

# Patient Education Department



**Patient Education Programme**  
**(reviewed August 2014)**

**This booklet is for patients. The Patient Education Department runs a series of learning sessions that will equip you with the knowledge to be able to manage your spinal cord injury.**

**The aim of this booklet is to give you details of the programme and learning objectives of each session.**

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **(Including Goal Planning)**

This session gives a general introduction to the Patient Education Room and the Patient Education Programme.

### **The Programme**

- ❖ How knowledge and understanding of SCI complements the rehabilitation process.
- ❖ The normality of the thoughts, feelings and stresses you might experience following your injury.
- ❖ How gaining information from this programme can prepare you for your life after leaving hospital.
- ❖ How the Goal Planning process works.

### **What am I going to learn from this?**

By the end of the session you should:

- ❖ Understand the relevance of the programme.
- ❖ Understand how Patient Education can support you and your family.
- ❖ Have had a chance to meet the rest of the group.
- ❖ Understand the Goal Planning process and your part in it.

# UNDERSTANDING SPINAL CORD INJURY

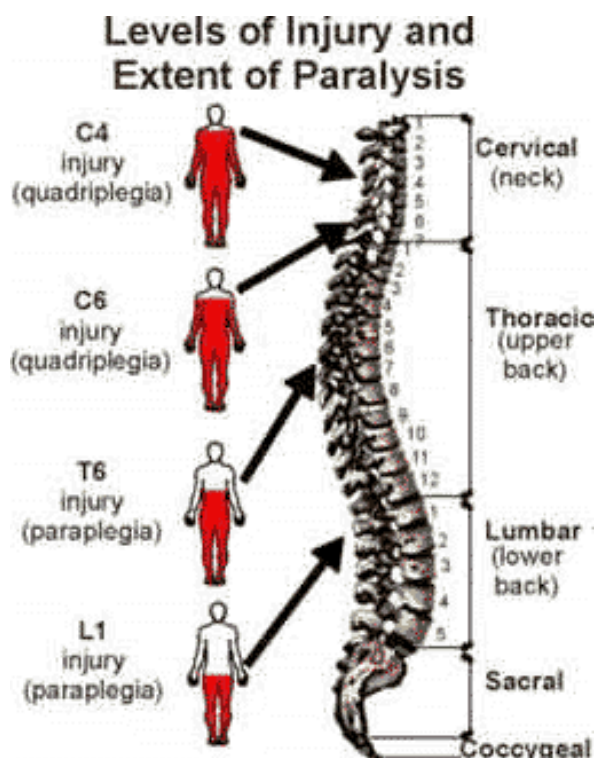
## The Programme

- ❖ What is the spinal cord?
- ❖ Anatomy of the spine and spinal cord.
- ❖ Function of the spinal cord and nervous systems.
- ❖ What are the likely consequences of damage at different levels of injury?

## What am I going to learn from this?

By the end of the session you should:

- ❖ Be able to define the term 'spinal cord'
- ❖ Understand the anatomy and function of the spinal cord.
- ❖ Understand the terminology relating to the SCI which in turn allows for an understanding of your injury.
- ❖ Understand what someone means when they talk about the central nervous system and autonomic nervous system.
- ❖ Understand the term 'Autonomic Dysreflexia' and how to recognise the symptoms.



