

Cast Care Instructions

For patients receiving a cast or splint

This pamphlet has information about:

- How to care for your cast
- Signs and symptoms to watch for
- Who to call if you have questions



You may need a cast or splint to treat a break, sprain, or for after a surgery. It takes a few days to get used to wearing a cast or splint.

Please follow your doctor's instructions about what you can and can't do when wearing a cast.

How to care for your cast

- A plaster cast takes 48 hours to dry before it reaches its full strength.
- A fiberglass cast reaches its maximum strength after about 1 hour.
- During the first 2 days, do not put all of your weight on the cast.
- Lift your injured arm or leg above the level of your heart when you are resting. This is most important during the first few days after you get your cast.
- All casts **must be kept dry**. When you are bathing or showering, wrap a hand towel around the cast. Then wrap a strong plastic bag around it. Secure it snugly. The towel will help absorb any water that gets through the bag.
- To decrease swelling and stiffness, move your fingers, elbow and shoulder often.
- Use a sling only when you are out in crowded places. Otherwise, do not depend on it. This may cause stiffness of the elbow and shoulder joints.
- After a surgery, a small amount of bleeding within the cast is normal. If bleeding continues, phone your clinic for instructions.

Important things NOT to do:

- DO NOT poke inside your cast with a ruler, knitting needle or coat hanger etc. You could break the skin and cause an infection. (If your cast is itchy, blow some COOL AIR from a hair dryer down the cast.)
- DO NOT stuff cotton or tissue under the edges of your cast. This could cause a decrease in blood flow.
- DO NOT rest a wet cast on any hard surfaces like a table. This will dent the cast and cause pressure, soreness and skin problems.



Watch for any of these signs or symptoms

- Cast feels too loose or too tight
- Cast softens, cracks or breaks
- Increasing pressure, or rubbing at certain points under your cast
- Fingers feel numb, cool, or are bluish in colour
- Wetness inside the cast
- Strong, unusual colour, odour or discharge from the cast
- Increased pain or pain you did not have before

If you have any of these symptoms, call the Hand Clinic at 416 603 5800 extension 2237.

Hours: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday, or call your doctor's office.

At all other times, go to the nearest emergency department.

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