

## Patient information

### Control of Swelling or Oedema

#### Hand Therapy - Therapies Department

Swelling, or oedema, can be thought of as a collection of fluids within body tissues. If this fluid is allowed to stay in the hand, it will collect around various structures in your hand and thicken like glue causing your joints and tendons to become "stuck". It is important that any swelling be reduced as soon as possible!

To reduce swelling, follow the procedures indicated by your therapist.

#### **Elevation:**

From time to time elevate (raise) your hand above the level of your heart. Sleep with your hand on several pillows at your side.

#### **Milking Massage:**

You can help to reduce swelling with a specific gentle massage to the swollen area, similar to the action used to push toothpaste out of a tube. Massage from the fingertips toward the wrist (similar to the action of putting on a glove) and remember to keep your hand elevated during the massage.

#### **Compression:**

Your therapist may provide you with a pressure garment, Coban wrap or elastic compression sleeves to help decrease swelling. These various compressive devices apply pressure to the outside of the affected area, in order to reduce the build-up of fluids causing the swelling. Wear these devices for the amount of time prescribed by your therapist (A separate advice leaflet will be supplied).

#### **Exercise:**

Keep your hand moving pumping or contracting the muscles acts to remove the swelling from your hand. It also helps to prevent the joints from becoming stiff and tendons from becoming stuck down. Perform all exercises with the hand elevated.

#### **Swelling can be reduced by raising your arm:**

Every 15 minutes within the hour, raise your hand right up above your head and "pump" (quickly, fully bend into fist and straighten) the fingers for 15 seconds.

## Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## Further Information

### Hand Therapy Unit

**Tel: 0151 706 2760**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2760**

### Broadgreen Hospital

**Tel: 0151 282 6276**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 282 6276**

### Author: Therapies Department

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