

# Care of Plaster Casts



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## What is a Cast?

A cast is a hard mold that encases a body part (usually a limb) to immobilize the bone/s and surrounding tissue. It can be used to treat injuries such as fractures, correct orthopedic conditions such as deformities and promote healing after surgery, amputation, or nerve or vascular repair.

## Cast Care

- Follow your doctor's advice
- Keep the cast elevated on pillows or using a sling above the level of your heart, to minimize the swelling
- Do exercise(s) to maintain muscle strength, as per your doctor's advice
- Protect the cast from getting wet by covering it with a plastic bag while taking a shower/bath
- Cool air helps to reduce itching; you can use a hair dryer on a cool setting to do this
- Do not insert any sharp objects or apply powder into the cast to relieve itching because it can cause damage to the skin and lead to infection
- Keep the cast dry, as moisture can weaken or destroy the cast
- Do not damage any area of the cast or place any weight on it, unless advised by your doctor.

## Check For the Following

Report immediately to the Emergency Department of your nearest hospital if any of these symptoms occur:

- Can't move fingers or toes
- Numbness or tingling in the casted hand or leg
- Increased pain, burning, or stinging
- The cast feels too tight
- Swelling below the cast
- Symptoms of infection (such as fever, unusual pain, and bad smell from the cast)
- The cast loosens, cracks, or breaks

## Reference:

<http://procedures.lww.com/lnp/home.do>

