

What is a prosthesis?

A prosthesis is an artificial part for the reconstruction of the face and restoration of function after radical surgery. You may have an artificial eye, an ear or a nose. You may have an obturator combined with the loss of nose or eye. Prostheses enables the patient to feel whole again and able to function in society. For many patients who loose their nose, it is much more positive if they are fitted with a dressing retaining a prosthetic shaped nose rather than be sent home with only a flat dressing. Quality of life is essential and vital to recovery.

How do I look after my prosthesis ?

A facial prosthesis that covers an open and empty orbit requires constant cleaning, as does the defect. It is recommended that it is washed in warm soapy water, rinsed gently and patted dry. Alternatively, you could use baby wipes. Many prostheses are retained by titanium implants that are fixtures fitted into healthy bone, like screws. The prosthesis has matching magnetic studs that lock onto the magnets fitted to the implants, rather like a male & female press stud. Sometimes there is a framework holding the magnets and these need to be cleaned daily. Cotton buds, strips of baby wipes and also the cleaning of the defect can be done the same way to wipe away debris and stop it granulating or crusting. A coating of *Maxitrol* ointment on the tissue help to keep it clean and healthy. Clean your prosthesis with a soft bristle toothbrush, mild soap and warm water. If an adhesive is used, it should be applied with a cotton tipped swab by evenly spreading a thin layer of the adhesive along the outer edges of the back side of your prosthesis according to the manufacturer's instructions. Allow the adhesive to reach its correct pre-application state as instructed. Using a mirror, carefully position and press your prosthesis onto your skin ensuring good contact.

Removing and Cleaning your prosthesis

Remove your prosthesis from your skin on a daily basis to keep your tissue healthy and to maintain hygiene. Lift the thickest edge of your prosthesis and gently remove it slowly so that you do not tear the edges or irritate your skin.. If you use an adhesive, it may be helpful to use a moist facecloth over the surface of the prosthesis to loosen the adhesive.

If your prosthesis is retained with Magnetic Attachments, clips or plastic buttons, take care to clean around each fixture with a soft brush, with soap and water. Alternatively use a moist baby wipe and cotton buds soaked in warm water.

Cleaning your skin

Wash your skin with soap and water after removing the prosthesis and remove any residue of adhesive from the skin. Apply a moisturising lotion or protective barrier cream on a nightly basis to restore natural body oils. If you suffer from any form of irritation or inflammation report the problem to your clinic.

Storing your prosthesis

Store your prosthesis in a dry, inconspicuous but safe place (for example your bedside table drawer).

If you have an orbital prosthesis, store it in an upright position.

Let's Face It Facial Cancer Information Leaflet



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The purpose of this leaflet is to help you to understand what experiences may lay ahead and what to do practically if you come across a problem that needs a solution...



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