
Discharge Instructions: Wrapping Your Stump Below the Knee

Wrapping your stump keeps the limb from swelling. And it shapes it so that it fits more comfortably in a prosthesis. You'll probably need to keep your limb wrapped (or keep it in a "shrinker sock") at all times—except when you bathe or wear a prosthesis. If it's hard for you to wrap the limb yourself, have someone wrap it for you. You may want to wrap it before you put on your underclothes.

General guidelines

- Use 1 or 2 clean 4-inch elastic bandages each day. You may want to sew them together end to end.
- Sit on the edge of a firm bed or chair. As you wrap, keep your knee extended on a stump board or chair of the same height.
- Always wrap in a diagonal direction. Wrapping straight across the limb can cut off the blood supply.
- Keep the tension greatest at the end of the limb. Gradually reduce the tension as you work up the lower leg.
- Make sure there are at least 2 layers of bandage and that no layer directly overlaps another. Keep the bandage free of wrinkles and creases.
- Be sure there is no puckering or bulging of the skin. Check to make sure that all the skin below the knee is covered. Don't cover the kneecap.
- Rewrap the limb every 4 to 6 hours, or if the bandage starts to slip or feel loose.
- Tingling or throbbing anywhere in the limb may be a sign that the tension is too tight. Rewrap the bandage, using less tension.

Step 1

- Hold the bandage in one hand with the roll facing up and toward you.
- With the other hand, hold the end of the bandage against the front of the limb, just below the knee.
- Slowly unroll the bandage diagonally down the front of the lower leg to the inside corner of the limb.

Step 2

- Wrap the bandage over the inside corner of the limb. Give it a slight tug so that it stays firmly against the skin.
- Bring the bandage around the back of the limb to the outside of the lower leg.

- Wrap diagonally up the lower leg toward the knee. Cross over the end of the bandage to hold it in place.

Step 3

- Go around the back of the lower leg. Bring the bandage to the front on the outside, just below the knee.
- Wrap diagonally down the front of the lower leg to the inside of the limb.

Step 4

- Bring the bandage around the back of the limb and forward over the outside corner. Give the bandage another gentle tug to keep it firmly against the skin.
- Wrap diagonally up the front of the lower leg.

Step 5

- Go around to the back of the limb and come to the front again below the knee.
- Wrap diagonally down the front of the lower leg toward the inside corner of the limb.
- Repeat steps 2 through 4 until all the skin below the knee is totally covered.

Step 6

- To keep the bandage from slipping, bring it up one side of the knee, around the back of the thigh, and down the other side of the knee.
- Then wrap diagonally down and around the lower leg to the end of the bandage.
- Attach the end of the bandage to the layer below it with paper tape. Don't use safety pins or clips.

Follow-up care

Make a follow-up appointment with your healthcare provider, or as advised.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these:

- Redness at the end of the stump that does not go away
- Bad odor from the stump
- Swelling or increasing pain at the end of the stump
- More bleeding than usual or discharge from the stump
- Stump that has a chalky white or blackish color