**Home Exercise Programme**

Following an injury or operation hypersensitivity can occur. This is an exaggerated response by the nerves in the skin to a stimulus that is normally not painful. Stimulation to the skin in the affected area of your body, such as touch or pressure, can feel unpleasant, oversensitive and even painful. Unfortunately these ‘feelings’ do not always go away without input, and this leaflet provides you with information to help reduce your symptoms.

It is natural for you to want to protect the sensitive area, but avoiding contact with tactile stimulation reinforces the message of sensitivity. You can reduce these feelings by deliberately overloading the sensitive nerve endings with different stimuli.

There are a number of useful techniques that can help you to overcome the problem:

**Massage**

* Using a non-perfumed moisturising cream, gently massage the sensitive area for approximately 5 minutes every 2 hours. You may want to begin away from the sensitive area and gradually move towards it as it becomes more tolerable.
* Keep a constant pressure and contact with the skin during the massage.
* As the area becomes less sensitive, gradually increase the pressure you apply.
* Vibration is effective in treating hypersensitivity. You can use the base of an electric toothbrush/shaver or a vibrator and move over the sensitive area as above.

**Different textures**

* Use a variety of textures, (e.g. cotton wool, silk, flannel, denim, velcro, rubber, etc.).
* Begin with textures that you find the most bearable to touch.
* The texture(s) are rubbed, tapped or rolled over the affected area or as close to it for as long as tolerated, focusing on how the texture feels and not the pain it’s eliciting.
* Ensure that the texture is in constant contact with the skin and the pressure is constant throughout.
* Then chose a texture you feel is almost unbearable and rub over the affected area for as long as tolerated.
* Continue to alternate the textures until they no longer cause abnormal feelings. Then progress to textures that are almost unbearable and repeat as above.
* It may take a few sessions before you feel able to move on to the next texture.
* You are aiming to work through 10 different textures.

**Immersion therapy**

* Fill containers with different particles of varying textures (smooth to rough) e.g. lentils, rice, pasta, sand etc.
* Establish an order as before – most to least comfortable. Place your hand into the bowl and move the hand around in stirring motions, as well as gripping and spanning your fingers, varying the speed and direction for 5 – 10 minutes.
* Once it becomes tolerable progress to the next container.
* You can also put small objects such as buttons/keys etc. into the bowl to pick out when able.
* All of this can be done with your eyes open or closed.

**Function**

It is important to use your hand for normal functional tasks and daily activities as soon as you are able. Following the above desensitisation programme, carry out an activity such as washing the dishes, playing cards, writing, or work related tasks. Ensure you know that the task you are about to do is **achievable**. This will reinforce normal functional use of the injured area.

**Remember**

* Try to carry out this treatment 5 – 6 times daily.
* It may take several sessions until you notice an improvement.
* It is important to be consistent with this treatment. The more consistent you are the faster your symptoms will be relieved.

**If you need further information or advice, please do not hesitate to contact your therapist.**

<https://wiltshirehealthandcare.nhs.uk/physiotherapy/contact-us/>

**Safeguarding**

Wiltshire Health and Care has a strong commitment to care that is safe, of a high quality and that upholds our patients’ rights. All our patients have the right to live lives free from abuse or neglect and, where they are able, to make or be supported to make informed decisions and choices about their treatment, care and support.  Where patients are not able to make their own decisions, Wiltshire Health and Care staff are committed to ensuring that treatment, care and support is undertaken in accordance with the person’s best interests.  In order to fulfil these commitments, Wiltshire Health and Care follow the Safeguarding principles and responsibilities laid out in Sections 42-46 of the Care Act (2014) and are informed by, and apply, the guiding principles and provisions of the Mental Capacity Act (2005).

If you or your carer have any concerns about abuse, neglect or your rights in relation to care provided by Wiltshire Health and Care or any other agency or individual,  please raise this directly with any Wiltshire Health and Care staff or contact the Safeguarding Adults Team by telephone on: 0300 4560111.

Regarding children, WHC is responsible for providing services in accordance with Section 11 of the Children’s Act (1989) and works under the principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any questions, or concerns, suggestions or compliments about our service, please speak to a member of staff.

This information sheet is available in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 0300 1237797 and PALS.wiltshirehealthandcare@nhs.net

**Patient and Public Involvement**

We value your opinions which will help us to further develop our services.

If you wish to provide feedback or get involved in our patient participation groups, please email the Patient and Public Involvement Officer at ask.wiltshirehealthandcare@nhs.net or telephone 01249 454386.