

## Cast or Splint Care

Casts and splints support injured limbs and keep bones from moving while they heal. It is important to care for your cast or splint at home.

### HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Keep the cast or splint uncovered during the drying period. It can take 48 hours (2 days) to dry if it is made of plaster. A fiberglass cast will dry in less than 1 hour.
- Do not rest the cast on anything harder than a pillow for the first 24 hours.
- Do not put weight on your injured limb or apply pressure to the cast until your healthcare provider gives you permission. If you have a plaster walking cast, do not walk on it for 48 hours (2 days).
- Keep the cast or splint clean and dry. Wet casts or splints can lose their shape and may not support the limb as well. Also, wet skin can become infected. Cover the cast or splint with a double plastic bag and tie it securely when bathing or when out in the rain or snow
- Do not place any foreign objects under your cast or splint. Do not try to scratch the skin under the cast with any object. The object could get stuck inside the cast. Also, scratching could lead to an infection.
- Do not remove padding from inside your cast, cut, reshape or attempt to repair.
- Exercise all joints next to the injury that are not immobilized by the cast or splint. For example, if you have a long leg cast, exercise the hip joint and toes. If you have an arm cast or splint, exercise the shoulder, elbow, thumb, and fingers.
- Elevate your injured arm or leg on 1 or 2 pillows for the first 1 to 3 days to decrease swelling and pain. It is best if you can comfortably elevate your cast so it is higher than your heart.

### SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your cast or splint cracks.
- Your cast or splint is too tight or too loose.
- You experience unbearable itching inside the cast.
- Your cast becomes wet or develops a soft spot or area.
- You have a bad smell coming from inside your cast.
- You get an object stuck under your cast.
- Your skin around the cast becomes red or raw.
- You develop a new pain or worsening pain after the cast has been applied.

### SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have fluid leaking through the cast.
- You are unable to move your fingers or toes.
- You have discoloured, cool, painful, or very swollen fingers or toes beyond the cast.
- You have tingling or numbness around the injured area.
- You have severe pain or pressure under the cast.
- You develop any difficulty with your breathing or have shortness of breath.
- You develop chest pain.

**This general advice cannot cover all possible problems. If there is concern, please contact your physician, healthcare provider or the Emergency Department without delay.**



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Document Released: 12/15/2001 Document Revised: 12/06/2012 Document Reviewed: 03/14/2012  
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Revised July 2016