Controlling Swelling in Your Hand
Occupational Therapy
Patient Information Leaflet
Swelling is a normal reaction of the body following an injury. This is due to a build up of fluid between the tissues and is called oedema. Management of oedema is important to reduce pain and joint stiffness.

**Elevation**

Elevation is an important way to reduce oedema, especially when combined with exercises or movement. Elevating the hand whenever possible can help to reduce oedema by allowing excess fluid to drain away.

**Ways to elevate your hand**

Whenever you sit or lie down, rest your hand and forearm on a stack of pillows:

- Keep your hand above the level of your heart.
- Elevate your hand without bending your elbow tightly.
- Do not let your hand drop over the edge of the pillows.

Whenever you stand for long periods of time, raise your hand above your head and do exercises as below:

- Close your fingers into a tight fist and then straighten them.
- Do these exercises 10 times every 15 minutes

Use a sling to elevate your hand when walking around and try not to wear jewellery or tight clothing around the arm.

**Massage**

Retrograde massage is another way of reducing oedema in your hand.

- Position your hand on pillows or hold your hand in the air with the elbow resting on a table.
- Apply lotion to the hand.
- Begin at your finger tips and use firm pressure with long, smooth strokes to rub down your fingers towards the hand and wrist.

**Active Use**

The tightening and relaxation of the muscles in the hand act as a pump to help push the fluid out of the hand and up the arm. Perform exercises as directed by your Occupational Therapist and use your hand throughout the day as normally as possible.

Any Questions - please contact your Occupational Therapist .......................................................... on Tel: 01384 244532.