

What to Expect: the Prosthetic Casting and Fitting Process

If you meet the Prosthetic Readiness Guidelines and the Rehab Team agrees that you are ready for an artificial limb, you will be booked for an Assessment and Casting appointment at Northland Prosthetics. Remember, although your Rehab Team is here to train and guide you, you play the biggest role in your prosthetic success! Look for this symbol to indicate key points for you to remember.



Pre-shaping and shrinking your limb is a very important step! Be sure to continue to wrap your residual limb or use a shrinker sock consistently in the weeks before your casting appointment and between your casting and your fitting.

Casting

* You may want to bring a pair of shorts to your casting appointment in order for the Prosthetist to easily access your residual limb for casting.

At your first appointment, your Prosthesist will assess your residual limb and talk to you about the activities that you would like to use your prosthesis for. The Prosthetist will take measurements of your limb and will take an impression of its shape using plaster of paris or a 3D digital image capture. This mold will be used to make your custom moulded prosthetic socket. Your next appointment will be your fitting.

Fitting

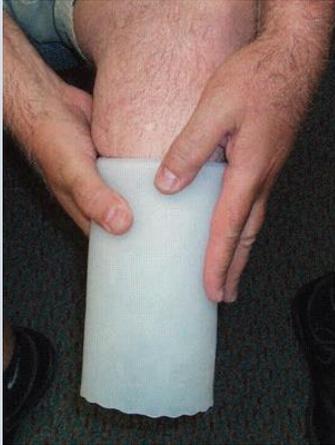
About 10-14 days after your casting appointment, you will be fit with your first preparatory prosthesis. A preparatory prosthesis is a prosthesis made with a thick plastic socket. Being able to see through the clear plastic socket helps your Prosthetist to check the fit, and the plastic can easily be adjusted by the Prosthetist to improve the fit.



Remember to bring a good pair of running shoes to your fitting appointment. It is not safe to walk on a prosthetic leg without shoes on both feet.

At your fitting, your Prosthetist will teach you how to put your prosthesis on and how to keep it clean. Using a cushion gel liner and a suction suspension sleeve is common. If you use this system, follow these steps for putting your prosthesis on.

Putting on a Below-Knee Prosthesis with a Cushion Gel Liner and Suction Suspension Sleeve



Step 1:

Roll the gel liner on the residual limb, being sure not to trap any air inside. This is a very important step! Trapped air inside your liner can cause skin breakdown.



Step 2:

Push your limb into the socket. You may need to stand and gently push your limb into the prosthesis.



Step 3:

Once the limb is all the way into the socket, roll the outer suspension sleeve up as high as possible on your thigh. Make sure that there is at least 3-4 inches of skin contact with the sleeve, above the level of the prosthetic liner.

First Steps and Gait Training

Once your socket has been properly fit, your Prosthetist will align it. A properly aligned prosthesis is an important part of your gait training. At this appointment, your Prosthetist will guide you through your first steps on your prosthesis. Further gait training is needed for all new amputees and is typically done through the amputee rehabilitation program at St. Joseph's Hospital.



What's Next? More Fittings!

You will see your Prosthetist when your socket needs adjustment. It will need adjusting as you get used to wearing it more often, and it will need to be adjusted to accommodate your limb as it continues to change shape.

Before you were casted for your preparatory prosthesis, you used tensor bandages and shrinker socks to shrink the size of your limb and to shape it properly. Wearing a prosthesis causes even more change in limb size and shape, as muscles start to atrophy and swelling is pushed out of your limb. It's normal for your limb to change in size and shape as you wear your prosthesis. These pictures show normal limb shrinkage over one year.





It is crucial to continue to manage your limb volume when not wearing your prosthesis. This means tensor bandaging or wearing a shrinker sock whenever your prosthesis is not being worn for at least two years. If swelling is not controlled when the prosthesis is off, you may not be able to get the prosthesis back on.

When your Prosthetist determines that there has been a significant amount of change in your limb, and your socket no longer fits well, you will be fit with a new preparatory prosthesis. Once your limb size and shape stabilize, your Prosthetist will fabricate a lighter and more durable definitive prosthesis.