

Oedema management

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

CONTACT DETAILS

St Andrews Centre (Chelmsford)

Adults **0300 44 30475**

Children **0300 44 30405**

Chelsea & Westminster Hospital (London)

Adults **020 3315 2500**

Children **020 3315 3706**

The Royal London Hospital (London)

Adults and Children **020 3594 5693**

Queen Victoria Hospital (East Grinstead)

Adults **01342 414440**

Children **01342 414469**

Stoke Mandeville Hospital (Aylesbury)

Adults and Children **01296 315040**

John Radcliffe Hospital Oxford

Adult and Children **01865 234760**

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 semi-recumbent 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.

Injuries that fall within the LSEBN Burn Referral Criteria should be discussed with the local Burn Service