

## Become a *Telehealth Champion*

As we take advantage of the many benefits of Telehealth – including protecting our patients and community from COVID-19 exposure risks – we put together these tips for communicating with your clinician so that you get the most out of your telehealth care.

### **Start Basic, Then Expand**

Provide detailed, to-the-point descriptions of any concerns you currently have. For example, “My limb hurts at the bottom/front when my heel lands on the ground as I walk” is clearer than “My socket hurts when I walk.”

You can then elaborate on each concern, including:

- When you noticed the problem begin
- When you notice the problem occurs
- How often the problem occurs
- Character of the pain/sensation (i.e., sharp, burning, aching, tingling)
- Any changes since your last visit (i.e., medical conditions, activities, weight change)
- If anything helps relieve the problem or if anything makes the problem worse
- How the problem has affected use of your orthosis or prosthesis

### **Use Numbers**

Numbers can provide more depth for your clinician. We often use a few scales to “measure” your symptoms.

- The Pain Scale describes discomfort – rated 0-10/10, with 0 meaning “no pain” and 10 meaning “worst imaginable pain.”
- The Socket Comfort Score describes comfort in a prosthetic socket – rated 0-10/10, with 0 meaning “not comfortable at all” and 10 meaning “most comfortable socket I can imagine.”

Numbers also add clarity around the situation in which the problem is occurring:

- How many hours a day do you use the orthosis or prosthesis?
- How many minutes do red spots on your skin last?
- How many prosthetic socks are you wearing?

### **Zoom Out**

It can be useful to convey how your orthosis or prosthesis affects your daily life. We care about knowing, for example, that your daughter is wearing her Scoliosis TLSO as prescribed but her school grades are dipping because she feels self-conscious and cannot concentrate. Telehealth allows us to talk about all aspects of your care, so we encourage reflecting beyond the device.

### **Final Thought**

Good lighting is essential to a good telehealth experience. Lighting should illuminate your face and any parts of you that may be required to view during the visit.

We know describing concerns without the benefit of physical touch and proximity can be challenging. However, with these tips and a little practice, you can become the best advocate for yourself, and we can provide you the best possible care.