

Hybrid Prosthesis Gives PFFD Patient Mobility

Jamie White wears a prosthesis, but she is not an amputee. Nor is her condition common. Jamie was born with proximal focal femoral deficiency (PFFD), a condition that occurs in one in 50,000 to one in 200,000 births. PFFD is a congenital anomaly of the pelvis and proximal femur, which causes hip deformity and shortening and altered function of one or both lower extremities.

There are several degrees of PFFD, where the femur is shortened, flexed, abducted or externally rotated. Some patients opt for leg-lengthening, rotationplasty, or an amputation. Every case is unique and for Jamie's situation, her parents opted not to have surgery.

Jamie was accepted as a patient at Shriners Hospital for Children - Houston when she was four months old. Her condition was initially treated with shoes built up with a vertical lift.

"I started with shoes but as I got my balance, I was fitted with a prosthesis when I was six years old by Muilenburg practitioner Ben Chadwell, CP, through Shriners Hospital. I have a fully-formed foot, but I don't have a lot of motion. My bones are fused at my hip," Jamie said.

"When I was little it took me longer to walk but I didn't feel limited. I had good family support. In school, I was able to do everything in physical education classes except run."

When Jamie turned 18, she left the Shriners system and continued as a patient of Muilenburg Prosthetics and Orthotics. After graduating from Texas State University in San Marcos, she switched her prosthetic care to a facility in Austin, where she has lived the past six years. But she found that the care was not satisfactory. "I didn't have a positive experience," she said. "I was dissatisfied overall with the service. I wasn't comfortable and when I went in for adjustments, they basically blew me off. Then my parents received a letter about the free clinic Muilenburg offered in October."

Shortly after Jamie attended the clinic, she became a patient of Richard Brunner, CP, who used his skill and creativity to create a prosthesis for Jamie that gives her leg extension, comfort, and mobility.



Jamie at 11 years old.



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Otto Bock's Trias+ Foot Delivers Unique Design

Now moderate walkers can enjoy the high functionality of carbon fiber feet with the Otto Bock Trias+ foot. The new Trias+ was modeled from the natural human foot, so it provides exceptional walking

function with easy rollover to reduce effort and conserve energy, improve gait symmetry, and reduce excessive forces on the contralateral limb.

"I feel the foot will be preferred by those who require a smooth heel to toe transition," explained Ted Muilenburg, CP. The performance of the Trias+ has been verified through gait analysis. Biomechanical tests identify a similar rollover characteristic when comparing the Trias+ to the contralateral foot. As a result, the foot offers a secure, controlled action while improving amputee confidence and the ability to vary cadence. The superior gait characteristics of the Trias+ are a direct result of the unique dual spring elements incorporated into its design.

In addition to the outstanding function of the Trias+, the combination of footshell and cosmesis connection cap creates several advantages. It stabilizes the ankle region and eases the application of a cosmetic cover for the practitioner.

The Trias+ foot is ideal for patients who meet K3 activity criteria and is suitable for transtibial, knee disarticulation, transfemoral, and hip disarticulation amputees. The durable carbon fiber construction ensures solid dependability for patients who weigh up to 275 pounds.

The Trias+ is backed by Otto Bock's three-year warranty.

If you have a question about the Trias+ foot, or would like more information, contact your MPO practitioner.



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"The prosthesis she is wearing is an extension of her natural foot," Richard said. "After casting her foot, I fabricated a hard socket built up with an acrylic laminate and light-weight components. Her foot fits straight down into the socket and is supported from the back of her leg. It is held into place with Velcro straps. Her prosthetic foot is a College Park Tru-Step. Jamie has expressed how the foot has helped her to walk better in normal situations around town, on stairs and slopes, as well as having a smoother gait from heel to toe. The College Park foot is a multi-axial foot and ankle combination that gives back what was lost or never there for the patient, that is ankle motion in all directions. Although her left leg is shorter than her right by almost five inches, with the prosthesis, the legs are of almost equal length.

"Jamie's prosthesis is customized to meet her unique needs," said Richard. "But it provides her ambulation and stability."

Jamie works as a manager for The ARC of the Capital Area, an organization that provides services to adults and children with developmental disabilities, and is happy she returned to MPO.

