

# Ear Use and Maintenance Instructions

## ARTech Custom Made Silicone Restorations

If the silicone prosthesis is properly maintained, it should last from two to ten years, depending upon the wear habits of the patient. A prosthesis which is only worn occasionally will naturally last longer than one worn daily. Silicone is a man-made material which can be damaged if abused, but it 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. When you first try it on (see "Putting on the Prosthesis" below), wear it for an hour or so, paying close attention to the way the extremity feels. If you experience slight pain or numbness, remove it for a while, then try again. Usually, the prosthesis can be worn for long periods of time immediately, but sometimes it takes a few days for your circulation to adjust to the new added pressures of the prosthesis. The silicone will gradually soften somewhat and conform to your residual extremity. Eventually, it should become very comfortable and almost like a part of you and can be worn all day. However, be sure to remove it before sleeping. If the prosthesis is still uncomfortable after a few days, it may require adjustment by the fabricating technician. In this case, return it to your prosthetist with a detailed description of the problem.

### *Putting on the Prosthesis*

The first step in wearing a silicone prosthesis is to wash and thoroughly dry your hands and skin where the prosthesis is to be placed. If retention is by magnets, then disregard the following information.

### *Adhesive & Solvent Instructions*

**Remove all old adhesives from the prosthesis before adding new adhesive.** Using a cotton swab or brush applicator included with the adhesive, apply a ring of adhesive about 1/8 inch from the trim line (edge) of the prosthesis. If there is little or no residual member left, then you might use additional adhesive in other strategic spots. Wait two or three minutes before applying to your skin. (Instructions are also on the bottle.) **Never put adhesive on the exterior of the prosthesis.**

Use a cotton swab dipped in solvent and run it carefully under the trim line of the prosthesis. You may need to do this several times for the adhesive to dissolve. **Do not pull or tug on the thin edges of the trim line.** Over time the silicone will tear. Instead, work it loose gradually and gently.

**REGULAR WASHING WITH SOAP AND WATER IS A MUST.**

### *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.

### **Preventing Color Changes**

Silicone is resistant to normal stains such as ball point pen and newspaper inks but **some things like leather and fabric dyes can stain the prosthesis**. 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 build-up 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 or 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.

Swimming in 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. Don't store the prosthesis in a pocket or purse next to ink pens or other items which may discolor the silicone.
3. Store the prosthesis in a dry, inconspicuous but safe place (like a bedside table drawer).
4. Keep the prosthesis out of the reach of small children or animals.
5. **Don't swim in the ocean with a silicone prosthesis. If it comes off, it's**
6. Avoid getting super glue on the silicone material.

### ***Cleaning Your Prosthesis***

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. Dawn or Ivory Liquid), and warm water. If the prosthesis still has traces of oil or dirt on the outer surface, try gently wiping the surface with a soft cloth moistened with rubbing alcohol.

If you wear your prosthesis frequently and for long periods of time (especially in hot weather), you may need to sanitize it periodically. Wash it thoroughly with mild soap and warm water to remove oils and dirt. Dry it completely (Use a hair dryer if you wish). Dust the interior of the prosthesis with baking soda and seal the prosthesis in a large

plastic bag overnight. In the morning, thoroughly rinse and dry it. If it still has a slightly offensive odor, use a soft cloth moistened with Listerine to wipe it down inside. After a few minutes, rinse it and it dry completely.

### ***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, 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. Length of time for repairs is subject to how many jobs are in-house at the time received.

**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.**