

Your views matter



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