Role of Occupational Therapy in burns

Occupational therapists

Occupational therapists are members of the Allied Health team who specialise in assisting patients to have optimal cosmetic results and optimal return to function.

Oedema (swelling) management

Oedema often occurs after tissue injuries. This can limit wound healing, joint movement and function. The Occupational Therapist assists in managing oedema by:

• Applying compression using bandages or garments
• Supporting and elevating swollen joints
• Encouraging movement in daily tasks.

Scar management

Burns often result in scarring which may become thick, tight and discoloured. This may cause pain, restricted movement and psychological distress. The Occupational Therapist will assist to manage your scars by:

• Applying compression bandages or garments
• Using silicone products
• Using scar massage.
• Splinting.

Functional upper limb therapy

Occupational Therapy for upper limb burns aims to maximise your independence in activities of daily living. Assessment and treatment with the Occupational Therapist may include:

• Joint range of movement, sensation and strength
• Grasp and release, fine motor control, and object manipulation focusing on daily activities (e.g. writing, eating, dressing)
• Activities of daily living retraining using assistive devices where necessary.

Occupational therapy may also address:

• Burn skin hypersensitivity
• Cognition/thinking ability
• Assistive equipment for safety and independence
• Home environment assessment and modifications
• Corrective cosmetics
• Return to work or school and driving.
• Referral to other specialist services as required.

For more information phone your therapist:
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