

Emergency Services

Cast or Splint Care

A cast or splint supports and protects an injured part of your body. The cast or splint keeps the injured area from moving, so it can heal faster. How long you need the cast or splint depends on the type of injury.

You have this type of cast or splint:

Plaster Cast

A plaster cast takes at least a day to become dry and hard. Do not put any weight or pressure on the cast during this time. If you have a cast on your leg and you have been told you can put weight on it, do not put weight on it for 3 days.

Fibreglass Cast

A fibreglass cast dries quickly, and is stronger and lighter than plaster. If you have a cast on your leg and you have been told you can put weight on it, you can put weight on the cast right way.

Plaster Splint

A plaster splint is the back half of the cast held in place with a tensor bandage. We use this type of splint when you have swelling around your injury. A cast may be put on later when the swelling goes away.

Metal Splint

The metal splint has been bent to hold your finger and hand in a certain position. Do not bend or change the shape of the splint. The tape holds the splint in place.

Care of the cast or splint

Keep the cast or splint dry.

To take a bath or shower:

- Wrap your cast or splint with a towel. If the splint is on a finger, wrap your whole hand.
- Pull a plastic bag over the towel so that it is completely covered.
- Wrap tape around the open end of the bag to keep water from getting in.

For plaster casts or splints:

- If it gets wet, soft, or cracked, arrange to see your family doctor.

For fibreglass casts:

- If it gets wet the outside, wipe it off.
- If it gets wet on the inside, blow cool air from a hair dryer.
- If it gets cracked, arrange to see your family doctor.

Itchy skin under a cast or splint is common.

Blow cool air from a hair dryer into the cast.

Do not put any objects down inside the cast or splint. You can damage your skin and cause an infection.

Do not put any powders or lotions under the cast or splint as a way to treat itchiness.

Do not trim, re-shape, or remove the cast or splint.

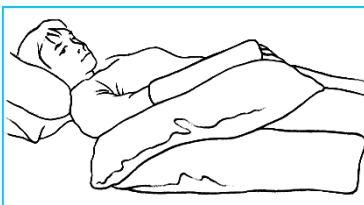
Do not hit your cast or splint against hard surfaces.

Cast or Splint Care - *continued*

Care of your injury

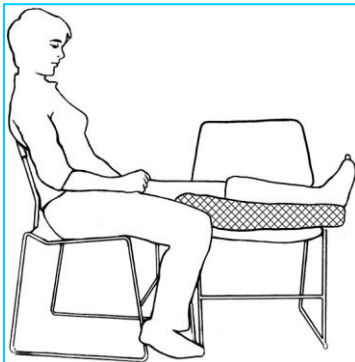
Take medicine for the pain if you need it.
Check with your family doctor or pharmacist as to what will work best for you.

To help reduce swelling and ease pain, rest your arm or leg so that it is above your heart.
To do this, rest your arm or leg on pillows when sitting or lying down.



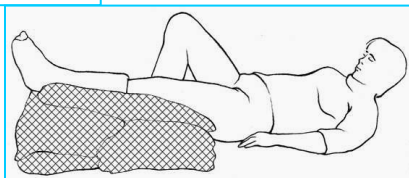
Arm resting on pillows and above the heart while lying down

Arm resting on pillows and above the heart while sitting



Leg elevated and resting on pillows while sitting

Leg resting on pillows and above the heart while lying down



If you have an arm cast, use a sling when walking around.

Wiggle your fingers or toes often, except if you have a metal splint on your finger(s).

Go to the nearest Emergency Department if:

- You have severe or increasing pain and it does not go away with changing position or pain medicine.
- Your cast or splint feels very tight.
- Your fingers or toes:
 - Turn blue or grey.
 - Become very swollen.
- Your hand or foot feels numb or tingles.
- The skin under the cast or splint is burning, stinging, or it feels like something is pressing into your skin.
- You have a bad smell coming from the cast or splint.
- You have chills and a fever over 38.5°C (101.3°F).

To learn more, it's good to ask:

- Your family doctor
- Your physiotherapist
- Fraser Health Virtual Care
1-800-314-0999 or live chat online at fraserhealth.ca/virtualcare
10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., daily
- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf and hard of hearing) or go online to HealthLinkBC.ca

Images used with permission from FB.224.C275.PHC 'Cast Care Following Surgery or Orthopedic Treatment' (June 2012) by Providence Health Care