

Place the elbow of your effected arm on the table with your fingers pointing towards the ceiling. These can be carried out if your cast includes the elbow and it may be more comfortable to rest the cast on a pillow.

- Bend all your fingers to make a fist and straighten
- Bend the knuckle joints of all your fingers whilst keeping fingers straight.
- Touch the tip of each finger with your thumb.

Repeat these exercises 5 times.

General advice

- Keep the injured limb elevated as much as possible to reduce swelling and aid recovery
- If using a sling remember to move the elbow and shoulder as advised.
- Use your affected hand for light activities only
- Keep the cast dry
- Do not poke anything down the cast
- Try not to scratch the skin under the cast
- Avoid drying the cast with hair dryers or other artificial heat sources
- Do not put anything heavy on the cast

This leaflet gives guidance only. If you have any queries or your symptoms worsen, please contact your GP, the Minor Injuries Unit or the Emergency Department. Or you can call 111.

Opening Times:

Open 5 days a week.

Mon day – Friday 08.30 – 16.30 (last admission time 16.00)

In an Emergency:

Southmead Hospital 0117 4145100
(Emergency Department)

Gloucestershire Hospital 03004222222
(Main Switch)

Royal United Hospital, Bath 01225 824391
(Emergency Department)

Great Weston Hospital, Swindon 01793 604020 (Main Switch)

Address & Telephone numbers:

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01666 501761 (MIU)

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Care of your Plaster Cast

Information for Patients attending the Minor Injuries Unit

Tetbury Hospital Trust Ltd
Reg Company No 2681604, Reg Charity No 1008926



A registered charity committed to delivering the best in care for local people and the communities we serve.

Introduction

This leaflet provides information on how to look after your plaster cast, which is important to ensure a better recovery of your broken bone and injured limb.

General Information

Plaster casts are made up of a bandage and a hard covering. Your initial plaster is most likely to be made from Plaster of Paris which will take approximately 48 hours to dry. The plaster feels warm for approximately 20 minutes after application and then becomes cold/clammy whilst the water evaporates. Synthetic casts will take approximately 15 minutes to dry and will feel hot.

When to seek help

Phone or return to the Minor Injuries Unit or Emergency Department if you experience:

- Increased pain despite regular pain relief
- Increased swelling – not reduced by keeping limb elevated
- Numbness or pins and needles in the affected limb
- Inability to move your fingers / toes
- If the plaster cracks, becomes loose or is rubbing your skin
- If you feel a 'hot spot' or blister like pain under the cast

If your knee or elbow ARE NOT in a cast, ensure you bend and straighten the limb, especially the knee, and this should be repeated 10 times each day.

Sport

It is unwise to participate in sport, especially contact sport whilst in a plaster. No swimming.

A water proof bag can be purchased to go over the affected limb when showering.

Can I drive?

You may feel that you are cable of driving a vehicle even though a plaster cast has been applied to your limb.

Please check with your insurance company because depending upon your cast / injury your insurance maybe invalid. This may lead to you being uninsured under the Road Traffic Act 1988.

Follow up Appointments

When attending a follow up / fracture clinic appointment please remember to:

- Bring a shoe when you are due to have a leg cast removed
- Bring crutches or walking frames
- Take pain relief prior to attending any appointments as they may remove or change the plaster cast, and any associated movement may cause discomfort.

Exercises when your leg is in a cast

Toe Exercises

Wiggle your toes whenever you remember. Curl your toes under, hold for 5 seconds and release. Stretch your toes out, hold for 5 seconds and release.

Leg Lifts

These help strengthen the muscles in your ankle and your leg while wearing a cast. Simply lie on the floor, keeping your leg and knee straight. Raise your leg several inches off the floor and hold for 5 seconds, bring your leg back down to the floor.

Exercises when your arm is in a cast

Complete these repetitions 4 times each day:

Shoulder flexion

Standing or sitting in an upright position, slowly lift your affected arm up towards the ceiling (elbow straight) and then lower, repeat 5 times.

Elbow flexion and extension

Sitting in an upright position, slowly bend your affected elbow so your hand moves towards your shoulder and then fully straighten your elbow. Repeat 5 times.

Finger flexion and extension

