



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 (Medicine given 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 you or 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.



Bony overgrowth

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.

Phantom limb sensation

This is when your child gets the feeling that the limb that was removed is still there.

These feelings include:

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

He might also have a feeling called telescoping.

- Your child may feel his hands or feet moving closer to his body. This is like the way a telescope brings objects closer.
- This feeling is usually not painful.
- This should not be confused with phantom limb pain.

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 not very common for an amputation that happens early in your 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 choa.org/limbdeficiency to learn more about the Children's Limb Deficiency Program.