"Going to Mullenburg for care is a trip for me, but it is worth it for so many reasons," she said. "Many of the people working there I still remember from my first visit after Shriners. And Richard was able to help me feel more

comfortable.

"My other prosthesis was dated and didn't have shock absorption, flexibility, or give me the mobility I needed. Richard was able to correct that."

Jamie White has never let her disability interfere with her zest for life.

When she was an infant, Jamie White was fitted with a Denis Browne Bar to help with hip positioning. She was able to do almost everything other children could, except run. Today, Jamie works as a manager at The ARC of the Capital Area in Austin.



HOUSTON CHRONICLE
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Office Orchids



Peggy Litton, who always greets visitors with a "big smile and kind words," is receptionist and secretary for Mullenburg Artificial Limb Co. Mother of two boys, she loves to try out new recipes.

In Memory

Peggy Litton, our long time office manager, passed away on April 16th. She started working with us March, 1960, and retired Spring of 1996. She was part of our family and she saw all of our patients as part of her family and had a genuine interest in their rehabilitation. She will be missed by all who knew her.



Meet the Administrative Staff

Muilenburg's office staff provides a variety of services to MPO's patients. Some are things you come in contact with every time you call or visit the office, such as answering phones, scheduling appointments, and registering patients. Some important office staff duties are 'behind the scenes' activities that help the MPO office and make each patient's benefits and billing process run smoothly.

These six dedicated employees have more than 65 years of combined experience at MPO. They're here to help when you have questions about the 'business' side of your relationship with Muilenburg.

Meet the office staff:

Marie Hunt, our office manager, has worked at MPO since 1995. Marie manages human resources, payroll, insurance verification and pre-authorization. Marie, her husband and two children reside in Sugar Land.

Paula Marchisio is our secretary and billing coordinator. She has been working at MPO for 23 years! A Minnesota native, Paula is married with one child. Her family resides in Porter.

Cynthia Johnson is responsible for accounts payables. She also works on insurance authorizations and pre-approvals. She resides in Clear Lake with her two boxer dogs. She has two grown children, three grandchildren.

Gwen Coleman (not pictured) has been with MPO for eight years and is responsible for accounts receivable. In December, Gwen will receive her bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Houston and will then pursue a master's degree in education. Gwen and her husband have three children and reside in Humble.

Mae Manning is receptionist and patient coordinator. Mae registers patients arriving for appointments and manages patient notes. She is the mother of four daughters and the grandmother of nine!

Mary Torres is the administrative assistant. Mary is responsible for various duties, including transcribing medical notes, filing, and helping with billing and insurance authorizations. A Houston native and current resident, Mary is married and has a three-year-old daughter.



The names of the ladies pictured are (left to right) Cynthia Johnson, Marie Hunt, Mae Manning, Paula Marchisio, and Mary Torres. Not pictured is Gwen Coleman.

What Can I Do If My Insurance Claim Is Denied?

When you receive a letter of denial from your insurance company, you will normally be provided with an explanation. If that is not included, request one from the insurer immediately.

It may be a simple matter that the insurance company did not have all the necessary information or documentation to process the claim. You can obtain the missing information and resubmit.

It's important to remember that your plan may require pre-authorization. If you fail to follow pre-authorization procedures, you may be required to pay a larger portion of the claim, or even all of the costs. Also, some plans require a letter of medical necessity, a referral or M.D. certification, in addition to the physician's prescription.

If the claim is still denied, you can get help from the Texas Department of Insurance, which can conduct investigations, acquire records of possible relevance to your case, issue orders, and hold hearings. The Commissioners of Insurance can take action against insurance companies, agents, and brokers. For more information, call the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) Information Line, 1-888-834-2476, or visit www.tdi.state.tx.us.

If your dispute involves a workers' compensation claim, call the Injured Worker Hot Line or contact your local Division of Workers' Compensation field office at 1-800-252-7031.

If your Medicare claim is denied, Medicare also has an appeals process. It is detailed on their Web site, www.medicare.gov/basics/appeals.asp. Or you can call their 24-hour information number at 1-800-633-4227.

We at Muilenburg will help you in whatever way we can to ensure you get the full benefits to which you are entitled. Don't hesitate to call us at any time if you have questions regarding your insurance coverage.