

The Prosthetic Limb Service

Information for Patients

In partnership with: Airedale NHS Foundation Trust • Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust • Calderdale & Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust • The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust • York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

The Prosthetic Limb Service

This booklet is intended to give you 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 the questions you and your family may have.

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.

Telephone numbers

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

Specialist Rehabilitation

Service Manager: 0113 206 3392

Prosthetist Appointments & General Enquiries:

9am until 4pm: 0113 206 3866

8am until 4pm: 0113 206 3787

Physiotherapy: 0113 206 3639

Occupational Therapy: 0113 206 3729

Nurse: 0113 206 3830

Clinical Psychologist: 0113 206 5897

Patient Affairs: 0113 206 3503

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 8am until 4pm. Closed Bank Holidays. Telephone enquiries will be answered between 9am and 4pm.

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.

A children's play area in is reception, please supervise children at all times. In addition there is a designated children's treatment area.

There is a WRVS café by the main hospital entrance where you can buy food and drinks. Opening times are 8am until 4pm. They also 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 while 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 of any change of 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

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 require an appointment. A poster is mounted in reception which identifies senior staff members within the service who will be able to assist.

Complaints can be raised and processed through the Trust complaints procedure.

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 and display permits.

Artificial (prosthetic) limbs

The role of the prosthetics team is to enable you to reach your maximum level of independence in daily living, work, and leisure pursuits. Not everyone who has

an amputation will receive an artificial limb (prosthesis). Using an artificial limb (prosthesis) requires more energy than walking with your own limb and can be very tiring. Some people are more independent using a wheelchair. Following an assessment and discussion with the prosthetic team a decision will be made whether an artificial limb (prosthesis) will be beneficial for you.

The Multidisciplinary Team are responsible for your medical and rehabilitation needs. They will discuss with you your rehabilitation needs and ways to enable you to become as independent as possible. They will consider your general health, the condition of your operated limb and the remaining limb.

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

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 (prosthesis) 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 (prosthesis) 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 206 36369.

The Occupational Therapist (OT) can liaise with the community staff, local hospitals, work and schools regarding adaptation or equipment which maybe required to support your independence.

Upper Limb Service

OT's work with patients of all ages, who have an upper limb absence or amputation. When you receive your first artificial limb/prosthesis, or if you change the type of prosthesis, the OT will give advice and training in its use.

The OT and Upper Limb Prosthetist run weekly 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.

Getting your first artificial limb

Your first (primary) appointment

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. Please contact appointments 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 (prosthesis).

Many factors affect whether an artificial limb (prosthesis) will enhance your independence. These include heart and chest problems, arthritis and neurological problems including strokes. The team will want to know about your lifestyle, housing, leisure pursuits and work, as these can influence the type of artificial limb (prosthesis) appropriate for your needs.

Your Prosthetist will be responsible for casting or measuring you for your artificial limb/prosthesis. There are different types of artificial limb (prosthesis) 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 (prosthesis)

Your next appointment will be for the fitting of your artificial limb (prosthesis) in a few weeks time. For fitting please bring a pair of comfortable well fitting shoes.

The Prosthetist will ask you to try your artificial limb (prosthesis) on and walk between parallel bars to check the fit and comfort. Some adjustments may be required. Your first artificial limb (prosthesis) 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 prosthesis.

Never adjust the artificial limb (prosthesis) yourself.

You may take your prosthesis home after the fit delivery appointment but **do not use** until you have seen your Physiotherapist.

Fitting and delivery of your artificial arm (prosthesis)

At this appointment you will usually be seen by the Prosthetist and Occupational Therapist (OT). They will give you the opportunity to practise using the artificial limb (prosthesis) and answer any questions you may have. Arrangements will be made for you to see the OT 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 appointment please contact the appointments section 0113 206 3866

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. Appointments and arrangements will be made for you to be seen as soon as possible.

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 a year for the artificial limb (prosthesis) to be checked out. Regular medical reviews will be continued for all children and those who having continuing medical problems.

Always bring your artificial limb (prosthesis) when attending any appointment at the Seacroft Centre.

Care of your residual limb

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

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

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

Your residual limb (stump) will change in shape and size during the first few months. When this happens the socket of your artificial limb (prosthesis) 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 the artificial limb (prosthesis) until the necessary adjustments have been made. A badly fitting socket may damage your residual limb (stump).

