



## **A Patient Guide**

The Amputee Rehabilitation Centre  
Regional Disablement Services

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to the Amputee Rehabilitation Centre at Musgrave Park Hospital. As part of Regional Disablement Services we aim to provide a high quality service to patients across Northern Ireland who have had an amputation of a limb.

We hope this patient information guide will help you with some of the questions you may have about your appointment at the Amputee Rehabilitation Centre. It will also introduce you to the team of people you will meet, the different stages of treatment you will go through, and some useful contact numbers for counselling services and support groups.

## **Who uses this service?**

You may not be aware that someone you have met or seen in the past has had an amputation; often it is not obvious. People who have an artificial limb tend to go about their business in an everyday fashion.

In Northern Ireland there are around 1,900 people who have had amputations and approximately 150 new people are referred to the Amputee Rehabilitation Centre Musgrave Park Hospital each year. Most of these people have had a lower limb (leg) amputation.

## The Prosthetic/Amputee Rehabilitation Team

The people you will meet include:

- The Consultant is a doctor specialising in Rehabilitation Medicine
- The Prosthetist is responsible for casting and measuring you and for creating and fitting your artificial limb (prosthesis).
- The Physiotherapist will supervise your walking training and instruct you on how to use your artificial limb.
- The Occupational Therapist will assess your abilities in tasks such as personal care, getting on/off the toilet, domestic duties, wheelchair skills and your home situation.
- The Clinical Psychologist will assess and treat those who require assistance in adapting to their amputation.

- Nurses provide care in the amputee ward during your prosthetic rehabilitation. (Not everyone requires inpatient care and some can have rehabilitation as outpatients).
- The Healthcare Assistant will look after your general comfort and wellbeing in the Amputee Rehabilitation Centre.
- The Social Worker will provide advice about housing and benefits. It may be necessary for the statutory authorities to provide care for you at home and the Social Worker can help arrange this.
- The Podiatrist will provide advice and foot care for lower limb amputees.
- The Ward Doctor will supervise your medical care in the Ward.

## HOW TO GET HERE

### By Car

Musgrave Park Hospital is accessible from the M1 or M2 motorways.

From the M1, take Exit 2, signed Outer Ring (A55) Balmoral. Follow the A55 to the hospital entrance which is on the right, just before the railway bridge.

From the M2 and M3, take the Westlink A12 (following signs for The West - The South) to join the M1. Take Exit 2 as above.

From the Lisburn Road or Balmoral Avenue, take the A55 Outer Ring (M1). Follow the road underneath the railway bridge and the hospital entrance is on the left.

### Trains

Balmoral train station is next to the hospital entrance. (Approximately 0.6 miles from the Amputee Rehabilitation Centre). Check train and bus times with Translink: Tel: 028 9066 6630

## **On Foot**

Metro Bus routes 92 and 92B travel to and from Musgrave Park Hospital from Belfast City Centre with a number of stops around the site.

## **Amputee Multidisciplinary Assessment**

The Consultant and other members of the team will help you decide and advise if you are ready to proceed with limb fitting.

It is important to realise that not all patients who have an amputation are fitted with an artificial limb. This could be because of general poor body strength, poor balance and other medical conditions. This will be fully discussed with you at your initial assessment. Some patients benefit from focused rehabilitation to learn how to move from bed to chair without a prosthesis.

If you are to receive an artificial limb, the team will discuss which type of limb is most suitable for you. A number of factors will be taken into account, such as: age, weight, physical build, agility, lifestyle and occupation.

Not everyone is ready for measurements to be taken at their initial visit. If your wound has not yet healed enough or if you have not advanced enough in your muscle strengthening then a further review appointment will be arranged. Advice will be given on the care required for your wound and residual limb, and on exercises you must do to increase your strength and mobility.

## **Measuring up for a limb**

The Prosthetist takes measurements and a plaster cast of your residual limb. If you have a lower limb amputation you should bring a pair of shoes with you on your first visit

A low-heeled shoe with either lace or strap fastening is preferred.

If you are unable to wear a shoe on your remaining foot at this time, bring the shoe that you expect to wear on your new limb with you anyway.

Your first visit usually lasts about one hour and 30 minutes.

### **First Fitting**

This takes place approximately 2 weeks after your cast and measurements have been taken. If you have been admitted to the ward the first fitting is generally done on the first day at your physiotherapy session.

Your prosthesis will have been made using the measures and cast taken at the previous appointment. The socket which your residual limb fits into is custom made and specifically shaped to support your weight.

The Limb will be in its skeletal form, all components used to build the limb will be visible. This allows any adjustments during walking training to be easily made.

Before discharge (if desired) the limb will be covered with cosmetic foam in order to make it appear similar in shape and size to your sound limb.

## Physiotherapy

After your new artificial limb has been fitted you will begin your physiotherapy. This includes learning how to put the limb on, take it off, and how to balance. Advice is provided on exercises to regain your strength and improve your mobility.

Walking will begin within the parallel bars and then progress to a walking aid such as a frame or sticks. We hope that by the end of your training you will be able to manage stairs, kerbs and uneven surfaces outside.

As a rough guideline you should expect to attend for 4 weeks but everybody is different and some may take longer than others.



