

# Information for patients and carers

## Sensory Stimulation

### The Foot



## Why have I received this leaflet?

You have received this leaflet as your family member or someone you provide care for has symptoms of sensory loss post stroke.

Carers and family members can play a key role in the treatment of sensory loss in the foot. This leaflet will provide information on how you can carry out some simple sensory techniques with the patient, and the benefits of doing so.

Lack of normal sensation makes limbs vulnerable to damage. It is important to:

- Regularly change position of the leg and foot to avoid too much pressure on affected area
- Ensure the limb is in a safe position, not trapped underneath anything or hanging down
- Regularly monitor skin condition to ensure skin not breaking down, becoming red or swollen
- Keep skin soft and hydrated by washing regularly and massaging with cream
- Ensure any splint is worn as advised by therapist.
- Be aware of scalding and burning. For example, with hot water, radiators and sitting too close to a fire

## What is sensory stimulation?

It is estimated that up to 80% of people experience sensory loss or sensory impairment following a stroke.

Some of the effects of sensory loss may include:

- Unable to feel the difference between hot and cold
- Unable to feel touch or pressure
- Unable to feel pain
- No awareness of where the affected limb is
- Unable to grip certain objects

The aim of sensory foot stimulation is to increase awareness of the affected limb.

This can be completed by family/friends at visiting time and continued following discharge from hospital.

## **Preparation for sensory stimulation**

Prior to starting treatment, please ensure that the affected foot and leg are well positioned either in the bed or chair.

## **Items required**

Sensory stimulation can be completed with a towel, toothbrush, cotton wool, wet cloth, and/or hand cream.

Please speak to your therapy team for guidance on which would be most suitable for your relative.

## **Caution**

Sensory stimulation should not be painful. If the patient starts to experience pain or discomfort, stop at once.

These exercises may cause mild redness immediately after the treatment.

If redness remains or the skin is broken/cracked stop the treatment and notify the therapist before continuing.

# How to complete sensory stimulation:

## Step one:



Using a towel rub the side of the foot from the heel to the little toe.

Ensure a gentle amount of pressure is applied and that the patient is looking at this foot.

Repeat 10 times.

## Step Two:



With the towel rub the tip of each toe.

Please take care when handling the foot.

Repeat 10 times.

## Step Three:



Gently use the towel to trace around the foot, paying particular attention to the web space between the toes.

After completing this activity, you may want to rub cream into the patient's foot.

## Contact details

If you have any further questions regarding the information within this leaflet, please contact:

Stroke Therapy Team on **01257 245118**.

The therapy team currently work Monday to Friday and Sundays  
8.30 -16.30.

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware)

<https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/>

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**This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

[patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk)

**Department:** Core Therapies, Stroke Rehabilitation

**Division:** DCS

**Production date:** September 2025

**Review date:** September 2028

**JR 1371 v1**