

# Prosthetic appointments

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The purpose of this leaflet is to explain what will happen when you are referred for a prosthetic limb. It will also explain the terms 'CAST & MEASURES', and 'FITTING/DELIVERY' that we use to describe the two types of appointments and what will happen at each of these appointments.

## When will I see the prosthetist about a prosthetic leg?

You will attend your first appointment with a prosthetist when:

- You have seen the consultant and she has determined that you are fit enough for a prosthetic leg taking into account your current medical condition and the condition of your residual limb.
- You do not have any sores or wound and/or heavy dressings
- Your residual limb is not swollen or significantly bulbous in shape

## What happens at my first visit to the prosthetist?

On your first visit to the prosthetist a number of things will happen relating to your future prosthesis (prosthetic leg).

Following the prosthetist's introduction, you will be assessed for componentry and the limb type which is suitable for you. There will be a discussion about what a prosthesis (leg) is, what shoes are best to wear and how long to wear the leg for from day-to-day.

The prosthetist will take a **cast and measures**, of your residual limb (stump), for the socket to be made. Discussion about **fitting** and future appointments will also be necessary.

You are welcome to ask the prosthetist any questions you have.

## What is a cast?

A cast is a mould of your residual limb using plaster bandage. Measurements are taken also and particular aspects, such as bony prominences and sensitive areas, of the limb are marked on the cast.

This process should take around 20 MINS (for a below-knee cast) and 40 MINS (for an above-knee casts). For an above-knee socket, only **measurements** may be required sometimes, rather than the full casting procedure.

## What happens next?

The prosthetist will fill the cast taken with liquid plaster to make a model of your limb. The model can then be adapted in accordance with what is necessary for YOU.

When the model is complete, the technicians can use this to manufacture the socket. The socket is then ready to be fitted at your **FITTING** appointment.

- **What happens once the socket is ready?**

You will have a fitting appointment (this is approximately ONE WEEK after the initial appointment with the prosthetist). At this appointment the fit of the socket and height of the limb is checked.

**Alignment** is checked to make sure the leg is safe and stable for walking and standing. The limb is checked and observed when you are walking. You will practice walking with the leg at this appointment only IF it is suitable and safe for you to do so.

- **When can I take the leg home?**

If you have a below knee amputation It may be possible to take the leg home after the fitting appointment.

If you have an above-knee amputation it will take an additional week at least, but we hope that you will take receipt 3 weeks after your first appointment with the prosthetist.

There is the option to have a cosmetic foam (cosmesis) over the **componentry**, shaped to resemble the anatomical leg. If you have requested this, the leg will be ready one week later again after being completely finished for you.

On occasion, legs can be sent to physiotherapy, who will be training you to walk with the prosthetic leg. They may retain the leg for a while until they are confident you will be safe to use it unsupervised. YOUR SAFETY IS THE TOP PRIORITY.

## Follow up appointments

### As a new amputee how will I be followed up?

Once you have taken receipt of your new prosthesis you will be asked to return to the centre after six weeks so that the prosthetist can check how you are progressing. You may need another appointment to come back again in another six weeks depending on how you are progressing. You will be advised if this is the case.

After 6 months you will be asked to come back to the centre again when you will see the consultant, nurse, physiotherapist and prosthetist to again check on your progress. Please feedback to the team your experience of prosthetic use and any problems that you are experiencing.

After one year you will be asked to attend the prosthetics Centre again for a further consultation.

### When should I make a follow up appointment?

Once you have a prosthetic limb you have open access to appointments at Dorset Prosthetics Centre. This means that you do not need another referral for any on-going prosthetic care or to see any of the Prosthetic Specialists: i.e. Prosthetists, Consultant, Nurse, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Counsellor, or Podiatrist.

