

Taking Care of Your: Plaster Cast

Plaster Cast Care

A plaster cast has been applied to help your broken bone heal properly and in the correct position. It is very important that you are extremely careful during the first 24 to 48 hours. If you have any questions that are not answered on this education handout, please call your doctor.

To allow the cast to work, it is important that you follow these instructions:

1. Do NOT put any weight or walk on your cast and allow your cast to dry for 24 to 48 hours before use (unless otherwise instructed).
2. Do NOT let your plaster cast get wet. Keep your cast clean and dry.
3. Do NOT insert anything into your cast. We know it can get itchy, but it is very important that nothing is put inside your cast. Objects inserted into your cast can cause scratches or open areas to develop on the skin which could become infected.
4. Do NOT drive (unless otherwise instructed).
5. Follow your doctor's instructions carefully regarding physical activity.
6. Move the fingers or toes of your casted leg or arm frequently to help reduce swelling and prevent joint stiffness (unless otherwise instructed).
7. Keep your cast elevated higher than heart-level to reduce swelling and pain.
8. Contact your doctor or go to the Emergency Department immediately if you experience any of the following:
 - a. Continued coldness or any discolouration (whitish or bluish colour) of your casted limb.
 - b. Numbness, continued tingling, or loss of movement of your casted limb.
 - c. Pain that is unrelieved by the medication your doctor has prescribed.
 - d. Your cast feels too snug or tight (even after having kept your cast elevated).
 - e. Any type of drainage or foul odour.
9. **Parents:** Small objects should be removed from your home to ensure children do NOT insert anything into their cast.

How will I shower/bathe? Can I wash my cast?

Baths are recommended over showers as it is easier to avoid getting water on your plaster cast.

Do not wash your plaster cast.

Do not get your plaster cast wet.

Do not wrap your plaster cast with saran wrap or a plastic bag as a means to try and keep the water out.

These methods often fail, resulting in your plaster cast getting wet.

What if I do get my plaster cast wet?

If you get your plaster cast wet and it becomes soft, the damaged cast must be removed and a new one put on. Call your doctor or go to the Emergency Department.

I got something stuck in my cast. How do I get it out?

Objects inserted into your cast can cause scratches or open areas to develop on the skin which could become infected. Call your doctor or go to the Emergency Department to have your cast removed and changed.

What if the cast gets cracked or damaged?

Small cracks may happen, however if the overall integrity of the cast is compromised (the cast is no longer able to hold the limb in the correct position) then it should be changed. Call your doctor or go to the Emergency Department.

It feels like something is wrong with my cast, can I remove it myself?

No, do not remove (or attempt to remove) your cast yourself. Call your doctor if you feel there may be something wrong with your cast.