

Caring for a Cast

Function of a cast

To protect the injured limb, a cast can immobilize the fracture part to promote healing as well as minimize pain and suffering caused by body movement. In general, a cast usually needs to stay on for 6 weeks.

Risks of cast

- Deep Vein Thrombosis (a blood clot in a deep vein, commonly occurred in lower limb)
- Compartment Syndrome (leading to tissue death due to a lack of oxygenation, given that blood vessels are compressed by the increased pressure within the compartment)
- Muscle wasting and joint stiffness
- Skin allergy and/or damage to the skin caused by hard edge of the casts

General precautions

- Do not put the cast on hard objects before it is completely dry to avoid distortion.
- Elevate the injured limb above heart level to help reduce swelling and enhance circulation, especially for the first 48 hours (e.g. upper limb can be supported by arm sling or pillow; lower limb can be elevated by a pillow.).
- Keep the cast dry and prevent it from getting wet. When taking a shower, cover the cast limb with a plastic bag / waterseal and secure it with waterproof tapes to make sure no water can seep in.
- Under advice of a physician / physiotherapist, you can move your unaffected joints like fingers or toes frequently to prevent swelling and joint stiffness.
- Do not walk or perform any weight bearing activities with the injured limb without medical advice. You may consult a physiotherapist for arranging walking aids under a doctor's consent.
- Avoid bumping or knocking with your cast.
- Do not pole anything underneath the cast even if the skin feels very itchy. Consult a doctor in case this happens.

Please consult your Doctor if any of the following occurs on the injured limb:

- Persistent pain, numbness or tingling sensation.
- With discharge or odor from the injured limb, or itchy skin.
- Coldness, swelling, whitish or bluish discoloration of the fingers or toes.
- The cast is softened, cracked or broken.
- The cast is unfit, either too tight or too loose.
- The edge of the cast is too sharp that your skin is damaged.

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