



# Cast Care Instructions

## Information for patients receiving a cast or splint

This pamphlet has information about:

- How to care for your cast
- Signs and symptoms to watch for
- Who to call if you have questions

## The Hand Program

Please visit the UHN Patient Education website for more health information:  
[www.uhnpatienteducation.ca](http://www.uhnpatienteducation.ca)

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Revised: 03/2017  
Form: D-5088

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 get used to wearing a cast or splint. Please follow your doctor's instructions about what you can and can't do when wearing a cast.

## How to care for your cast

- A plaster cast takes 48 hours to dry before it reaches its full strength.
- If you were given a fibreglass 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. 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.



### **Do Not:**

- DO NOT poke inside your cast with a ruler, knitting needle or coat hanger etc. You could break the skin and cause an infection. (If your cast is itchy, blow 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 like a table. This will dent the cast and cause pressure, soreness and skin problems.



## **Watch for any of these 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 pain or pain you did not have before

If you have any of these symptoms, call the Hand Clinic at:

**416-603-5800 extension 2237**

Hours: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday, or call your doctor's office.

**At all other times go to the nearest emergency department.**

## **Meet our team in the Hand Program:**

Dr. Dimitri Anastakis MD, MEd, FRCS(C), FACS	Phone: 416-603-5790
Dr. Jamil Ahmad MD, FRCS (C)	Phone: 416-603-5800 ext. 4924
Dr. Heather Baltzer MD, MSc, FRCS(C)	Phone: 416-603-5449
Dr. Matthew Furey MD, FRCS(C)	Phone: 416-603-5800 ext. 4924
Dr. Steven McCabe MD, FRCS(C)	Phone: 416-603-5455
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