

Pain From Amputation

Your child may have many different feelings in the area where a limb was removed. Some may be painful. This is common with amputations that happen because of:

- Trauma
- Infection
- Cancer

Postoperative pain

This pain happens after surgery. An amputation removes:

- Skin
- Muscle
- Bones
- Nerves

This can cause swelling.

Your child will take medicine for his pain. It may be given by:

- A pump that your child controls
- A liquid or pill he can swallow
- An epidural (This is when medicine is given to through a special tube called a catheter.)



Scar tissue

A scar happens when tissue grows over the area where the limb was removed. This is the body's way of healing.

- Massaging the skin can help reduce pain.
- Your child's doctor will tell you when it is OK to massage the skin.
- Scar tissue can keep a prosthesis (artificial limb) or socket from fitting or working the right way.

Sensitivity

Your child's skin may be sensitive after surgery. This may last until the nerves heal.

- It is important that your child massage his limb early in the healing process. This helps the nerves get used to being touched.
- Touching the end of the amputated limb with different materials is a good way to get your child used to sensation.
- A physical or occupational therapist can tell you what to do.



Your child might feel pain because of tiny spurs or bony overgrowth.

- These grow on the end of the bone where the limb was removed.
- Your child may need surgery to remove them.

Pain may happen if your child is not using the limb enough. This can happen after the amputation or later in life.

- Your child should exercise his limb and wear his prosthesis.
 This can prevent weakness and bone damage.
- The physical and occupational therapists in the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Limb Deficiency Program will teach your child exercises.

Phantom limb sensation

This is when your child feels the limb that was removed. These feelings include:

- Movement
- Numbness
- Tingling
- Temperature changes
- Pressure
- Itching

He might also have a feeling called telescoping.

Phantom limb pain

This means your child feels pain where the limb used to be.

- The nerves send pain signals that make your child think the limb is still there.
- This is common with an amputation that happens later in a child's life.
- It is often worse just after amputation while your child heals.
- This pain can feel like cramping, aching, burning or stabbing.

Treating pain

Be sure to tell your child's doctor or nurse about any pain.

Describe the pain using terms like aching, burning or stabbing.

This will help them decide the best treatment for your child.

The Children's Limb Deficiency Program has a team to help treat your child's pain. The team includes:

- Psychologists
- Child life specialists
- Social workers

Visit **www.choa.org/limbdeficiency** to learn more about the Children's Limb Deficiency Program.

