

Caring for a plaster cast

Information for patients, parents and guardians

This factsheet has been designed to advise you on how to best look after your child's plaster cast and when and where to seek help if you experience any problems.

Contact the hospital immediately (even out of hours) if:

- your child's fingers or toes become swollen, blue, numb or difficult to move
- the cast cracks, becomes too loose or too tight, or in any way uncomfortable
- there is severe pain, worse than the original injury
- there is any discharge or unpleasant odour (not sweat) from the cast

The plaster may feel tight for a short period after application. Elevating the limb on two or more pillows can usually relieve this.

General advice

- Back slabs are temporary casts and must not be used for walking on.
- If your child has been told they are allowed to walk on the cast they must allow it to dry completely first. This takes two to three days for plaster of Paris casts and one hour for synthetic casts.
- Do not heat the cast to help dry it quicker.
- Your child must always walk with the cast sandal provided, if a sandal was not provided they must not walk on the cast.
- It's important to keep moving all joints not covered by a cast, especially fingers, toes, elbows and shoulders.
- Do not get the cast wet or use plastic, bin liners or cling film to keep the cast dry. They do not work. Special covers can be purchased to use while washing or bathing; ask staff for details or wrap a towel around the cast and keep it well away from the water.
- Do not put anything down the cast to scratch, as this can cause an infection if there is any broken skin under the cast.
- Do not cut the cast if it is rubbing or causing discomfort, please contact the number over the page for help.

Contact details:

Southampton Children's Hospital
023 8120 4852

Opening hours:

Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm
Friday, 9am to 2.30pm

Appointment enquiries – children

023 8120 8204

Out of hours contact the emergency department

023 8120 6220

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.

www.uhs.nhs.uk/childrenshospital