



SMART
SOUTHEAST SCOTLAND MOBILITY
& REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY

Prosthetic Limb Service



Frequently Asked Questions

SMART Centre, Astley Ainslie Hospital,
133 Grange Loan, Edinburgh,
EH9 2HL

0131 537 9444

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

No. All prostheses are supplied by the NHS or Scottish Specialist Prosthetic Service.

What happens if I move to another area?

If you change your address or GP, please let the SMARTCentre know and we will inform you of any changes to your prosthetic care. If so, we can inform you of your nearest prosthetic centre.

What happens if my prosthesis needs repaired when I am away? (e.g. on holiday)

There are Prosthetic Rehabilitation Centres all over the UK. They should 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 SMART Centre administration team or your Prosthetist where the nearest centre will be before you travel.

If you are abroad, you may be able to have emergency repairs carried out. This is dependent on the country and local provision. Some countries may expect you to pay a contributory cost. On return please contact the SMART Centre.

Is my first prosthesis temporary?

No. The first prosthesis you are issued with is custom made for you. As your residual limb (stump) matures and changes shape you may need to be re-cast/re-scanned for a new socket. The type of limb may also be changed to suit any change in needs.

How long does it take to make a prosthesis?

Your first prosthesis will aim to be manufactured within 5 working days. If it is due to take longer you will be informed. Subsequent sockets will be subject to clinician and workshop availability. You will be informed at casting/measuring of the expected delivery time and date.

How does the limb stay on?

There are a number of ways to suspend a prosthesis from your residual limb. Some methods include: using a strap, sleeve, belt, suction or pin. Your Prosthetist will discuss this with you and select the most appropriate method.

Will the bones at 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 aims to be taken. Every effort is made to ensure comfort and protection of your residual limb and the end of bones that lie at the bottom.

Can I change the shoes I wear?

Yes. This is usually possible where the heel height of the shoe remains the same. Your Prosthetist can explain this in more detail.

Why is the prosthesis so heavy?

We aim to make the prosthesis as lightweight as possible, however components must be robust and strong enough to withstand continual weight-bearing.

Can I wear the prosthesis in bed?

No. You may damage your residual limb or other leg. Remove it at night to check your skin. Remember to put it on if you are getting up to toilet in the night or use your wheelchair.

Can I swim with my prosthesis?

No. Certain components within the prosthesis should not be submerged in water. There are artificial limbs designed to be used in wet areas, please discuss this with your Prosthetist.

How long can I wear the prosthesis 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 prominent?

The muscles in your residual limb reduce as they are no longer being used as they were before amputation. This makes the bone appear more prominent. It is not usually a problem but may require you to manage the fit of your prosthesis by changing your sock fit. If you are not able to achieve a comfortable fit, please contact the SMART Centre.

What will I be able to do with my prosthesis?

This will depend on your general health and fitness. You may also be limited by your residual limb. Working closely with your Prosthetist and Physiotherapist may enable you to achieve more with your prosthesis.

Can I drive with my prosthesis?

You will need to notify DVLA and your insurance company of any new health conditions that affect your driving status. Should you want to return to driving, please contact your GP for a referral to the Driving Assessment Department at the SMART Centre.

