

LOWER LIMB AMPUTATION SURGERY

LOWER LIMB AMPUTATION IN TASMANIA

There are many reasons for amputation surgery, including:

- The blood supply to your foot or leg is no longer enough to keep it healthy.
- A wound or ulcer on your foot or leg is not getting better with medicine or dressings.
- An infection or disease in your foot or leg is not getting better with treatment.
- Accidents, burns, cancer or deformity of your foot or leg.

Amputation surgery is life changing. The Tasmanian Health Service (THS) team is committed to supporting you on your journey.

Before surgery

If your surgery is planned, the healthcare team will speak with you before surgery about:

- Surgery and what to expect afterwards.
- Early mobility and rehabilitation.
- Emotional health and well-being.
- Any home changes or modifications required.
- Managing at home (moving around, personal care and home life).

The team can put you in contact with other support services, including:

- Aboriginal Health
- Refugee Health
- Counselling
- Peer support (Speaking to a trained volunteer who has experienced amputation).

If amputation surgery happens suddenly, there may not be time to speak with your healthcare team beforehand.

The THS is committed to providing information and support as soon as possible after surgery.

After surgery

The part of your limb that is still there after surgery is sometimes called a 'residual limb', 'residuum', or 'stump'.



Wound and residual limb care

Your residual limb will have wound dressings and bandages. These keep your wound clean and stop the residuum from swelling. A long drain tube will be in place to help your wound heal.

Access general information videos by Tasmanian Health Professionals at www.health.tas.gov.au/amputation



Pain management

It is important to tell the health care team if you are in pain. Pain in your wound or limb is common following surgery. Pain should improve as your wound heals. Your medical team may prescribe medication to manage pain.

Some people experience phantom pain or phantom sensation.

Phantom pain can feel like shooting pain, cramping, burning or a mild electric shock. The pain feels like it's within the part of body that's no longer there. For example, a burning feeling in the foot that has been amputated. Phantom pain can be managed. It often lessens over time.

Phantom sensation is the feeling of the limb still being there, even after the amputation. Phantom sensations are often described as pins and needles, tingling and itching. Many people experience phantom sensations and they are often present at night. Because of this, it is important to take care when getting out of bed at night to go the bathroom.



Mobility

You will learn how to move in and out of bed. You will begin an exercise program and wheelchair training. A wheelchair will become your main way of moving around in the first weeks.

Emotional well being

After surgery you will experience a range of emotions and feelings, as with any life-changing event. You may choose to connect with a trained volunteer who has experienced amputation, through a Peer Support program. You may also choose to connect with Social Work or Psychology services during this time.

Diabetes management

If you have diabetes your blood sugar levels may be unstable while your wound is healing. This is normal because your body is adjusting and using extra energy to heal your wound. The medical team will help you to manage this.

Preparations for your return home

The team will assess how you will manage your mobility, personal care, and daily activities when you return home. You may need equipment and modifications to be safe at home.

Rehabilitation

If you require more time to recover, more intense therapy or have complex care needs you may be referred to a rehabilitation team. They provide specialist guidance and advice on your recovery and may arrange transfer to a rehabilitation unit.

For more information, please visit www.health.tas.gov.au/amputation

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IN TASMANIA

Connecting Tasmanians
to information and
support for their
amputation journey