### You must make an appointment if:

- Your socket is uncomfortable or rubs
- You see any blisters or sores.
- Your socket is too tight
- Your socket is too big and you are wearing more than 3 thick socks.
- You hear any different sounds from the prosthesis - e.g clicking noises.
- The prosthesis does not behave as it has been doing
- You have a fall that may have damaged the prosthetic leg
- Your mobility deteriorates

## How often will my prosthesis be checked?

Your prosthetic leg should be checked every 12 months. You will be asked to attend the centre and bring your leg(s) with you for inspection. This is called a **component review**.

If the staff are concerned about the wear and tear on your prosthetic leg they may contact you to ask you to come in sooner to have it checked.

Please attend these appointments so that we can make sure that your prosthesis is functioning well and is safe.

## Who do I need to see if I have a problem with the prosthetic leg?

If you have a problem with the fit of the socket, you will need an appointment to see the prosthetist.

If the problem is mechanical only, i.e. to do with the mechanics of the components, you can book an appointment to see the Clinical Support Technician (CST).

If you have a problem with your mobility you can ask to see the physiotherapist as well as the prosthetist or CST.

If your pain has increased or you have any other medical problems connected to your amputation you can ask to see the Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine.

## Is it possible to have an emergency appointment with a prosthetist?

You can contact DPC reception in an emergency Monday to Friday 8a.m. – 4.00 p.m. When you call you will be triaged and if deemed an emergency you will be given an appointment to see a prosthetist or CST on the day. This may not be the prosthetist that you see every time that you attend: it will be the person who is able to see you on the day.

It will be classed as an emergency if your prosthetic leg has broken and you do not have a spare leg or a wheelchair that you can use.

You should make timely appointments to deal with sores and rubs or signs of infection so that this does not become an emergency situation.

## What happens if my prosthetic leg breaks over a weekend or in the evening?

You will either have a spare leg or you will have a wheelchair that you can use until you can contact us to arrange an appointment.

If you are concerned as to how you will manage in this eventuality, please talk to one of the therapy staff.

## Prosthetic Terminology

It may be useful to understand some of the terms that are used in connection with your prosthetic care:

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<b>Prosthesis</b>	Artificial limb
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<b>Residual Limb</b>	The remaining part of your amputated limb
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<b>Socket</b>	The part of your prosthesis where your residual limb goes
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<b>Cast</b>	A plaster wrap of your residual limb
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<b>Measures</b>	Taken for reference when modifying the filled plaster cast, or taken for making the socket
<b>Fitting</b>	An appointment where you attend to use your prosthesis in the parallel bars with the prosthetist. It is needed to assess the fit, height and alignment of the prosthesis. Several fitting appointments may be required if a complex shape/aligned prosthesis is necessary.
<b>Delivery</b>	An appointment where you attend to pick up your finished prosthetic leg. Only small fine tuning adjustments will be needed.
<b>Adjustments</b>	Alterations to the prosthetic limb
<b>Component</b>	The structural parts which make up your prosthesis. The higher your amputation level the more components you will have
<b>Suspension</b>	The prosthesis is not directly attached to your body, suspension is therefore the method of how the limb will stay connected to your body
<b>Alignment</b>	how the parts of your prosthesis are set up in order for you to walk to the best of your ability
<b>Cosmesis</b>	Foam wrap covering the components if you do not want them to be shown. Will make the prosthesis look more 'leg' shaped
<b>Prosthetic socks</b>	cotton socks that are shaped to fit over your residual limb
<b>Leather lining</b>	A lining within the socket used to reduce the number of socks being worn
<b>Cuff strap</b>	A leather strap used to suspend a below knee prosthesis which is riveted to the socket and fastens around your thigh
<b>Belt</b>	A way of suspending the prosthesis in above knee amputees
<b>Sleeves</b>	Knee sleeves, normally made of gel or material that are worn on the outside of a below knee prosthesis and rolled up onto the thigh to suspend the prosthesis
<b>Liners</b>	Normally made up of gel and worn directly over the residual limb inside the socket

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