



Midlands
Orthopaedic Centre

Trauma & Orthopaedics



Caring for your plaster cast

Patient Information Leaflet



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The Dudley Group
NHS Foundation Trust

Introduction

This leaflet is for people who have a plaster cast. It gives advice on caring for your plaster cast, what problems may occur and what to do if these happen. The advice given is only a guideline as each case is different. Treatment may vary according to your needs.

What do I need to do?

Limbs in plaster should be kept raised, especially for the first 48 hours after they have been put on. If you do not follow this advice, you may experience swelling and your plaster will become tight.

Please bring your clinic appointment card with you on every visit to clinic or the plaster room.

How do I care for my plaster cast?

- **Keep the plaster dry.** Do not allow it to become wet as it will cause the cast to soften and cause problems with your skin condition. You can buy a cover for when you need to have a bath and shower. We will give you a leaflet explaining where you can buy these.
- **Children who have a semi-rigid cast** can get them wet if there are no wounds under the cast. The plaster technician will tell you if you have a cast you are allowed to get wet.
- **Do not** apply any external heat to the plaster to aid drying.
- **Keep the limb in plaster raised** while you are sitting down. Legs in plaster should be raised higher than the hips and arms. Arms should be placed on a cushion or pillow so the hand is level with the shoulder.
- **Clean and dry the skin around the plaster every day.** Make sure the skin around the edge of the cast is not becoming sore by inspecting it for redness.
- **Do not** try to cut or remove the plaster yourself.
- **Carry out your exercises** as advised.
- **Make sure you stand up and move around** at least once every hour, and keep your other limbs that are not in plaster moving.
- **If irritation occurs under the plaster,** never push anything down to scratch it as you can damage your skin.

What should I look out for?

- **Colour.** Is your skin the normal colour? Especially check your fingers and toes.
- **Sensation.** Is the feeling normal in each finger and toe? Are there any areas of numbness or feelings of pins and needles?

- **Movement.** Can you move each finger and toe as you could previously? Not just wiggle them but fully bend and stretch each one.
- Has any **swelling** re-occurred or increased – of the limb, fingers, toes or the surrounding areas?
- Check the plaster daily to ensure that no discharge, moisture or odour is coming from it.

You must contact the plaster room or Emergency Department on the numbers below for advice if you:

- Have numbness or pins and needles.
- Cannot move your fingers or toes.
- Have blue skin, particularly on your fingers or toes.
- Have a lot of swelling on the limb that is in plaster.
- Feel severe pain or a burning sensation.

Or:

- If the plaster cracks, gets wet or becomes soft.
- If the plaster cast becomes loose or uncomfortable in any way.

Preventing deep vein thrombosis (DVT)

Being in a cast can mean you cannot move around as much. This can increase your risk of developing a blood clot (DVT). So, it is important to look out for any of the following symptoms:

- Red or discoloured area on your leg.
- Pain in the calf or groin.
- Leg pain, tenderness, swelling and increased warmth of your leg.
- Acute shortness of breath.
- Coughing up blood.
- Chest pain worsening when breathing in deeply.

If you develop any of these symptoms, contact the Emergency Department immediately on 01384 456111 ext 2300.

Contact numbers

Plaster Room – Outpatient Department

01384 456111 ext. 2843 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Fracture Clinic – Outpatient Department

01384 456111 ext. 2220 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Minor injury nurse station in Emergency Department

01384 456111 ext. 1756 (24 hour service)

Emergency Department reception

01384 456111 ext. 2300 (24 hours, every day)

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