



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

- **Keep cast clean and dry.** Cover with plastic. If it becomes damp, use a hair dryer to dry the area.
- Plastic bags are good covering in wet weather.
- If cast gets wet or dirty **call Bone & Joint Center: 701-946-7404**
- If the cast becomes rough on edges, cover the rough area with tape.

### CARING FOR YOUR SKIN WHILE WEARING YOUR CAST

- Soap & water, rinse washcloth the skin area around the cast; **DO NOT** saturate the cast in the process.
- May daily cleanse around edges of cast with rubbing alcohol. If skin dry, use soap & water.
- Lotion may build up on the inside of the cast causing stickiness, so avoid around edges of cast or under it.
- **Skin irritation at cast edge:** pad with soft materials (cotton, foam); anchor to the cast, as loose material slipping into the cast will cause more irritation.

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

- Twice a day check the following (fingers for arm cast; toes for leg cast):
- Are they pink in color? Squeeze the nails till white; when released; should be a quick return to pink color.
- If return is slow, **call Bone & Joint Center (BJC)**
- 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?
- Fully extend non fractured fingers or toes for any loss of motion or increased pain, **call BJC.**
- Check for good feeling on all surfaces of the hand, fingers or toes; numbness, tingling, or pinprick pain, **call BJC.**
- Check cast for any odors other than those from something spilled on/around the cast. Ordinarily, casts won't smell.
- Be especially conscious if there are stitches under the cast. If any smell is noticed, **call BJC.**
- Call for any staining of, or discharge from, the cast.
- If swelling is noted after activity, elevate the extremity, the higher the better; sling is helpful for arm cast.

### IF YOUR DOCTOR PERMITS:

- Hand/arm cast: 4 times EACH DAY remove sling and move shoulder/arm in normal way to prevent stiffness and swelling of extremity.
- Leg cast: as tolerated in resting position, tighten and relax thigh muscles; straight leg lifts every two hours while awake.
- **ITCHING: DO NOT** stick anything inside the cast to scratch, especially if there are stitches=INFECTION!
- **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.