

Shrinkers

A shrinker may be used initially to prepare your residual limb for a prosthesis, but it may also be used long-term to manage limb volume to ensure proper fit of your prosthesis. It is worn whenever you are not wearing your prosthesis, unless otherwise directed by your prosthetist. The shrinker is a tight, elastic stocking that compresses the residual limb.

The purpose of the shrinker is to:

- Reduce the amount of fluid or swelling in the limb
- Keep the residual limb at a more consistent volume
- “Shape” the residual limb after an amputation, so that it becomes a more ideal shape and size to fit into a prosthesis

Use

Generally, the following steps should be taken to apply the shrinker to your limb:

1. Using both hands, scrunch down the shrinker and stretch the opening.
2. Pull the shrinker up on the limb. Below knee shrinkers should extend past the knee. Above knee shrinkers should be worn with the shorter side on the inside and the belt secured to prevent the shrinker from rolling down.
3. The shrinker should be very snug. If your limb is still healing, it may be difficult to put on initially. It may be easier to put on with assistance from another person. If you find it too difficult, a donning aid may be obtained from your prosthetist to assist you with this.
4. Make sure the shrinker is pulled taut with no wrinkles. It must be pulled up all the way at all times. It is best to take the shrinker off a few times throughout the day, reposition it, and pull it back on.
5. Wear the shrinker at all times, day and night, except when you are bathing or when wearing your prosthesis.
6. Do not lie with pillows underneath your residual limb. Try to sit and lie with your leg straight to prevent muscle tightness or contractures.

Care and Maintenance

Two shrinkers were likely provided to you so that you may alternate their use on a daily basis for hygiene purposes. The shrinker should be cleaned daily after use. Follow the manufacturer's directions to clean the shrinker. Most recommend hand- or machine-washing on low setting with a mild soap. Machine-dry low or hang to dry.

Whenever cleaning the shrinkers, you should inspect them for damage, such as holes, fraying, or tearing, that may occur with use. If you find these, you should contact your prosthetist, as they may need to be replaced. A visit with

your physician to obtain a prescription may be necessary for such services.

Make An Appointment

[651-290-8707](tel:651-290-8707)

Refer a Patient

[651-325-2200](tel:651-325-2200)

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](tel:651-229-3890).