

# Cast Care Instructions



TWH

## Hand Program

### General Information for patients receiving a cast or splint

A cast or splint may be put on you to treat a break, sprain, or for after an operation.

It takes a few days to adjust to wearing a cast or splint. Please follow your doctor's instructions about physical activity.

### How to Care for Your Cast:

- A plaster cast takes 48 hours to dry before it reaches its maximum strength.
- If you have been given a fiberglass cast, it will reach its maximum strength after about 1 hour.
- During the first 2 days, do not put all of your weight on the cast.
- Lift your injured arm or leg above the level of your heart when you are resting. This is most important during the first few days after you get your cast.
- All casts **MUST BE KEPT DRY**. When you are bathing or showering, wrap a hand towel around the cast, and then wrap a strong plastic bag around it. Secure it snugly. The towel will help absorb any water that gets through the bag.
- To decrease swelling and stiffness, move your fingers, elbow and shoulder often.
- Use a sling only when you are out in crowded places. Otherwise, do not depend on it. This may cause stiffness of the elbow and shoulder joints.
- After an operation, a small amount of bleeding within the cast is normal. If bleeding continues, phone the clinic for instructions at the number below.

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**Author:** Fiona FitzPatrick R.T. (ORTHOPAED), Eric Small Orthopaedic Technician

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## **DO NOT:**

- DO NOT poke inside your cast with a ruler, knitting needle, coat hanger, etc., because you could break the skin and cause an infection. (If you find that your cast is itchy, direct some COOL AIR from a hair dryer down the cast.)
- DO NOT stuff cotton or tissue under the edges of your cast. This could cause a decrease in blood flow.
- DO NOT rest a wet cast on any hard surfaces. This will dent the cast and cause pressure, soreness and skin problems.

## **Watch for any of the following signs or symptoms:**

- cast feels too loose or too tight
- cast softens, cracks or breaks
- increasing pressure, or rubbing at certain points under your cast
- fingers feel numb, cool, or are bluish in colour
- wetness inside the cast
- strong, unusual colour, odour and/or discharge from the cast
- increased or unexpected pain

If you have any of these symptoms, call the Hand Clinic at 416-603-5800 EXT. 2237  
Hours: 8 A.M. - 4 P.M., Monday to Friday, or call your Doctor's office. At all other times go to the Emergency department.

## **The Hand Program:**

Dr. Dimitri Anastakis MD, MEd, FRCS(C), FACS  
416-603-5790

Dr. Jamil Ahmad MD, FRCS (C)  
416-603-5800 x.4924

Dr. Brent Graham MD, FRCS(C)  
416-603-5647

Dr. Michel Schofield MD, MSc  
416-603-5455

Dr. Herb von Schroeder MD, MSc, FRCS(C)  
416-603-5641

Eric Small, Orthopaedic Technician  
Fiona FitzPatrick, R.T. (ORTHOPAED)  
416-603-5800 ext. 2237

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Toronto General Hospital Toronto Western Hospital Princess Margaret Hospital