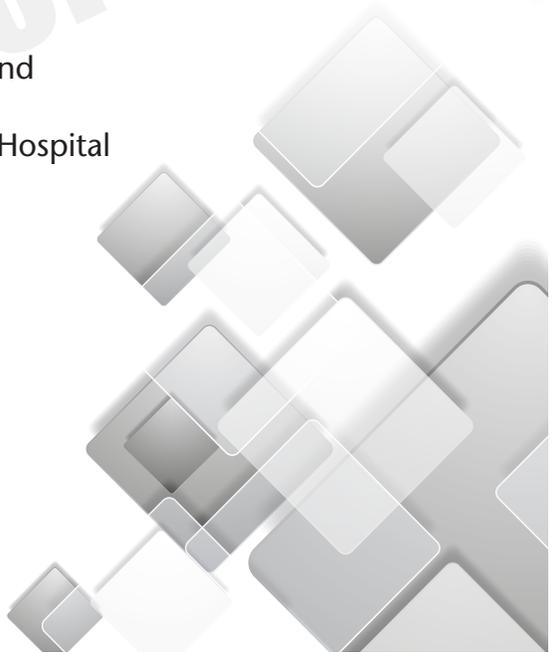


Information about

# Suspension Sleeves for Trans-Tibial Prostheses

## WestMARC

West of Scotland Mobility and  
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Queen Elizabeth University Hospital  
1345 Govan Road  
Glasgow  
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You have been provided with a prosthesis, which has a number of component parts that your clinician has chosen. This is based on your individual needs, and the socket design is based on your stump length and shape, knee shape, activity level and type of liner you will use. We may give you a suspension sleeve which helps provide additional or sole suspension to your limb.

A suspension sleeve attaches to the prostheses on the outside and pulls, or rolls, up over the knee and on to the thigh. It should extend up on to your thigh above the top of the stump socks or liner. For some types, it is essential that a good portion of the sleeve touches your skin. If you do not use it correctly it will not provide good suspension and if it becomes too stretched or worn, your limb may feel loose and insecure. You should ask for a replacement if this happens.

There are a variety of sleeves available, and the choice is based on the degree of suspension you need and your ability to use them. Sleeve materials include stretchy elastic, neoprene and mineral gels, e.g. silicone, and they may be an essential method of holding the leg on, or they may be a supplement to a Patella Tendon Bearing (PTB) socket which grips above the knee.

A fabric sleeve is made from an elastic nylon knit, similar to the compression sock used initially after surgery. This has two rows of silicone on the inner side which help to grip onto the socket and the stump. Generally this is easy to use, even if your hand strength is poor, and it is quite hard wearing.

A gel or silicone sleeve generally has a nylon knit outer cover and a gel or silicone inner. There are a range of these sleeves available. Some have a softer gel which are easy to apply and some a stiffer gel which are more difficult to apply. These range in durability depending on the material used.

## Applying the sleeve

The gel or silicone sleeves are the trickiest to apply, as they are inclined to stick to the socket before they are in the correct position. We generally want about half of the sleeve on the socket and half on your thigh, and if it is a tapered sleeve, the narrower part will be on the socket. You will probably see the clinician fitting the sleeve by turning it inside out, gripping the wider edge and pulling it over the socket, then turning in the bottom narrow edge when it is about half-way down the leg before pulling up the wider part. This can be very fiddly, but is satisfying when it is correctly positioned so that the top half extends above the socket edge.

When putting the leg on, especially with the gel or silicone sleeves, it is important to **deflect the top of the stump socks back over the socket edge** before fitting the sleeve on to the thigh. This protects the sleeve from wearing (rubbing on the edge of the hard socket) and also gives a good clear area of skin contact when the sleeve is in place. We may give you a gaiter (protector sleeve) to protect the sleeve from breakdown on the socket edge.

You should clean the sleeve regularly, ideally off the leg, but it is not always easy to take it on and off. If you can take it off, wash it by hand in soapy water, rinse and towel dry then leave overnight away from direct heat. Ideally a mild or unperfumed soap or laundry detergent is best for washing, especially if you have a skin reaction to perfume or chemicals. If you have to keep the sleeve on the leg, turn over the top half each evening and wash and rinse with a cloth, then pat with a towel. Allow to air dry overnight.

## Perspiration (sweating)

Some people are troubled by excess perspiration and wearing a sleeve may make this worse. Using an unperfumed anti-perspirant may help. People have found liquid talc and witch-hazel helpful.

For re-ordering, your sleeve type is: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Contact Details**

**Opening Times:** Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

**Telephone:** 0300 790 0129

(Monday to Friday: 8.45am to 4.15pm).

An answerphone is available if the phone lines are busy.

**Website:**

[www.nhsggc.org.uk/your-health/health-services/westmarc](http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/your-health/health-services/westmarc)

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