

Looking After Your Plaster

Plaster applied on: Review on:

☐ No weight on the limb ☐ Partial weight ☐ Full weight as comfortable

COME TO THE CLINIC OR HOSPITAL IMMEDIATELY IF

Fingers or toes become **white, blue, very pale or cold** · **increasing pain** that painkillers do not touch · **pins and needles or numbness** · you cannot move the fingers or toes · swelling that keeps increasing despite elevation · severe pain when the fingers or toes are gently straightened

These can mean the plaster is too tight and the circulation is being cut off. **This is an emergency. Do not wait until morning.**

The first 48 hours

- **Keep the limb raised above the level of your heart** as much as possible — arm on pillows, leg propped up. This is the best thing you can do for pain and swelling.
- **Move your fingers or toes regularly** — every hour. It keeps the circulation moving and reduces stiffness.
- A plaster takes 24 to 48 hours to dry fully. Do not rest it on a hard edge, which can dent it and press on the skin.

KEEP IT COMPLETELY DRY

Cover it with a plastic bag sealed at the top for bathing, or use a proper cast cover. **A wet plaster softens, loses its shape and rots the skin underneath.** If it does get wet, come and have it changed — do not try to dry it with a hair dryer on hot.

NEVER PUT ANYTHING INSIDE THE PLASTER

Not a knitting needle, pencil, stick, wire, powder, oil or coin. It is the most tempting thing in the world when it itches, and it causes wounds you cannot see, which then become infected under the cast.

For itching: tap the outside of the plaster, or blow cool air from a hair dryer on the **cold** setting into the open end.

Also: do not trim, cut or remove the plaster yourself. Do not walk on a plaster unless we have fitted a walking heel and told you it is allowed. Tell us if it cracks, becomes loose, or starts to smell.

Search: plaster cast care, POP, cast itching, cast wet, plaster instructions

