

“YOUR CAST”

So, you are now wearing a cast! You are in this cast to keep your arm or leg from moving so the broken bone or injured tissue will heal. You may wonder how to care for the cast and if it is functioning properly. Here are a few hints to help you.

1. WHEN YOUR CAST IS NEW

- A. Your new FIBERGLASS cast takes about 30 minutes to dry. If it is a walking cast wait 30 minutes before weight bearing. Wait longer if ordered to do so.
- B. Do not rest your cast on hard surfaces or sharp edges. This may result in dents in the cast, which can cause pressure areas.
- C. For a new injury keep the cast elevated on pillows (above heart level) for 48 hours. Also use an ice pack on the injured extremity for 48 hours. Continue each of these suggestions longer if pain and/or swelling persists.

2. ONCE YOUR CAST IS DRY

- A. **DO NOT** get the cast wet! If you accidentally get the cast wet, towel dry first, then use a hair dryer on a cool setting to dry the inside of the cast. This will take several hours before the cast padding is adequately dry.
- B. Move about as normally as possible and do exercises regularly as directed by your physician.
- C. Protect the exposed portion of hand or foot from the cold with a sock or a mitten. Wearing a sock on the toes while in a walking cast will help keep debris from getting up inside the cast.
- D. Do not use plastic or rubber boots over a cast for more than a few minutes, as this will cause moisture to form and get the cast wet. Use your crutches while walking on wet ground or sidewalks. Be extremely careful when it is icy!
- E. If your cast breaks down, do not attempt to trim or fix it yourself. Notify the physician or Ortho Tech immediately.
- F. **DO NOT** poke anything into the cast for scratching. This can cause infection. Perspiration can often cause itching; use a hairdryer on a cool setting to air out the cast. You may also use your knuckles to knock on the cast where itching occurs. This can often relieve itching. If the itching is unbearable, report it to your physician.
- G. Warn children not to poke cotton balls, keys, crayons, money, etc., into the cast. These may get “lost” in the cast and cause pressure areas resulting in sores.
- H. Should you feel something is definitely wrong with your cast, (discoloration, swelling, tingling, numbness of toes or fingers) contact your physician.
- I. Active motion of fingers and toes is encouraged. Always remove jewelry from the injured extremity.
- J. Do not do any heavy lifting, pushing or pulling.

3. BATHING/SHOWERING

- A. Personal hygiene should be maintained while in the cast.
- B. Commercially manufactured cast protectors are available for purchase at most medical supply stores. There are some suggestions on the back of this form. Sometimes insurance companies will cover the cost of these items.
- C. These steps are effective if followed in using plastic bags over the cast and extremity while bathing or showering.
 - 1) Make sure the bags are airtight (blow air in the bag to ensure they do not have holes).
 - 2) Place one bag over the extremity using waterproof tape (Duct tape is suggested) to seal off the cast. Only about ¼ to ½ inch of tape should adhere to the skin above the cast.

- 3) Fold a hand towel or washcloth, about 3 inches wide, and wrap it around the extremity above the level of the first plastic bag. You may secure this with a rubber band.
- 4) Using a second plastic bag, secure it with the waterproof tape above the cloth used in step 3. The tape must go completely around the top of the bag and on the skin and should be snug enough to provide a seal.
- 5) It is important to ensure the tape is not so tight it cuts off circulation.
- 6) If using the bathtub, **NEVER** submerge the protected extremity.
- 7) While showering with a cast on your lower extremity, the use of a shower stool or similar object to sit on in the shower is suggested for safety purposes.
- 8) Following the bath/shower towel dry the body and the outer bag before it is removed

4. CRUTCHES - SEE REVERSE - *ALWAYS** bring crutches when coming for a possible cast removal or cast change.***

I UNDERSTAND AND WILL FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

SIGNATURE: _____ PATIENT'S

NAME: _____

(Parent or legal guardian if patient is minor)

(Please print)

Date of Birth _____ DATE:-

5. AFTER THE FRACTURE IS HEALED AND CAST IS REMOVED – SKIN CARE

- A. Cleanse skin carefully and gently with soap and water.
 - B. Never scratch vigorously with fingernails. Gentle rubbing with fingertips is permitted.
- Apply baby powder, hand lotion or baby oil.

6. USING CRUTCHES - If you have questions regarding the crutch fit, ask the Medical Assistant or Ortho Tech to check the fit.

- A. Your crutches should have shoulder pads and rubber tips, which have a gripping, edge.
- B. Most of your weight bearing should be done with your hands – NOT your armpits.
- C. If crutches break, pads wear out or do not seem to fit properly, see the agency which provided them for adjustment or replacement.
- D. Stairs:
 - 1) UP – Leave crutches on starting level and put good foot up first, then the bad foot with the crutches.
 - 2) DOWN – Put crutches down first along with the bad foot, trailing the good foot. An easy way to remember this is “Up with the good – Down with the bad.” Only take one step at a time.

If you are interested in purchasing cast care protectors you may contact any of the following:

XeroSox Pro-Pump – www.XeroSox.com or call 1-888-937-6769.

Major Medical Supply – www.majormedicalsupply.com or call 303-403-4655.

Orthopedic Medical Supplies – www.orthomedicalsupplies.com or call 1-800-678-4632.

Apple Medical, Inc. 5025 W. 29th Ave., Denver, CO 80212. phone: 303-455-1195.

REMEMBER:

ALWAYS BRING CRUTCHES WHEN COMING FOR A POSSIBLE CAST REMOVAL OR CAST CHANGE.