

## SKIN CARE

Skin care, as part of the rehab program, is important to prevent future complication with both your intact limb as well as your residual limb. Whether you are a new amputee or have been an amputee for years, skin care is always important.

### SKIN CARE OF RESIDUAL LIMB

#### Bathing:

- Daily cleansing of the residual limb using a mild, non perfumed soap, low pH soap preferably at the end of the day.
- Use lukewarm water to prevent drying, burning or irritation. (The heat of the shower can make your limb swell. A larger residual limb along with damp skin makes the limb more prone to irritation in the socket)
- Soap is a potential skin irritant. Rinse the limb well in order to prevent build up of soapy residue which can lead to irritation.
- For those on dialysis or fluid restrictions, your skin is likely to be even drier.....you may require additional moisturizing throughout the day, maybe apply when on dialysis if you remove your limb during this time.
- After bathing, follow up by drying the skin thoroughly by gently patting the skin with a clean soft towel.

#### SCAB REMOVAL:

- DO NOT cut scabs off skin
- DO NOT force scab to fall off
- Washing will ease removal of scabs and allow them to fall off naturally.

#### Moisturizing:

- DO NOT use moisturizers, creams or lotions on residual limb unless recommended by your physician. Use of moisturizer may soften the skin too much, preventing the necessary toughening of the skin in preparation for the prosthesis.
- DO NOT use baby powder or talcum

### Skin Care of Intact Limb

#### Toe Nails:

- Always check the skin daily
- Look out for ingrown nails and notify your podiatrist

#### Callous, Corns, Blisters or Sores:

- Inspect all surfaces of your feet, even between your toes.
- A quick check is better than a major skin breakdown.
- DO NOT cut callous but watch them closely for drainage
- Cover blisters with a clean bandage or padding
- Consult podiatrist for removal of calluses or care of blisters.



## **Skin Inspection of the Residual Limb**

Inspecting your skin daily is very important. Frequent skin inspections can detect a problem at the very beginning and prevent it from worsening.

- Inspect at least twice a day.
- Always check the skin daily before and after using the prosthesis.
- If your prosthesis doesn't fit well or with the impact of years of using prosthesis, there is potential to develop thickened skin or callous which is more susceptible to breakdown.
- Early wound management is a must, especially in the diabetic group. Seek professional advice, if you have a wound that doesn't heal within 2-3 days.
- Inspect the total area of your residual limb, especially along the incision line with a long-handled inspection mirror.
- While inspecting your residual limb, look out for the following:
  1. Redness
  2. Warmth
  3. Pain
  4. Swelling
  5. Drainage or pus
  6. Foul odor

## **For Diabetics:**

- Again, dry cracked and itchy skin can be an entry point for bugs and subsequent infection
- Keep your blood sugar levels under control, when your 'sugars' are high the body loses fluid and becomes dehydrated and can lead to dry skin.

**Good skin care and a well fitting prosthesis should keep your skin healthy**