

Plaster casts

How to care for your plaster

It is important that you:

- do not wet, heat or try to bend your plaster
- do not scratch the skin under the plaster with pens, knitting needles, rulers etc. as this can result in injury to the skin.
- take extra care during the first 48 hours to allow the plaster to dry properly
- cover the plaster with a tea towel or hand towel, and place a plastic bag over the top, when bathing
- check that fingers and/or toes do not slip inside the plaster cast
- observe the affected hand/fingers or foot/toes several times a day for the first 48 hours after the cast has been applied:
 - temperature – should be warm or slightly cool to touch (same as the other limb)
 - skin colour – should be the same as the other limb
 - movement – may be reduced
 - sensation – should be the same as the other limb
 - swelling – swollen toes, hands or fingers is normal initially, and then should gradually reduce in size over the next few days.

If you have any concerns about the above, please see your local doctor or your nearest emergency department.

Bandage care

Plaster with crepe bandage

- Daily re-bandaging of the plaster is required to keep it firm. You will need to re-apply a crepe bandage firmly over the existing bandage every day. Do not remove the original bandage.
- The nurse or doctor will show you how to bandage starting from the fingers or toes and working up the limb.
- You will be given a crepe bandage before leaving the hospital.

Plaster with elastic coloured bandage

No re-bandaging required.

Full (synthetic/fibreglass) cast

No re-bandaging required.



Daily activity

Wear a sling (if given one) – until your child is normally moving their arm. This will help to reduce swelling and help with pain and recovery.

Use walking aids (crutches) – if given any.

It is advised that you:

- encourage active movement of the fingers or toes of the affected limb
- do not play sport
- do not attend school until comfortable
- see a doctor if your child is unsettled, irritable, or has a reduced appetite
- keep the plaster firm for good support.

Your child may find it more comfortable to elevate (raise) the injured limb for the first 24-48 hours (e.g. pillow under the plaster when sitting or sleeping). This can help to reduce swelling and pain.

Pain relief

It is advised that you:

- Give paracetamol or ibuprofen, for pain if required as per the packet instructions.
- See a doctor if pain is not relieved by the medication.

Follow-up care

- The length of time between follow-up appointments will vary depending on the nature of the injury.
- You will either be notified of your appointment time or be given a phone number to call to arrange your appointment.

Contact

If you have any concerns following discharge regarding any of the below:

- Pain, swelling, colour changes, decreased sensation or movement of the fingers/ toes in the plaster cast.
- Plaster cast seems soft, loose or has cracks.
- Skin inside the plaster is infected (bad smell from the cast, your child has a fever).

Then please take your child to their local doctor, or nearest emergency department.



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