

# Desensitisation

## Paediatric Management Advice Leaflet

### What is Hypersensitivity?

Hypersensitivity is an exaggerated reaction of the nerve endings. After an injury or operation, nerves within the skin can sometimes become overly sensitive. Stimulation to the skin in that region of your body (such as touch or pressure) can feel unpleasant, oversensitive and even painful. It can cause limitations in the use of an affected area; resulting in stiffness, weakness and a longer recovery.

### What is Desensitisation?

Desensitisation techniques are used to reduce symptoms of hypersensitivity and to increase your tolerance to touch of the affected area. You can reduce these feelings by deliberately overloading the sensitive nerve endings with different stimuli. Follow the below programme to help desensitise your affected area. Start with stage 1 and progress to stages 2 and 3 as your affected area becomes less sensitive. The outcome of this programme is directly related to how frequently it is done. We recommend to complete the programme over 6 times daily. At all other times touch and rub the area with the hand and clothes to continue to provide the area with sensory stimuli.

### Stage 1 - Normal Massage

Put a small amount of cream (E45 or non-scented hand cream) on to the sensitive area. Using small circular movements massage into the sensitive area varying the pressure. Complete for 3-5 minutes.



### Stage 2 - Textured massage

Choose 3 textures from something tolerable to something almost unbearable (e.g. tissues, sponge, Velcro or towelling). Begin with the most tolerable texture making small circular movements across the sensitive area for 1 minute, then progress onto the other textures Complete this for a total of 3 minutes.



### Stage 3 - Immersion Massage

Choose 3 household substances (e.g. macaroni or rice). Start with the most tolerable working to the most intolerable, stirring the hand round in the substances. Complete this for a total of 3 minutes. Also try this with hot and cold water, at a temperature you can tolerate.



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