

# Cast Care

A cast keeps an injured bone from moving so there is less pain and the bone heals better. When a cast is put on, a sock-like material is put over your injured leg or arm. Then a soft cotton material is wrapped to cushion your skin. Wet fiberglass or plaster cast material is then put on. It will begin to feel warm as it is put on. The material will harden and set in 5 to 10 minutes. The staff will tell you when and how you can walk on your leg or use the arm with the cast.

## General care

- Do not pull out the padding inside your cast.
- Do not break off rough edges or trim without checking with your doctor first.
- Check your skin each day for redness or raw areas. If you have either, call your doctor.
- Check your cast each day for cracked or soft spots. If you have either, call your doctor.

## Bathing

- Avoid getting your cast wet. The cotton under the cast is very hard to get dry. If it gets wet, it can cause skin problems.
- When you bathe, keep the cast out of the water. Put a plastic bag over your cast to keep it dry. Seal the open end of the bag around your arm or leg with tape to keep it as dry as possible.
- If your cast gets wet, use a hair dryer on low setting to dry your cast. Do not hold the dryer in one spot too long or it might burn your skin. It may take up to 2 hours to dry.

## Movement or activity

- Do not rest your cast against hard surfaces for longer than 30 minutes. The pressure on your skin under the cast could cause your skin to breakdown.
- Raise your injured leg or arm above the height of your heart as much as possible. This will help to ease swelling and pain in the first few days.
- Exercise your toes or fingers. This helps with circulation, healing and helps to limit swelling.

## Skin care

- Do not scratch under the cast with any sharp object. This may cause skin damage.
- Keep dirt, sand or powder away from the inside of the cast.
- Use a large sock or mitten as a toe or hand warmer.
- Use a nail file to smooth any rough edges on your cast.
- Use a fan or hair dryer each day, set on cool, to keep your cast dry and help relieve itching.

## **Call your doctor right away if:**

- Numb, tingling, cold or blue toes or fingers
- Loss of movement of the toes or fingers
- Increased pain
- Burning or stinging
- Swelling that makes your cast feel tight or a lot of swelling below your cast
- A loose cast or if it slides around, gets damaged, breaks or any other problems with your cast

## **Removing the cast**

Your cast will be removed with a special saw. You will only feel some vibrating and pressure from the movement of the saw. Never try to remove your cast yourself.

Your injured leg or arm will look smaller after the cast is removed. Your skin will also be dry and flaky. Use lotion or bath oil to soften and remove dead skin. The staff will tell you what activities you can do to strengthen your muscles.

**Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**