

“WHAT PREVENTATIVE MEASURES CAN I TAKE TO AVOID AMPUTATION?”

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In the United States, complications from diabetes and peripheral vascular disease account for over half of all amputations. If you look at lower limb amputations in Kern County, the rate is much higher.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I DEVELOP AN ULCER ON MY FOOT OR RESIDUAL LIMB?

If you develop an ulcer or abrasion on your foot, it's important to wash the wound with soap and water and call your doctor immediately. If you wear a prosthetic limb, you should discontinue the use of the device and call your doctor. In some cases the prosthesis may just need an adjustment and/or modification. Your prosthetist will be able to guide you to the appropriate care if medical attention is needed.

HOW DOES A DISEASE THAT EFFECTS INSULIN AND BLOOD SUGAR LEAD TO AMPUTATION?

Diabetes can lead to the damaging of the nervous system, called diabetic neuropathy. Typically neuropathy will affect the lower extremities such as the legs and feet; causing numbness, tingling and pain. Due to the decrease in sensation and the limited blood flow to those areas, minor blisters, cuts, scrapes and calluses can easily become infected. If the infection becomes severe enough, in many cases the only treatment is amputation of the infected area up to an area of sufficient blood flow.

ARE THERE PREVENTATIVE MEASURES I CAN TAKE TO PREVENT ULCERATION ON MY FEET AND RESIDUAL LIMB?

The most important aspect is to have a good preventative care program for your feet. This includes daily inspection of your feet/residual limb, washing, moisturizing dry skin and properly bandaging any cuts or sores that may be present. Also, wearing properly fitting shoes with diabetic inserts and socks will greatly reduce the risk of friction sores and blisters from forming. If you are an amputee, then having a properly fitting prosthesis is extremely important. A loose fitting prosthesis can cause pistoning of the limb within the socket leading to abrasions and blisters.



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