If your residual limb (stump) becomes more swollen or you develop any other problems please arrange an appointment with the doctor or Prosthetist.

Care of the artificial limb (prosthesis)

The socket should be wiped out daily, using a damp cloth or wipes and allowed to dry. If the foot or any other part of the artificial limb (prosthesis) becomes wet remove the shoe and sock and allow to dry naturally. Never use direct heat to dry the socket.

If the artificial limb (prosthesis) 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 (stump) socks are worn to help protect your skin and make your artificial limb (prosthesis) 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 (prosthesis). Eat regular healthy foods and if you require any dietary advice ask the Seacroft Centre Nurse.

You should seriously consider stopping smoking. The affects of smoking can damage you 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 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 need repairing when I am away?

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 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 (stump) 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 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 (stump) 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 comfort and protection of your residual limb (stump).

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 needs to be strong enough to support your weight. It is probably no heavier than your own leg.

Can I wear the artificial leg (prosthesis) in bed?

No. You may damage your residual limb (stump) 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 the leg 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 (stump) becoming so prominent?

The muscles in your residual limb (stump) that used to move your lower leg are no longer required and begin 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 (prosthesis)?

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 (prosthesis)?

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.

Trouble shooting for limb wearers

Loose fitting limb, goes on too easily	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Try an extra sock2. If using 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 wearing2. Wear your compression sock for 30 minutes then try again
Painful residual limb	Contact 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	Contact the centre for replacements. You will need to bring the limb in
Stiff knee lock	Contact 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

To Leeds City Station then bus number 56 (Metro, turquoise line) from Eastgate in Leeds city centre.

By bus

A number of buses stop near to the hospital. For further details, please ring the Metro bus information line on 0113 245 7676. If you need assistance from the main gate to the prosthetic department, please report to the Lodge building at the main entrance of the hospital.

By car

Parking is available outside the Specialist Rehabilitation Centre reception. If you require any assistance from your car please inform the staff at the Lodge situated at the main entrance to the hospital.

By ambulance

Ambulance transport is available for people who have a medical need in line with the agreed Patient Transport Services Protocol. 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. Your requirement for an ambulance 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 the reclaiming of 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 206 3503 or 0113 206 3204.

Glossary of terms

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 shape of the residual limb

Congenital An abnormal condition present at birth

Early walking aid Temporary practice limb to use in physiotherapy

Multidisciplinary team (MDT) A group of healthcare professionals who are involved with your care

Rehabilitation Medical Physician A doctor concerned with your general medical health and pain control

Occupational Therapist Health professional who is concerned with the functional/every day tasks and environmental aspects of rehabilitation

Orthotist Health professional who may measure you for footwear from your remaining limb

Phantom sensations Sensation of the limb which has been removed

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

Podiatrist Health professional concerned with the care of your remaining foot

Prosthesis/Artificial limb An artificial replacement of a body part

Prosthetist Health professional who prescribes, measures, casts or uses a computer scanner to make your prosthetic limb. Also they are responsible for your on going care regarding your prosthetic limb while you continue to be a limb wearer

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

Useful Contacts

Seacroft Specialist Rehabilitation Centre

Seacroft Hospital
York Road
Leeds, West Yorkshire
LS14 6UH

0113 20 63866

www.leadsth.nhs.uk

Limbless Association

Offer 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 and also offer assistance and information to carers, family members and friends.

Unit 16
Waterhouse Business Centre
2 Cromer way
Chelsford, Essex
CM1 2QE

Helpline: 0800 644 0185

www.limbless-association.org

Diabetes UK

Macleod House,
10 Parkway
London
NW1 7AA

020 7424 1000

www.diabetes.org.uk

British Limbless Ex Service Men's Association (BLESMA)

The national charity for limbless serving and ex service men and women and their dependants and widows.

185-187 high Road
Chadwell heath
Romford, Essex
RM6 6NA

020 8590 1124

www.blesma.org

REACH - Association for Children with Upper Limb Deficiency

Mrs Sue Stokes
25 High Street
Wellingborough, Northamptonshire
NN8 4JZ

01933 274 216

www.reach.org.uk

William Merritt Disabled Living Centre

St Mary's Hospital

Armley, Leeds

LS12 3QE

0113 305 5332

DVLA - Drivers Medical Group

DVLA

Swansea

SA99 1DF

0300 790 6806

www.direct.gov.uk