# BLADDER MANAGEMENT

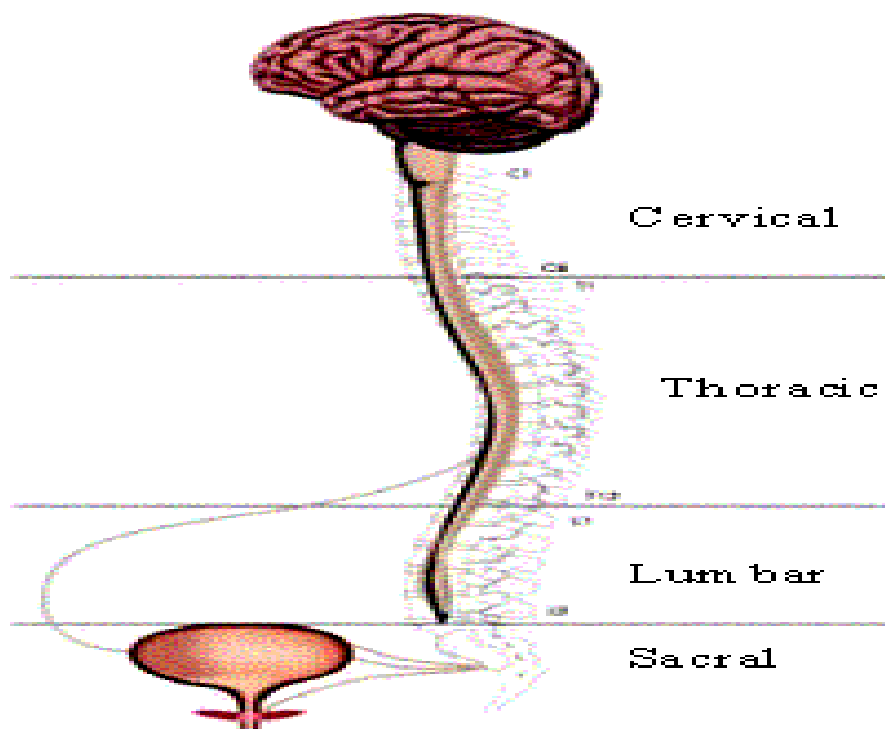
## The Programme

- ❖ Why do we need to manage the bladder?
- ❖ Bladder control prior to SCI.
- ❖ Bladder control after SCI.
- ❖ Methods of managing your bladder.
- ❖ Deciding what method to use.
- ❖ Complications and what to do about them:  
follow up.

## What am I going to learn from this?

By the end of the session you should:

- ❖ Know why and when your bladder needs to be managed.
- ❖ Know what methods are available and why they are chosen.
- ❖ Understand more about the type of catheters, sheaths etc available.
- ❖ Know who to problem solve bladder problems.



# CARE OF THE SKIN

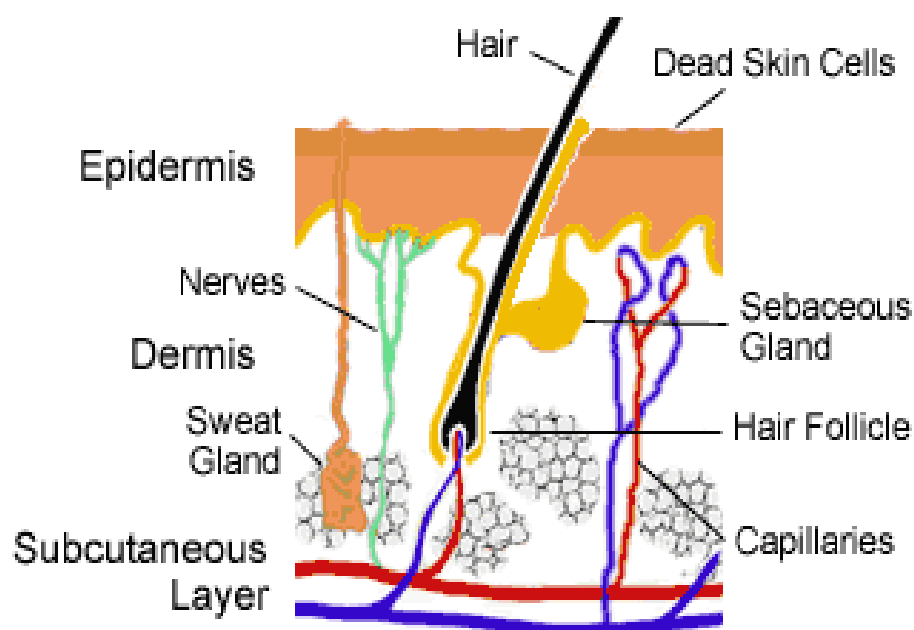
## The Programme

- ❖ What is a pressure ulcer?
- ❖ What causes pressure ulcers?
- ❖ Short and long term complications of pressure ulcers.
- ❖ Discussion of specific problem areas – time for questions.

## What am I going to learn from this?

By the end of the session you should:

- ❖ Know what a pressure ulcer is.
- ❖ How a pressure ulcer can be prevented.
- ❖ What the early signs of pressure ulcer development are.



# PAIN MANAGEMENT

## The Programme

- ❖ What is pain and how it works.
- ❖ Understanding the different types of pain that can be experienced after SCI.
- ❖ Pain management; drug treatments and other strategies.

## What am I going to learn from this?

By the end of the session you should:

- ❖ Understand more about how pain works.
- ❖ Have a greater awareness of strategies to manage pain.
- ❖ Have an opportunity, if you wish, to discuss ways in which you can manage pain.
- ❖ Know where to get help and advice about individual difficulties with pain.





