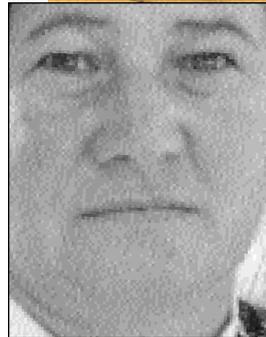
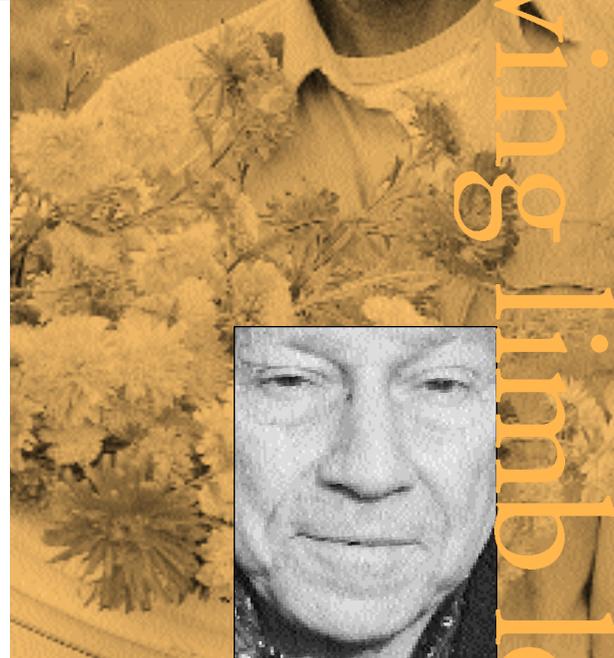


RESOURCES

INFECTION PREVENTION



surviving limb loss

SURVIVING LIMB LOSS

- Amputation Surgery
- Pain After Amputation
- Wrapping Your Residual Limb
- Infection Prevention
- Emotions After Limb Loss
- Prosthetics
- Physical Rehabilitation
- Getting Back to Work
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Information for Families



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INFECTION PREVENTION

While the wound of your amputation surgery is healing, you are at risk of getting an infection. An infection can cause pain, fever, the need for more medical treatment, or even another surgery. An uncontrolled infection can lead to death. You need to learn how to prevent and treat infections. The more you learn now, the better prepared you will be to take care of yourself in the future.



INFECTION PREVENTION

Even after you leave the hospital, you will need to pay special attention to keeping your residual limb clean. Because it will be held tightly inside the socket of your prosthesis, your limb will be prone to sores and infections. In or out of the hospital, if you suspect that you are getting an infection, treat it immediately, or ask for help. Act quickly, before a small irritation becomes a serious problem.

Preventing infections.

In the hospital, it is primarily the responsibility of doctors and nurses to take care of your wound. Ask questions about what they are doing and why; this is your right and your responsibility.

PREVENTION GUIDELINES

The best approach is to prevent infection by following these guidelines:

- Wash your hands before you clean a wound. Dry your hands in the air, not on a towel.
- Clean a wound 2-4 times each day with clean, preferably boiled, water.
- Each time you clean a wound, put a clean bandage on it.



Wash your hands before you clean a wound or change a bandage.

Keep your residual limb and wound clean.

- Be gentle when you are cleaning a wound. Too much force will make it worse.
- Do not use antiseptic agents (medicines which prevent infection) such as iodine, hydrogen peroxide, or Betadine on healing wounds. Antiseptics kill germs but will also slow the healing.

Disinfect everything that comes into contact with a wound.

- Wash everything with soap and water. Dry in the air, not with a towel.
- Steam or boil objects for 20 minutes.
- Store cleaned objects in a disinfected pot or jar or container with lid.
- When air drying bandages in the sun, protect them from dust and insects.

The best bandage is one that keeps the wound moist and the surrounding skin dry. If the area of the bandage over the wound is dry, it may stick to the fluid from the wound. When the bandage is removed, the wound may tear and reopen. To keep it moist, put petroleum jelly (i.e., Vaseline®) on clean gauze and cover the wound.

Eat well and drink plenty of water to strengthen your body's power to heal itself.

Learn as much as you can about how to take care of yourself.



If you are taking antibiotics, make sure you take the full dosage. You will usually take a few pills each day for 10-14 days. If a doctor gave them to you, follow the doctor's instructions.



Check the skin of your residual limb every day to look for red spots, blisters or other signs of infection. If you see signs of infection, even small ones, take action.

SIGNS OF INFECTION

- "Hot" area around the wound
- Redness, swelling, or pain near the wound
- Pus
- Red lines above the wound
- Increase in pain
- Fever

TREATMENT

- Clean the wound and put on a clean bandage 4 times per day.
- Use boiled water, gently squirting the water with a syringe or suction bulb.
- Never try to close an infected wound with stitches or butterfly bandages.
- Take another complete round of antibiotics.

SIGNS OF SERIOUS INFECTION

- Bad smell from the wound area
- Swollen glands in neck, groin, or armpits
- Brown or gray, often bad-smelling liquid around the wound (yellow liquid is OK; clear is good)
- Abnormally black skin or tissue around the wound (gangrene)

TAKE ACTION IMMEDIATELY

If you see signs of serious infection, you need to see a doctor. This is an emergency! Gangrene is a sign that tissue is dying. The infection could spread quickly, causing you to need surgery again. There is a chance that the gangrene could spread throughout your body and kill you.