

Wearing a custom-made artificial finger prosthesis

Prosthesis Clinic

Information for Patients

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Introduction

A missing finger may be from a birth deformity or the result of an injury or amputation. You have been given a custom-made artificial (prosthesis) finger to replace your missing finger. The prosthesis does not work in the same way as a normal finger, so there may be some limits as to what can be achieved.

Putting your prosthesis on correctly can take a bit of practice at first. Trained staff at the Prosthesis Clinic (a prosthetist), will show you how to attach your prosthesis at your fitting appointment. Please follow the information in this leaflet as closely as possible to maintain the appearance and use of your prosthesis.

Fitting your prosthesis

- Before attaching your prosthesis, make sure your hands and the prosthesis are clean and dry.
- Your prosthesis is held in place by creating a vacuum. To get a good hold it is important to create this vacuum correctly.
- By wetting the inside surface of the prosthesis you should be able to slide it over the end of your finger and turn into the correct position.
- Once in position squeeze out any excess water or air under the silicone. Be careful not to pull at/ or hold onto the thin edges of the sleeve as they can tear.
- If a ring is being used to hide the fitting edge, this will need to be placed onto the finger before fitting the prosthesis. Once positioned, the ring can be bought forward to sit over the finishing edge.
- Finally, you may use a cotton bud to put some Vaseline or edge glue (adhesive) underneath the finishing edge, which will help to hide this.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Removing your prosthesis

Turning your prosthesis will help to break the vacuum created allowing you to remove it.

Do not pull from the thin edges as they will tear.

When can I wear my prosthesis?

You will be advised on how and when to wear your prosthesis at your fitting appointment. This will mostly be determined by your needs. For example, you may choose to only wear your prosthesis on social occasions or wear it for longer times every day.

We advise that you do not sleep in your prosthesis as this is an opportunity to allow the skin to breathe.

Can I wear my prosthesis for sporting activities?

The prosthesis may be worn for most sporting activities, although we suggest removing it to avoid loss or damage.

Your prosthesis is made from a material called silicone. You may find that the chemicals in swimming pools may bleach the this over time. If you go swimming you will need to rinse the prosthesis in clean water as soon as possible once you are out of the pool.

Cleaning your prosthesis

It is important to clean your prosthesis daily. If not kept clean, bacteria can grow within the silicone causing it to smell, change colour and reduce the quality of the material:

- Carefully clean your prosthesis with a solution of warm water and scent free, colour free soap, using gauze or a very soft toothbrush. Do not rub it aggressively.
- Extra care should be taken at the fine edges to prevent tearing, and the external surface so you do not remove any of the surface colour.
- Rinse clean and pat dry with a tissue or towel.

Cigarette smoke and strong chemicals will discolour your prosthesis quickly, please try to avoid contact with these.

Can I use nail polish on the nail of the prosthesis?

You can use nail polish on the acrylic nail of your prosthesis if you wish to.

Acetone-free nail polish remover should be used and care should be taken not to get this on the silicone of the prosthesis. Cotton buds should be used for this to control the remover fluid.

Where should I keep my prosthesis when I'm not wearing it?

Make sure that your prosthesis is clean and dry before storing it.

Store in a dry container or drawer away from direct sunlight and heat sources. Sunlight can affect the colour of the silicone and heat (such as from radiators) can cause the fine edges of the prosthesis to curl.

Will I have any follow-up appointments?

After you have been fitted with a new finger you will be asked to come back to clinic to check the fit and see how you are managing. You can use this time to ask any more questions you may have.

If everything is fine you will be reviewed once every 18 to 24 months

How long will my prosthesis last?

A prosthesis can vary in life span due to many factors. Your prosthetist will be able to advise you when they think you are in need of a new one. A replacement finger prosthesis will be custom-made for you when needed.

What should I look out for?

If you have persistent soreness, swelling or redness around the fitting surface, stop wearing your prosthesis and contact the prosthetics clinic as soon as possible.

What should I do if I have a problem?

If you have any problems with your prosthesis, please contact the service on the telephone numbers below for help and advice (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5.30pm):

Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery: 0116 258 5671

Maxillofacial Laboratory/ Prosthesis Clinic: 0116 258 5255