## **Support After Spinal Cord Injury**

### **The Programme**

- ❖ Short presentations from four of the spinal charities about how they can support you during rehab and after discharge from the NSIC.
- ❖ Group discussion to explore potential legal issues faced by patients to include, but not limited to, the following:
  - a) Employment issues
  - b) Enforcing policies of insurance
  - c) The use of Power of Attorney
  - d) Claiming compensation
  - e) Complex welfare benefits
  - f) Disability discrimination
- ❖ Examine the relevant law applicable to these issues.
- ❖ Discuss the role of the lawyer within the discharge process.
- ❖ Have an opportunity to discuss legal issues with experienced lawyers.

### **What am I going to learn from this?**

By the end of this session you should:

- ❖ Have an awareness of the role of the different charities.
- ❖ Know how to get in touch with them.
- ❖ Have had the opportunity to discuss relevant legal issues with an experienced lawyer.
- ❖ Have a basic understanding of the relevant law.
- ❖ Have explored ways of dealing with the legal issues and identified a plan of action where required.



# NUTRITION

## The Programme:

- ❖ What's a healthy diet?
- ❖ Healthy bones, skin & heart.
- ❖ Energy balance.
- ❖ Dietary fibre for healthy bowels.
- ❖ Reading labels.
- ❖ Making food choices.

## What am I going to learn from this?

By the end of the session you should:

- ❖ Know what food groups make up a balanced diet and how much of each food group to eat.
- ❖ Understand how dietary needs are altered following spinal cord injury.
- ❖ Know what foods to eat to maintain healthy bones and skin and a healthy weight.
- ❖ Know how to change the fat in your diet to reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke.
- ❖ Understand how to include more fibre in your diet for bowel health.
- ❖ Know how to read food labels.
- ❖ Understand how to make healthy food choices .

## The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



# COPING WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY

## The Programme

- ❖ Consider sources of stress and how to manage them.
- ❖ Recognise the normality of individual reactions.
- ❖ What influences stress?
- ❖ Breaking down stress.
- ❖ Problem solving.

## What am I going to learn from this?

By the end of the session you should:

- ❖ Understand that this is variability in stress.
- ❖ Understand how appraising a situation as a threat or challenge can alter your reaction to it.
- ❖ Understand what helps someone cope.
- ❖ Have had a chance to discuss stressful situations that may arise as a result of your SCI and develop solutions to these problems.

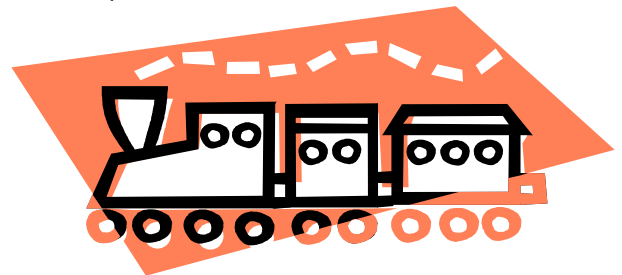




## MOBILITY

### The Programme

- ❖ Group discussion to establish current knowledge level.
- ❖ Procedure for seating provision.
- ❖ Role of wheelchair service.
- ❖ Renewal of equipment after discharge.
- ❖ Will I get help with the cost of a wheelchair?
- ❖ Advice on travelling (car, rail, sea and air) and insurance.



### What am I going to learn from this?

By the end of the session you should:

- ❖ Understand wheelchair and cushion provision from admission to discharge and thereafter.
- ❖ Know what type of cushion you have.
- ❖ Know what wheelchairs are available and the cost of them.
- ❖ Understand the grants/vouchers available that will help you pay for your wheelchair.
- ❖ Appreciate the difficulties but possibilities of travel.



# BOWEL MANAGEMENT

## The Programme

- ❖ Implications of the spinal cord injury for bowel function.
- ❖ What is Bowel Management?
- ❖ Why learn about Bowel Management?
- ❖ When to manage your bowels.
- ❖ Possible problems of not managing bowels.
- ❖ When and how to seek help?

## What am I going to learn from this?

By the end of the session you should:

- ❖ Understand the main functions of large bowel in health.
- ❖ Understand major impacts of spinal cord injury on bowel function.
- ❖ Know what the aims of bowel management are.
- ❖ Be aware of the interventions that can be used to manage the bowel.
- ❖ Know how to avoid and manage constipation.
- ❖ Know when and how to seek medical advice for bowel problems.





