PROSTHETIC SOCKS: PATIENT HANDOUT
Managing Daily Limb Changes

What Factors Affect Limb Volume?¹⁻⁵

• General Factors
  o Biological sex (e.g., menstrual cycle); water retention (e.g., salt intake, hydration); physical activity level (↑ activity = ↓ volume); sweating; body composition

• Health-related Factors
  o Medications; circulation (better circulation = more stable volume); kidney dysfunction

• Amputation-related Factors
  o Time since amputation (↑ time = ↓ volume if your weight stays the same)
    ▪ Biggest ↓ in first 6 months after amputation

• Prosthesis-related Factors
  o Nighttime shrinker use ↓ volume
  o Vacuum suspension ↓ volume

Prosthetic Socks⁶⁻⁷

• Manage volume change
• Come in different sizes (narrow/wide, long/short)
• Come in different ply
  o Ply = number of threads woven together when the sock is made
    ▪ 3-ply ≠ 3x thicker than 1-ply

What Happens if Socks are not Used?

• Discomfort
• Skin Issues
• Pain
• Feeling unstable in socket
• Reliance on good side

When Should You Add a Sock?

• You feel…
  o Your socket rotating when standing
  o Sudden low back or hip pain
    ▪ Prosthesis may be too short
  o “Wobble” when standing/walking
  o Increased pressure on the bottom of your limb or in your groin

• You see…
  o Increased gapping
    ▪ Around knee (below-knee)
    ▪ At side of hip (above-knee)
  o Red areas when you take off leg
    ▪ On end of your shin bone
    ▪ On end of your thigh bone
When Should You Add a Sock?

How Many is Too Many?
- If you feel...
  - Sudden low back or hip pain
    - Prosthesis may be too tall
  - You are catching your toes
- If you cannot...
  - Put on your prosthesis at all
  - Fully get into your socket

When to Remove Socks?
- Above-knee prosthesis
  - Lack of pressure on your sit bone
- Below-knee prosthesis
  - Kneecap sits fully outside of socket
  - Excessive pressure around knee

Beat the Heat!
- Take it off!
- Use wicking sheaths or athletic socks
- Use antiperspirant (not deodorant; unscented; check with your prosthetist first)
  - Apply at night to ↓ daytime sweat

When Should You See Your Prosthetist?
- If you are regularly needing 8+ ply of sock
- If you can’t find a comfortable amount of sock: it feels like it’s either too much or too little
- If you have long-lasting redness (>30 minutes) after taking off your prosthesis
- If your consumables (socks, liners) are showing signs of wear
- Every 6 months at a minimum for your safety
Tips & Tricks

- Half socks (made by cutting with scissors)
  - Top half (A):
    - Use above seal of seal-in liners
    - Use to snug up top of socket and limit how far down you go into the socket
  - Bottom half (B):
    - Use to snug up fit of bottom half of socket
    - Use if you feel wobbly in your socket even though it feels snug around your knee

- The Powder Test
  - Add a little baby powder into the bottom of the socket. Put on your socks and your prosthesis and walk for 1-2 minutes. Then remove your prosthesis. If the majority of the powder remains in the bottom of the socket, you are not sitting all the way into your prosthesis and should reduce your sock ply.
    - Note: do not use this test if you have a vacuum pump in your prosthesis as the powder may lead to a clog.

Why is Sock Management So Important? 8-10

- Socket fit is the single most important issue related to successful prosthesis use.
- Change in limb size and shape affects how your prosthesis fits, and can cause discomfort, skin issues, & reduce how stable you feel when walking.

Does Sock Management Apply to Me?

- Most people with prostheses need to add socks later in the day, especially on more active days.

This document was created based on the below references that are available online through PubMed at https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/ (note: some references require a fee to access):