

Use and Maintenance Instructions

For ARTech Custom Made Silicone Restorations

AK & BK Prosthesis

If the silicone prosthesis is properly maintained, it should last from two to five years, depending upon the wear habits of the patient and the type of prosthesis. For example, an AK or BK covering which is worn every day may not last as long as a finger prosthesis which is only worn occasionally. Just remember that silicone is a man-made material which can be damaged if abused, but can also be repaired.

When You Receive Your Prosthesis

If the prosthesis still has a slight solvent smell, don't worry. It will dissipate in a few days.

Putting on the Prosthesis

Put on or remove an AK or BK prosthesis as instructed by your prosthetist. The pull hole can be accessed by sliding the skin straight down over the socket. Do not roll the skin over itself. The interior surface of the silicone skin may need to be lubricated with talcum powder to make it slide over the surface of the socket easier. The button for ankle adjustment can be felt through the skin.

General Precautions

Avoiding Rough Surfaces

Silicone is one of the most durable materials available, however, if the prosthesis is habitually rubbed against rough surfaces, the outer painted surface may wear off resulting in a color change. Although the worn areas can be repaired and touched-up by ARTech Laboratory, it is still an inconvenience as well as an additional expense.

Do not walk on rough surfaces without wearing shoes and/or socks. You may go swimming while wearing your silicone prosthesis, but avoid repeatedly rubbing it on the surfaces of the pool walls or floor.

Preventing Color Changes

Silicone is resistant to normal stains such as ball point pen and newspaper inks but **prolonged exposure to some unstable dyes can stain the prosthesis. For example, new shoes may cause staining of a silicone prosthesis. Some fabric dyes will also stain. Please refrain from rubbing your prosthesis against fabrics like new blue jeans. We recommend washing jeans several times before wearing. Always wear socks or nylons inside a dyed leather shoe.** If you wear new colored socks, wear a nylon or white sock under the colored sock. Do not store the prosthesis in an area which may allow it to have prolonged contact with unstable dyes, permanent inks, oils, or solvents. If you notice a stain which cannot be rubbed or washed off, send the prosthesis to ARTech as soon as possible. With proper treatment, most stains can be eliminated or dramatically reduced, so don't panic!

Avoid exposing the prosthesis to tobacco smoke, as it may stain or yellow the prosthetic material. In addition the buildup of hydro carbons may make future repairs difficult since it will hamper the adherence of new paint to the older paint.

Normal outdoor wearing habits do not harm the silicone material, but prolonged exposure to the rays of the sun can bleach out any color pigments, including those in the prosthesis. Do not store the prosthesis in direct sunlight or wear it more than necessary for tanning, outdoor sports, etc.

Avoid directly exposing the prosthetic material to strong solvents such as benzene, xylene, and gasoline, which can cause fading and weakening of the prosthetic material. Other harsh chemicals such as industrial cleaning fluids or strong acids may also have adverse effects on the prosthesis. If the prosthesis is exposed to any such chemicals or solvents, wash it as soon as possible with warm water and mild soap or detergent, using a soft brush if available.

If your prosthesis is designed for swimming, normally treated pool water is no problem for an ARTech prosthesis, but it is advisable to thoroughly wash it with a mild soap solution and then rinse it in warm tap water after swimming.

Avoiding Accidents

Using a silicone prosthesis for performing everyday tasks can be very helpful, but there are a few precautions which should be observed. Here is a typical list:

1. Avoid prolonged contact with extremely hot appliances such as irons, soldering irons, blow torches, frying pans, barbeque grills, etc. The silicone material is highly resistant to high temperatures, but it can be scorched with prolonged contact.
2. Avoid cutting the material with razor knives, scissors or kitchen utensils.
3. Store the prosthesis in a dry, safe place.
4. Keep the prosthesis out of reach of small children and pets.
5. **Do not get super glue on the silicone material or acrylic nails.** You may use rubber cement or stick-on pads to attach nails.
6. If you get a scratch on an acrylic nail, you may use an ultra-fine buffer to remove it. However, avoid rubbing the adjoining silicone material.

Cleaning Your Prosthesis

Please wash regularly with soap and water. If the prosthesis becomes slightly discolored, it is usually dirt, dust, or oils which collect on the surface of the material and can easily be removed by washing with a soft bristled brush, mild soap (i.e. Ivory Liquid or Dawn dishwashing detergent), and warm water. If the prosthesis still has traces of oil on the outer surface, try gently wiping the surface with a soft cloth moistened with rubbing alcohol. Dry it completely (Use a hair dryer if you wish).

Caution: The acrylic nails should NOT be cleaned with rubbing alcohol. Prolonged contact with alcohol can damage the acrylic material. When removing nail polish from the nails of a hand or finger prosthesis, **always** use non-acetone nail polish remover.

When you need a repair

Silicone has been proven to be the best material available for cosmetic restoration prostheses. However, it is a man-made material which can be damaged by abuse or simply worn out by common use. Some patients make their prostheses last for years while others need a repair or replacement in a few months.

When you notice a tear or discoloration in the silicone material (or acrylic nail), return it to your prosthetist as soon as possible along with a complete description of the probable cause of the problem. He will, in turn, send it to ARTech with instructions to repair or replace the prosthesis as the situation requires. At ARTech, repairs are made and the prosthesis is returned as soon as possible. **Under no circumstances use any type "super glue" to repair the prosthesis. The chemicals will cause the silicone to crystalize and compound the problem, resulting in an increase of time and cost of repairs.**