

Cast Care Instructions

KEEP IT DRY

- Casts cannot get wet! Wet casts cause skin irritation and infections.
- For bathing:
 - Cover the cast with a towel then a plastic bag
 - Secure the plastic bag with tape or a rubber band
 - **Never** submerge a cast under water
 - For children 3 years old and younger: only perform sponge baths
- Keep a spare plastic bag in your car, purse, or child's backpack in case of rain or snow.

ELEVATE

- Elevate your cast to prevent swelling of the fingers or toes.
 - For upper extremities:
 - Keep the hand above the elbow and the elbow above the shoulder
 - Use a sling to elevate while standing
 - For lower extremities:
 - Keep the foot above the knee and the knee above the shoulder
 - Always float the heel by placing a pillow or cushion under the calf
- Elevation is most important for the first 24-48 hours, but may be necessary for longer depending on your injury.

SKIN CARE

- Casts can be itchy. **Never** place anything down or inside the cast.
 - **Do not** put any type of lotion or powder inside the cast.
 - **Do not** remove any padding from inside the cast.
- To help with itching:
 - Encourage your child to decrease their activity levels. Sweating causes the skin under the cast to become hot and itchy.
 - Blow cold air down the cast with a fan, hair dryer (on a cool setting), or air conditioner.
 - Apply a cloth covered bag of ice over the cast. Ice may be kept on 20 minutes every hour. Never apply ice directly to the skin or cast.
 - Tap on the cast gently with a wood spoon or other round object.
 - Give your child over-the-counter allergy medicine like Claritin, Zyrtec, or Benadryl. These medicines can help relieve itching and do not require a prescription. Ask the pharmacist how much to give if needed.
- If your child does not or cannot move on their own, change their position every 2 hours during the day and every 4 hours at night to prevent skin breakdown in the cast.

WHEN TO GET HELP

Please notify our staff if

1. Your child's fingers or toes are:
 - pale, blue, or discolored
 - have decreased feeling
 - have increased swelling
 - have decreased or no movement
 - have tingling or "pins and needles" feeling
 - have increased pain
 - are no longer able to be seen due to the cast or the cast/splint is "slipping"
2. Something becomes stuck in the cast

3. The cast breaks, becomes wet, or falls off
4. There is a foul odor coming from the cast
5. Your child is irritable or has a fever for no other obvious reason
6. Your child has pain that is not relieved by medicine

PHONE NUMBERS

Orthopaedic Nurses: **202-476-7120** (7:30am to 4:00pm Monday through Friday)

After-Hours Orthopaedic Doctor: **202-476-5000** (ask to speak to the orthopaedic resident on-call)

Orthopaedic Appointments: **202-476-2112, option 2**