

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 from 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. There may be some limits as to what you can do with the finger.

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 to help keep your prosthesis long lasting and looking new.

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.
- You must wet the inside surface of the prosthesis. This should help to slide it over the end of your finger. Then turn it into the correct position.
- Once in place 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. This can cause them to tear.
- If you are using a ring to hide the fitting edge, you will need to put this on your finger before fitting the prosthesis. When prosthesis is on, you can bring the ring 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. This will help hide the edges.

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

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

Removing your prosthesis

You can turn your prosthesis to help break the vacuum. This will let you remove it.

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

When can I wear my prosthesis?

We will advise you on how and when to wear your prosthesis at your fitting appointment. This will be based on your needs. For example, you may choose to only wear your prosthesis on social gatherings or wear it for longer times every day.

We advise that you do not sleep in your prosthesis. You need to give your skin a break from the prosthesis.

Can I wear my prosthesis for sporting activities?

The prosthesis may be worn for most sporting activities. We do 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 it 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

You must clean your prosthesis daily. Bacteria can grow within the silicone causing it to smell, change colour and reduce the quality of the material. You must:

- carefully clean your prosthesis with a solution of warm water and scent free, colour free soap. Use a gauze or a very soft toothbrush to clean. Do not rub harshly.
- take extra care 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. 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.

You should use acetone-free nail polish remover to remove the nail polish. Try not to get this on the silicone of the prosthesis. Use cotton buds to control the remover fluid.

Where should I keep my prosthesis when I am 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 soreness, swelling or redness around the fitting surface, stop wearing your prosthesis and contact the prosthetics clinic right away.

What should I do if I have a problem?

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

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery: **0116 258 5671**

Maxillofacial Laboratory/ Prosthesis Clinic: **0116 258 5255**

