

Hand therapy department

Desensitisation – home programme

After an injury or operation, nerves within the skin can sometimes become overly sensitive. Stimulation to the skin in that region of your body, such as touch or pressure, can feel unpleasant, oversensitive and even painful. This leaflet provides you with information about how to help reduce these feelings.

You can reduce these feelings by deliberately bombarding the sensitive nerve endings with different stimuli. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to ask your hand therapist.

Massage

- Massage the sensitive area for five minutes, every two hours
- Use a perfume free moisturiser, such as Nivea or E45 on the area twice daily. This helps to soften the scar line and desensitise that area.

Different textures (such as velvet, Velcro®, cloth, moleskin, towelling)

- Choose a texture that is almost unbearable for you to touch.
- Rub this texture over the area for a few seconds.
- Then choose a texture that is bearable.
- Rub this over the area for two to three minutes, concentrating on feeling the touch rather than the pain.
- Return to your first (unbearable) texture and rub it over the area for two minutes. It should now be more bearable.
- Once the first texture becomes bearable, choose a new unbearable one and continue the process.
- Repeat 5 times a day.

Immersion

- Fill a container with lentils, rice, macaroni, dried beans, or something similar that is only just bearable for you to touch.
- Immerse your finger or hand into the material and work the hand through it for five to seven minutes.
- Once it becomes more bearable, change the texture.
- Repeat 5 times a day.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about desensitisation, please contact the **Hand therapy department** on **020 7188 4172** or **020 7188 4174**, Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm

Useful sources of information

Pharmacy medicines helpline

For information about any medicines that you have been prescribed at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals, you can speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

e: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC)

For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.

t: 020 7188 3416

Language support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

NHS Direct – Offers health information and advice from specially trained nurses over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 0845 4647 **w:** www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Become a member of your local hospitals, and help shape our future

Membership is free and it is completely up to you how much you get involved. To become a member of our Foundation Trust, you need to be 18 years of age or over, live in Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Wandsworth or Westminster or have been a patient at either hospital in the last five years.

To join, please call 0848 143 4017, email members@gstt.nhs.uk or visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk

Leaflet number: 1526/VER3

Date published: April 2013

Review date: April 2016

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