



Custom collar following burn injury

A custom collar is a semi-opaque, flexible plastic collar, made specifically for people from a plaster case taken of the neck. Scar management using a custom collar, commences when a burn wound or graft is healed. Custom collars apply compression simultaneously along the jawline, neck and chest, lengthening the developing contracture over time. The semi-opaque plastic allows visualisation of how much pressure is being applied to the scars/contractures.

Custom Collars aim to:

- Focus on managing contractures and reduce scarring on the neck
- Apply pressure to a maturing scar to help speed up healing providing more uniform alignment of collagen. Resulting in a flatter, softer and more pliable scar.

Wearing regimes:

Custom collars are generally worn overnight and during rest periods and removed during the day for normal movement and exercise, unless otherwise prescribed by the VABS allied health team.

Initial wear time tolerance can start at 1-2 hours and can increase whilst alternating with the cervical collar (Aspen, Miami J or soft collar).

- Use of the custom collar should continue until scarring has reached the point of full maturation (this may be anywhere from 6 months to 2 years)
- If the person has pressure garments, troubleshooting a suitable wearing regime which allows the person to alternate between garments and collar may be required

Donning Instructions

- Person to position themselves in front of the mirror
- Place the collar on the front of the neck and hold in a comfortable position with one hand
- Using the other hand, pull the Velcro straps around
- Thread the lower strap through the metal D-ring and fasten firmly
- Thread the upper strap through the metal D-ring and fasten firmly
- Adjust the tension on these straps so that the skin becomes blanched (white) over areas of scarring through the collar
- Contact media such as silicone can be safely used under your collar

Whilst a client may need assistance placing the collar, it is imperative they are able to remove it independently for safety.

Care of the custom collar

- Custom collars should be wiped after each use, using warm soapy water
- Avoid wetting the straps
- Dry the collar using a towel or by drying indoors or in the shade; never place the collar in direct sunlight or near a heater as it will lose its shape.

Monitor your skin carefully – if the skin appears irritated, or breaks down to a wound, remove and contact the VABS

Ensure you bring the custom collar to all outpatient burns appointments where the fit will be reviewed to ensure it remains effective. Custom collars usually last for around 3-6 months.

Contact Details

Email: burnsunit@alfred.org.au
Attention: Victorian Adult Burns Service, Allied Health