



**TIPS IN CARING FOR YOUR CAST
PATIENT – FAMILY TEACHING GUIDE**

- If the cast becomes soiled, clean with a cloth dampened with dry cleanser. If still soiled, use white shoe polish, but sparingly; too much may saturate and soften the cast.
- Avoid getting water on or in your cast. If it becomes damp, use a hair dryer to dry the area.
- Plastic bags are good covering in wet weather.
- If the cast becomes rough on edges, cover the rough area with tape.

CARING FOR YOUR SKIN WHILE WEARING YOUR CAST

- Wash the skin area around the cast taking care not to saturate the cast in the process.
- Rub the areas around the cast frequently with alcohol. Lotion has a tendency to build up on the inside of the cast and becomes sticky, so it should never be used around the cast or under it.
- If edges are causing irritation to the skin, pad with some soft materials such as cotton or foam. Be sure the padding is well anchored to the cast, as loose material slipping into the cast will cause even more irritation.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO WATCH FOR AND DO WHILE YOU ARE WEARING YOUR CAST

- Twice a day check your fingers, if the cast is on your arm; or toes, if the cast is on your leg.
- Are they pink in color? Squeeze the nails till white; when released, they should have an immediate return to their pink color.
- If return is slow, call your doctor.
- Do not be alarmed if your foot appears darker when it is down. This is normal.
- Watch for swelling. Compare it to the other hand or foot. Are they about the same?
- Move fingers or toes, **NOT JUST WIGGLE**, but fully extend the fingers or toes. If any loss of motion or any increased pain is noted, call your doctor.

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- Make sure there is feeling on all surfaces of the hand and fingers or toes. If any numbness, tingling, or pinprick pain develops, call your doctor.
- Check around the cast for any odors other than those that may be from something spilled on or around the cast. Ordinarily, casts won't smell.
- Be especially conscious if there are stitches under the cast. If any smell is noticed, don't delay calling your doctor.
- Also, watch for any staining of, or discharge from, the cast.
- If swelling is noted after activity, elevate the extremity, the higher the better.
- Arm casts are most comfortable with a sling support.

IF YOUR DOCTOR PERMITS:

- To keep your shoulder from becoming stiff, **EACH DAY**, four times a day, remove the sling and exercise the arm by putting it through its full range of motion. In other words, move it the way it normally goes.
- For the leg in a cast, if possible, work at "setting", that is, tightening, then relaxing the thigh muscles, doing this frequently, or every two hours while awake. You should discuss this with your doctor **FIRST**, but some exercise is essential.
- If skin under the cast begins to itch, **DO NOT** try to stick anything inside the cast to scratch, especially if there are stitches. Parents: especially be alert to children sticking forks, sticks, or other ingenious objects inside the cast.

REMEMBER: CAST CARE MUST CONTINUE AS LONG AS YOUR CAST IS ON

If you undergo a cast change, the whole process of observation and care begins as new.