

Proper Cast Care

Proper cast care starts with the instructions for your injury and cast. A cast supports healing tissue, but it does not make every activity safe. Before leaving your appointment, confirm which movements and daily tasks are allowed.

The first few days

Swelling can make a new cast feel tight. Raise the injured limb as instructed and move exposed fingers or toes when your clinician permits. Let the cast harden for the time your cast team specifies. Do not speed drying with heat.

Know your restrictions

Ask whether you may put weight on a leg cast, which walking aid to use, and how to protect the cast while washing. Keep it dry unless your team has given specific waterproof-cast instructions. Do not cut or remove it yourself.

Do not ignore warning signs

Increasing pain, numbness, burning, cold or blue fingers or toes, or loss of movement needs urgent assessment. New calf pain or swelling also needs urgent medical care. Call 911 for chest pain, sudden shortness of breath, or collapse.

Keep your follow-up appointment. Ask whom to contact outside office hours, and use emergency care for serious symptoms rather than waiting for the office to reopen.

Related reading

- Cast Care & Maintenance
- Cast Care & Foot Protection

Sources and further information

- North Tees and Hartlepool NHS: Plaster casts
- Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS: Care of your cast
- AAOS: Care of casts and splints

This handout provides general education. Your treating clinician can explain how it applies to your injury.