

Information for patients and carers

Sensory Stimulation

The Hand



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 hand. This leaflet provides 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 hand and arm to avoid too much pressure on affected area
- Ensure 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 hand 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 hand and arm are well positioned. This may mean placing the limb on a pillow or arm of a 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 hand from the little finger to the wrist.



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

Repeat 10 times.

Step Two:



With the towel rub each of the fingertips.

Please take care when handling the patient's hand, wrist and arm.

not bend the fingers back.

Repeat 10 times.

Step Three:



Gently use the towel to trace around the hand, paying particular attention to the space between the fingers.

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

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 Sunday 8.30-16.30.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware

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

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**.

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

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:

patientexperienceandinvolem@LTHTR.nhs.uk

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