## **The Amputee Ward - Withers 1B**

For the majority of new patients prosthetic rehabilitation is provided as an inpatient. This involves admission to the Ward for an average of 4 weeks, or longer if required. Weekend home leave is encouraged but you must arrange your own transport.

The Ward is in the Withers Orthopaedic Unit. There is a full complement of nurses who will provide the care you need. Please bring with you an accurate record of all the medicines you are taking.

You should bring your everyday clothes to wear during the daytime.

You should be seen by a podiatrist on at least one occasion during admission.

A hospital bus will take you to the Amputee Rehabilitation Centre for your daily treatment.

There is careful planning for your discharge home at the completion of your rehabilitation. The Occupational Therapist and Social Worker will help you sort out any problems at home.

## **Transport to the Amputee Rehabilitation Centre**

Transport will be provided, if necessary, for your admission and discharge from hospital following your inpatient stay for prosthetic rehabilitation.

However, hospital transport cannot be provided for weekend leave during your inpatient stay and you must make your own arrangements for this.

For subsequent visits to the Amputee Rehabilitation Centre transport can only be provided if you cannot use public transport, you are not in receipt of Disabled Living Allowance Mobility Component and you cannot make arrangements for family or friends to bring you.

If you request transport you will be asked to complete a form to tell us what benefits you get.

Certain benefits will allow you to claim back travel expenses at public transport rate or a higher rate if you require an attendant to assist you.

## **Return visits to the Amputee Rehabilitation Centre**

6-8 weeks after discharge from physiotherapy you will be reviewed by your Prosthetist and the Consultant. They will check the fit of your prosthesis and your progress with it.

You will then have check-up appointments every few months. Adjustments or new sockets may be required as the shape of your residual limb changes. Fewer attendances are necessary as time goes on.

Your overall progress is reviewed with regard to your amputation, pain control, walking ability, medical conditions, psychological adjustment, housing, driving, work intentions etc.

## **Additional Support**

Over the next few pages you will be provided with several useful numbers and support group contact details.

## Useful telephone numbers

### **Western Health and Social Care Trust HQ**

Tel: 028 7134 5171

[www.westeritrust.hscni.net](http://www.westeritrust.hscni.net)

### **Southern Health and Social Care Trust HQ**

Tel: 028 3833 4444

Email: [corporate.hq@southerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:corporate.hq@southerntrust.hscni.net)

[www.southerntrust.hscni.net](http://www.southerntrust.hscni.net)

### **Northern Health and Social Care Trust HQ**

Tel: 028 2563 3712

Email: [info@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:info@northerntrust.hscni.net)

[www.northerntrust.hscni.net](http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net)

### **Belfast Health and Social Care Trust HQ**

Tel: 028 9004 0100

Email: [info@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:info@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

[www.belfasttrust.hscni.net](http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net)

### **South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust HQ**

Tel: 028 9055 3100

Email: [public.relations@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:public.relations@setrust.hscni.net)

[www.setrust.hscni.net](http://www.setrust.hscni.net)

## Support Groups

### Prosthetic User Forum - Northern Ireland

This is “A Forum for Users of Artificial Limbs”.

The Prosthetic User Forum was set up in 2002 as the result of a survey entitled ‘Listening to Patients’.

The User Forum meet quarterly and aim to:

Represent you or your child or relative

Voice your concerns

Influence the development of services

Offer you support.

**To become part of the Prosthetic User Forum or for further details on the work that the Group carries out, please contact our Reception on 028 9504 1747.**

### Limbless Association

Provides information, advice and support for people of all ages who are without one or more limbs, and encouragement to prospective amputees, carers and those already trying to cope with limb loss or deficiency.

Roehampton Rehabilitation Centre

Roehampton Lane

London

SW15 5PR

Tel: 020 8788 1777

[www.limbless-association.org](http://www.limbless-association.org)

## **Limbless Support N.I.**

This group of established patients who arrange activities and social events for amputees in Northern Ireland.

## **Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland**

DVLNI Central Office  
County Hall  
Castlerock Road  
Coleraine  
Tel: 0845 402 4000 (9.15am – 4.00pm)  
Fax: 028 7034 1398  
[www.dvlni.gov.uk](http://www.dvlni.gov.uk)

## **Phab NI**

Committed to providing quality services to young people with and without disabilities.

Phab NI Independent Living  
Jennymount Business Park  
3 Jennymount Court  
North Derby Street  
Belfast  
BT15 3HN  
Tel: 028 9050 4800  
Fax: 028 9075 4321  
Email: [info@phabni.org](mailto:info@phabni.org)

## Contact Details

Musgrave Park Hospital  
(main switchboard) 028 90902000

Regional Disablement Services  
Reception / Prosthetic Helpline - 028 9504 1747

Physiotherapy Advice Line 028 9615 2279

Occupational Therapy 028 9615 2759

Consultant's Secretary 028 9504 7239

Withers Ward 1B 028 9504 1783

## Amputee Rehabilitation Centre Opening Times:

Monday- Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm

Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm

Emergency Repair Clinic - 028 9504 1747



**Amputee Rehabilitation Centre  
Regional Disablement Services  
Musgrave Park Hospital  
Stockman's Lane  
Belfast BT9 7JB**