



Belfast Health and
Social Care Trust

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Advice for Patients After an Amputation

After an amputation (removal) of part of your leg it can be a very stressful time for you and your family.

This leaflet will provide you with some information about what to expect in rehabilitation and convalescence over the next few months.

Stump Pain:

After an amputation it is very important to have adequate pain relief. This will help you to maintain a good range of movement in your stump (remaining part of limb) and allow you to start building strength in your leg again. You may experience discomfort in the stump after surgery, however the acute pain team will assist the ward staff to reduce the pain as much as possible.

Phantom Pain/Sensation:

After amputation it is very common to feel that the absent foot is still there. You may have pain, experience tingling, numbness, warmth, coldness, heaviness or burning. If this is very painful or troublesome it is important to let a member of staff know, so that medication can be prescribed.

Stump Care:

A nurse will regularly change the wound dressing while in hospital. Sometimes an antibiotic will be required to help healing. After a week, if the wound is healing, you may be given a stump stocking to support the stump. You should continue to wear this during the day until you are seen by the consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine at Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast.

Coping with Amputation

Coping with amputation can be hard. If you're finding it difficult please let a member of staff know.

Meet the Team

Physiotherapist

The physiotherapist on the ward will help you keep the muscle strength in your arms and legs after your operation. They will instruct you on an exercise programme to help with your movement, muscle strength, your balance and to help you get active again.

Podiatrist

The podiatrist will advise you on the importance of looking after your remaining foot and what shoes to wear for protection. It is important to check your foot every day and keep the skin clean and well moisturised. Any cuts, bleeding, bruises or hard skin should be dealt with promptly by a podiatrist or your doctor or nurse. Wear well-fitting shoes that don't squeeze your toes and fit securely. The hospital podiatrist or your GP can arrange for you to see a podiatrist in your local community if you require help with your foot care.

Occupational Therapist

The occupational therapist (OT) will discuss short and long term wheelchair needs with you and help you to arrange a wheelchair for discharge. A wheelchair and pressure cushion will be provided for ward use and the OT will instruct/ practice safe transfer methods.

The suitability of your home will be considered by the therapist. Initially, you will not be able to use stairs and may need to have a bed and commode downstairs. Onward referral will be made to community OT as appropriate.

Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine

You will be seen by a Rehabilitation Medicine Consultant (specialist in rehabilitation) as an inpatient or/and outpatient. She will advise on the best setting for your convalescence and rehabilitation and also discuss pain relief and other medical issues with you. It may not always be possible to go home directly from hospital.

You will be called to the Amputation Rehabilitation Centre at Musgrave Park Hospital in 6-8 weeks for an initial outpatient assessment.

Once seen as an outpatient, you may be offered inpatient or outpatient rehabilitation at Musgrave Park Hospital to improve your ability to move from one surface to another (transfer) or walk with an artificial leg.

Not everyone will be able to use an artificial limb but many people can learn to transfer from bed to chair, chair to wheelchair or commode and wheelchair to car using a sliding board.

Discharge from hospital

When you no longer require acute inpatient treatment you will be transferred to an alternative care setting or discharged home. Many patients find they need support to return home safely: the social worker, working alongside the ward team can provide a professional assessment of your health and social care needs. There can be a range of appropriate options eg. home-based community services, further rehabilitation in your Trust area or transfer to your local hospital. The ward social worker can assist you and your family to plan for your return home, and can help you to access a range of community supports and services.