NHS
The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt
Orthopaedic Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print. Arrangements can also be made on request for it to be explained in your preferred language. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

Feedback

Tell us what you think of our patient information leaflet. Please send your comments to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

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Information for patients

Care of Your Plaster Cast

Out Patients

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Introduction

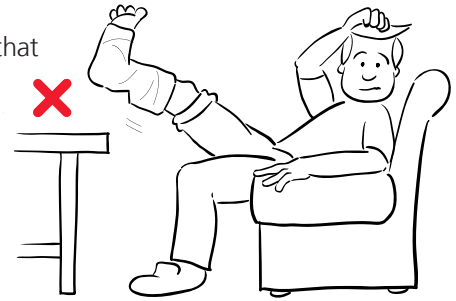
You have been placed in a plaster cast. This is to stop you moving that part of your body to allow time for healing. This could be because you have had an injury or following an operation. Your cast will be made from layers of Plaster of Paris (POP) bandage or a synthetic material, usually polyester based. You will be told when it is put on which type you have.

How do I look after my wet cast?

Until your plaster is properly dry it can easily be damaged by pressure. POP will take up to 48 hours to dry; synthetic cast will take about 1 hour. Therefore you should not put any weight on your cast until it is fully dry as this will cause it to soften and crack.

DO allow your cast to dry naturally. A chemical reaction will make your cast warm, which will last for approximately 20 minutes. It will then become cold. However this does not mean your cast is dry.

DO NOT use artificial heat sources to dry your cast as your cast can retain the heat and cause burns to your skin. It will also mean that your cast not drying properly resulting in a weak cast!



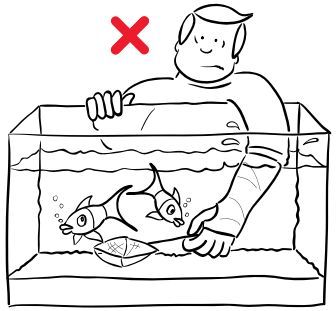
DO NOT rest your wet cast on a hard surface as this can cause dents which will rub the skin under your cast.

If you notice any of the following contact the hospital:

- Your fingers/toes become cold, blue, painful or tingly or become excessively swollen and do not get better 30 minutes after raising the limb above your heart.
- The plaster is too tight or too loose.
- Your plaster becomes wet or cracked.
- Your limb becomes more painful and is not relieved by painkillers.
- Your skin under the cast or around the edges feels sore.

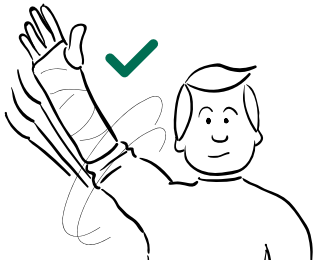
Mon-Fri 9-5 Outpatient Department **01691 404361** or **01691 404572**
Out of hours **01691 404000** and ask for the sister in charge of the hospital

How do I look after my dry cast?



DO NOT get your cast wet as it will soften and not support your limb. If you need to bath or shower you should use a specialised waterproof cover. Waterproof covers can be purchased from chemists and on the internet. We do not recommend the use of ordinary plastic bags as they could let in water. Do not place your cast directly into water.

DO NOT alter your cast. Any alterations should be done by a competent technician or nurse to ensure your cast still fulfils its purpose.



DO NOT push objects down your cast to scratch your skin as this could cause sore areas or disturb any dressings that may be present.

DO exercise all joints not encased in your cast to prevent you from getting stiff.

DO raise your limb to help prevent swelling. Even when sleeping raise your cast by placing it on pillows.

Other things to consider

You may feel that you are able to drive your car even with your cast on. However a plaster cast will reduce your ability to control your vehicle. Therefore you should inform your insurance company before attempting to drive as you may not be insured to do so and driving without insurance is a criminal offence for which you can be prosecuted.