



## Cervical collar following burn injury

Cervical collars can be prescribed for management of burn injuries to the neck, there are a number of options / brands (Aspen, Miami J and soft collars) and you will be fitted with the most appropriate. It is a type of brace used to hold the neck in a neutral position following surgery or during burns rehabilitation. They are generally worn in earlier stages of burn management to go over bulkier dressings and fresher wounds. They encourage lengthening of the neck area by providing contour under the jaw.

### Cervical collars aim to:

- Maintain neck position to ensure correct healing of skin grafts (in the acute phase)
- Reduce risk of neck contractures by providing a prolonged stretch of a developing contracture band

### Wearing regimes:

- In the acute stage, and if not directed differently, the orthosis should be worn for **23 hours per day, 7 days per week**, removing only for dressing changes, showering and exercise programs if prescribed by the therapists.
- Post healing, the use of a Cervical collar can continue for the duration of the scar maturation process (6-12 months). At this stage, however a Custom collar may be prescribed for improve scar management.

### Donning instructions

- The client should position themselves in front of a mirror
- Place the front section of the collar under the chin and hold in place using one hand
- Using the other hand, place the back section of the collar around the back of the neck, ensuring it overlaps the front section at the sides of the neck
- Secure the Velcro straps firmly on either side, ensuring they are evenly tensioned and the back section is not rotated to the left or right

### Fitting checklist for Aspen / Miami J collars

- The collar should fit firmly under the chin. If it can be pulled away using the hole at the front of the collar, it is too loose.
- The fabric liners should cover all plastic areas of the collar. If plastic is touching the skin anywhere, remove the collar and adjust the liners as required before re-fitting

- The Velcro straps should appear symmetrical at the front of the collar. If one strap is longer than the other, the back section may be rotated, or one side may be looser than the other. Either tighten the looser side, or refit the collar as above

### Care of the Aspen / Miami J collars

- Aspen / Miami J collars come with a spare set of liners which the orthotist will provide to at the time of fitting
- Liners can be changed as often as required, generally once per day
- Hand wash liners in warm soapy water and towel/air dry flat
- Do not place in the dryer
- Plastic parts of the collar can be wiped using a damp cloth

### Fitting checklist for soft collars

- The collar should fit firmly under the chin. If it can be pulled away from the neck and the chin falls inside the collar, it is too loose.
- You need to be provided with two collars to enable cleaning, one to wear and one to wash.
- The Velcro strap will secure firmly behind your neck.

### Care of the soft collars

- Soft collars can be changed as often as required, generally once per day
- Hand wash following use in warm soapy water if soiled and towel/air dry flat
- Do not place in the dryer

Inspect skin regularly for pressure areas and contact your therapist if excessive rubbing or pressure areas develop

People may alternate between the cervical collar and custom collars (refer to Custom Collar factsheet), as they increase their wearing tolerance of the custom collar.

***Ensure your clients' bring their collars to all of their outpatient burns appointments to ensure their fit is still effective, and the collar is still required.***

<b>Contact Details</b>
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