## TALK WITH EX PATIENTS

A chance for you to talk to former patients about their life experiences of managing and living with a spinal cord injury.

This is a discussion based group session and is your chance to ask questions about anything.

You may wish to ask questions such as:

- ❖ What is it like being at home?
- ❖ How did you set and achieve your goals?
- ❖ What are the issues relating to work?
- ❖ What changed most when you went home?
- ❖ What has stayed the same?
- ❖ This is also your chance to explore doubts, fears, wishes and hopes.



# SEXUALITY AND FERTILITY

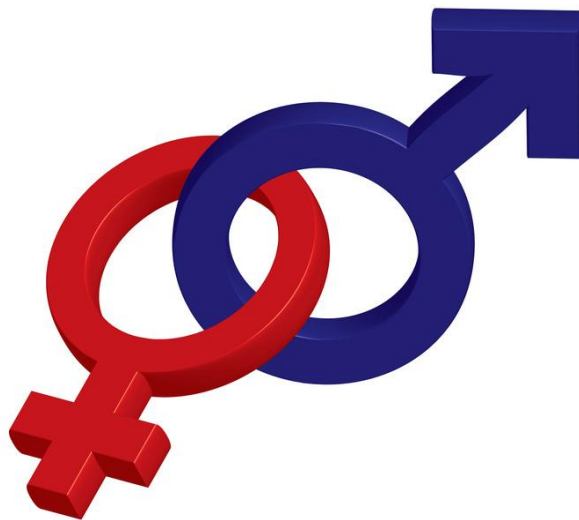
## The Programme

- ❖ Why is there sexual dysfunction following SCI?
- ❖ What is available to aid sexual function?
- ❖ What are the emotional issues surrounding sexuality?
- ❖ How can I deal with them?
- ❖ Will I be able to date again?
- ❖ Can I have children?

## What am I going to learn from this?

By the end of the session you should:

- ❖ Understand your body's sexual function following SCI and how it can be improved.
- ❖ Understand the emotional issues surrounding sexuality and dating following SCI.
- ❖ Understand what fertility treatment is available should you need it.



# FITNESS

## The Programme

- ❖ Implications of spinal cord injury on weight changes.
- ❖ Secondary health problems associated with weight gain.
- ❖ Impact of weight gain on function.
- ❖ Benefits of exercise.
- ❖ What sports are available following spinal cord injury.
- ❖ Information on how to access sports and exercise post spinal cord injury.

## What am I going to learn from this:

By the end of the session you should:

- ❖ Increase in knowledge why there are significant weight changes post spinal cord injury.
- ❖ Understand the secondary health problems and the impact of weight gain on function post spinal cord injury.
- ❖ Understand the benefits of exercise and the preparation and precautions that need to be undertaken prior to exercising.
- ❖ Increased awareness of government initiatives and charities that assist in individuals participating in sports/exercise post spinal cord injury.
- ❖ Increase knowledge of sports/activities available to a large variety of individuals with spinal cord injury.



# PROBLEM SOLVING AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

## The Programme

- ❖ Identifying possible problems that people with spinal cord injury may face.
- ❖ Breaking down problems.
- ❖ Generating possible solutions.
- ❖ Discussing ideas in an open group.
- ❖ Choosing strategies to deal with problems.
- ❖ Social support and coping.

## What am I going to learn from this?

By the end of the session you should:

- ❖ Have had the opportunity to discuss possible situations/problems people with spinal cord injury may encounter in their everyday life.
- ❖ Explored possible ways of dealing with problems and possible solutions.
- ❖ Understand the various points of view and ways of dealing with situations.
- ❖ Understand the importance of social support and coping.





# OUTPATIENT SUPPORT AFTER LEAVING HOSPITAL

## The Programme

- ❖ Introduction of the SPOP (Spinal Outpatients Team) multidisciplinary team.
- ❖ Transport to SPOP.
- ❖ The role of the peripatetic team, home visiting, community staff, GP and district nurse.
- ❖ Supply of equipment.
- ❖ Information on telephone help.
- ❖ Question and answer session/troubleshooting the previous clinical talks.

## What am I going to learn from this?

By the end of the session you should:

- ❖ Be aware of the multidisciplinary team in SPOP.
- ❖ Understand what the service provides.
- ❖ Know how to access SPOP for information and advice.

