



CARING FOR A CHILD WITH A CAST

FOLLOW-UP

Your appointment with Dr. _____
has been made for you on _____

CASTS

Casts are used for many reasons. Your doctor or nurse will tell you why your child needs one.

WHAT TO DO

- **Do not** let your child walk or lean on the cast while it is wet. A plaster cast may take 2 days to dry – a fibreglass one will take 2 hours to dry. (It may feel dry on the outside and still be wet on the inside.)
- Leave the cast open to the air as much as possible when it is drying.
- Keep the arm or the leg with the cast raised as much as possible for the next few days. This helps stop the swelling. Use pillows to prop it up – the higher the better.
- Have your child wiggle his or her fingers (if the cast is on the arm) or toes (if the cast is on the leg) often – every 2-3 hours while awake.

ACTIVITY

- As long as the cast is on, your child should not be involved in any play or other activity where he or she might lose balance and trip or fall.
- If the cast is damaged, the arm or leg inside the cast could be injured as well. This means **no** rough play, bike riding, skate boarding, running, climbing or playing on stairs.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Pain

- For the next few days, if your child has pain, give acetaminophen (Tempra or Tylenol) as shown on the bottle.
- **Do not give Aspirin or ASA.** Other medicine may be given under the advice of your doctor.

Swelling

- Be sure that the fingers (if the cast is on the arm) or toes (if the cast is on the leg) are pink and not hot or swollen.
- If they are hot, swollen, tingling or blue, raise the cast high on pillows for 30-60 minutes.

Smell

- After a week or two, a cast may get dirty and begin to smell. If the smell is really bad, especially if there was surgery done, call your doctor, hospital or nursing station.

WHEN TO GET HELP

- If the pain gets worse and acetaminophen (Tempra or Tylenol) doesn't help.
- If raising the cast for an hour does not change the colour, swelling or tingling.
- If the smell is really bad, especially if surgery was done.
- If the cast is cracked or broken.

CARE OF THE CAST

- Keep it dry.
- If it gets wet, keep it open to the air or use a hair dryer set on low (or cool) to help it dry.

- In wet weather, cover it with plastic bags when your child goes outside.
- Cover any rough edges with tape to stop it from scratching the skin. A nurse will show you how to do this.

CARE OF THE SKIN

- Clean the skin around the cast with a damp cloth. Dry it well.
- Do not use lotions or powder near the cast. They can make it itchy or cause a rash.
- If the skin under the cast is itchy, keep the cast cool (remove clothing covering it) or blow cool air down it with a hair dryer. **Do not use** anything to stick down the cast to scratch an itch.
- **Do not put anything inside the cast** – it could scratch the skin and cause an infection or sores.

CRUTCHES

- You will need to buy the crutches. You can do this at Steven's Home Medical Supplies Store (within the Health Sciences Centre complex at 700 William Avenue.) The cost is less than \$25. You will be given a \$5 refund if you return the crutches **with your receipt** when your child no longer needs them.
- If you are given crutches in the Emergency Department, you will receive a bill in the mail. The bill may be paid when you return the crutches to the Health Sciences Centre cashier at the 820 Sherbrook Street entrance. Please keep the crutches until your child is better.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT CAST CLINIC

- The doctor will check to see if the cast should come off, stay on, or be changed a bit.
- For removing back slabs (soft casts), the process can be simple and you just need scissors. For the usual full fiberglass or plaster cast (hard casts) we use a cast removal tool. Some children and youth find this tool a bit loud.
- It can help to know what to expect. Prepare yourself and your child/youth for the cast removal process by using your smartphone camera app and pointing it at this QR code for a video and information:



- You can also visit our website: hsc.mb.ca/children/our-services/cast-removal

If you have any questions or concerns call:

- **Your child's doctor at** _____
- **Health Links – Info Santé at 788-8200 (toll free 1-888-315-9257)**
- **Your local hospital or nursing station**

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