

Oedema Management

CONTACT DETAILS



www.trips.nhs.uk

St Andrews Burns Service
Broomfield Hospital (Chelmsford)
Adults/Children **01245 516037**
Outpatients **01245 516008**

Chelsea & Westminster Hospital (London)
Adults **02033152500**
Children **02033153706**

Queen Victoria Hospital (East Grinstead)
Adults **01342 414440**
Children **01342 414469**

Stoke Mandeville Hospital (Aylesbury)
Adults and Children **01296 315040**

Local oedema (swelling) is the body's natural reaction to injury and is normal in the initial days following burn injury.

IMPACT

Oedema interferes with tissue perfusion and wound healing by increasing the diffusion distance between capillaries and cells. Oedema can also increase pain and limit movement in the affected limb.

ELEVATION

Try to minimise swelling with elevation of the affected part of the body. Use of pillows to position the limb can assist with swelling. If injury occurs to the lower limb, patients should elevate the limb at rest. Any patients with facial burns should adopt a semirecumbent position to minimise facial and airway swelling.

MOBILITY

Functional activity and range of motion exercises can reduce oedema.

BANDAGING

Elastic compression (eg Tubigrip or Coban) may assist in oedema control of fully healed burns. Do not apply tight circumferential unyielding bandages after burn injury.