

Skin Observation Guidelines for Prosthetic Users



For individuals with limb loss, maintaining the integrity of your skin is vital to health and wellness. Your new prosthesis is an important new part of your body. To ensure you are wearing it properly and safely, check your skin often.

If you have decreased feeling in your limb due to scar tissue, neuropathy, or grafting, checking your skin often will be the key to your prosthetic success.



Skin should appear even in color over entire limb. Pinkness on soft areas of limb that fades in less than 30 seconds after removing prosthesis is normal.

Redness, abrasions, pain and callouses on skin are signs of increased pressure or movement in the prosthesis. Any redness or breakdown over a boney area is cause for concern.

Redness at the bottom end of bone or limb or on bottom edge of knee cap are signs you may need to add a sock, especially if this is accompanied by feeling loose in the socket. If the abnormal pressures cannot be resolved with socks, call your prosthetist to evaluate your prosthetic fit. Refer to *Volume Management Guide* for more information on use of prosthetic socks.

Purplish areas on skin indicate lack of contact. You may also feel a burning or itching feeling over this area. Left unresolved, these areas can turn into water blisters. Possible causes can be too many socks, liner donned with air bubbles, not being able to get down to bottom of prosthesis and liner slipping (usually from perspiration or lotions).

Red streaking across limb is usually indicative of liner pinching the skin. When donning liner, ensure it is rolled onto limb. If the liner is lifted and stretched over an area red streaking will appear.

Red, scaly, sometimes circular, itchy areas on skin are typical of fungal infections, similar to athlete's foot. Talk to your prosthetist or physician.

Water blisters. Water blisters indicate a lack of contact. Most commonly water blisters may appear on the bottom of your leg if 1) you are not fully to the bottom of your socket 2) your liner was put on with air bubbles in it or 3) you have slipped out of your liner because of sweating or wearing lotions.

Water blisters may also appear around folded tissues or deep scar lines, and socket trimlines. Consult with your prosthetist to manage. On a case by case basis, you may still be able to wear your prosthesis. It is important to keep the blister covered with a gauze when wearing the liner or prosthesis. Check the bandage often, change at least once per day or when it becomes soiled.

For more healthy tips, please contact POSI today.