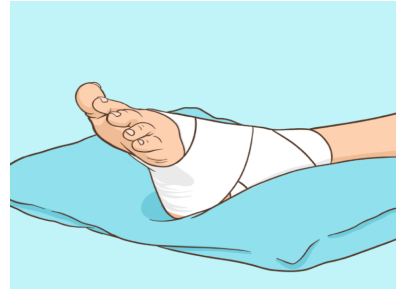


OrthoInfo Basics – Cast Care

Elevate. Prop your injured arm or leg up on pillows or another support so that it is above your heart.

Keeping your cast raised helps fluid drain “downhill”. You will have to recline if the splint or cast is on your leg and keep heel floating and pillow under the leg.

Exercise. Gently exercise your swollen fingers or toes. Moving them often will prevent stiffness.



Even if your cast or splint feels uncomfortable, never try to remove it yourself. You could cut your skin or prevent your fracture from healing properly

Call the office if you are concerned.

How do I take care of my cast or splint?

You must protect your cast from damage so it can protect your injury while it heals. If you have broken your foot or leg, you will probably get crutches to help you walk. A sling will help support your cast or splint if it is on your arm.

Keep your splint or cast dry. Moisture can weaken the cast and it may not be able to keep your injured bone in place. Wet cotton padding next to your skin can cause a rash or other irritation.

Use two layers of plastic or purchase waterproof shields to keep your splint or cast dry while you bathe. **Even with protection, never submerge your cast in water.** Because keeping a cast dry may be harder for children, many doctors recommend sponge baths until a child's cast is removed.

Avoid dirt. Keep dirt, sand, and powder away from the inside of your splint or cast.

Padding. Do not pull out the padding from your splint or cast.

Itching. Do not stick objects inside the splint or cast to scratch itching skin. Do not squirt cream or anything else inside it to soothe the itch. In some cases, blowing cool air from a hand – held hair dryer into the cast may help relieve itching. If itching persists, talk to your doctor.

***Inspect the skin around the cast.** If it becomes red or raw, contact your doctor.

Inspect your cast regularly. If it becomes cracked or has soft spots, contact your doctor's office.

Are there any warning signs I should watch for?

Swelling can create a lot of pressure under your cast. This can lead to problems. That's why it is so important to keep the swelling down. If you experience any of the following symptoms, contact your doctor's office immediately for advice

Your pain is getting worse. Pain may worsen if swelling makes your cast or splint feel too tight. It may also worsen if you have developed an infection or another problem.

Numbness. Too much pressure on your nerves can cause numbness or tingling in your hand or foot.

Burning. Too much pressure on your skin can cause burning or stinging under your cast

Severe swelling. If you have a lot of swelling below your cast in your fingers or toes. It may mean your cast is slowing your blood circulation.

No movement. You cannot move your toes or fingers.



What will rehabilitation be like?

Broken bones take several weeks to several months to heal. Pain usually stops long before the bone is solid enough to handle the stresses of everyday activities. You will need to wear your cast or splint until your bone is fully healed and can support itself