

Tips to Prevent Swelling and Stiffness

- **ELEVATE** your injured arm or leg for at least 48 to 72 hours. Elevation allows lymph fluid and blood to drain "downhill" to your heart, reducing swelling.
 - Keep your injured arm or leg above the level of your heart.
 - For legs: Lie down and rest your leg on two or more pillows for elevation.
 - For arms: Prop your arm on top of two or more pillows.
- **EXERCISE** fingers and toes gently and often.
- **ICE** around the injured area. Loosely pack ice into a sealed plastic bag and wrap around the cast at the area of the injury; keep it there long enough to cool your limb.



When to Call Your Doctor or Physician Assistant:

If your fingers or toes become cold, pale, blue or numb, or if you are unable to move them.

If you have severe or constant pain that is not relieved by pain medication or elevation.

If there is an odor or unusual drainage under or through the cast.

If you have other concerns that are not addressed above.

Hope Orthopedics of Oregon Cast & Brace Department

Questions?

Please call Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm

503-540-6498



Hope Orthopedics of Oregon
1600 State Street, Salem, OR 97301
503-540-6300



Hope Orthopedics of Oregon

Cast Care Instructions



Patient Guide to Cast Care



Thank you for choosing Hope Orthopedics of Oregon for your casting needs. This brochure was prepared to provide you with

some important information about the proper care of your cast and skin. Following these instructions will help ensure the effectiveness of your cast and enable your healing to proceed as quickly as possible. If you have any questions, please ask your physician or physician assistant.

Caring for Your Cast

- **It takes up to 48 hours** for a plaster cast to dry. Fiberglass casts can take up to two hours. While your cast is drying, keep it uncovered as much as possible to help it to dry faster.
- **While it is drying**, do not do anything to change the shape of or alter your cast in any way.
- **Use a nail file or scissors** to cut or file away any loose or sharp edges.
- **Avoid exposing your cast** to dirt and sand.
- **Do not put powder** in the cast.
- **Keep the cast clean and dry**; moisture causes skin irritation, will break down the cast and can cause unpleasant odors.
 - Before bathing or showering, wrap your limb and cast in two layers of plastic (a garbage bag for example).
 - If you do get some dampness in the cast, use a hair dryer on a cool setting to thoroughly dry it out.
- **Please do not attempt to remove your cast** with a saw or cutter or by any other means.



If your provider approved walking in your cast, be sure to wear the cast boot. This will help prevent falls and keep the cast from wearing out on the bottom.

Most insurance companies consider it your responsibility to take care of your cast properly. You may not be reimbursed for the cost of changing a cast that has become wet or smells or you have attempted to remove.

If you have concerns about your cast, please come into the clinic so that we may check it. You do not need an appointment to be seen in the Cast & Brace Department.



Caring for Your Skin

- **Do not pull padding out of the cast** or push anything into it.
- **Check the skin under the edges** of the cast daily. If you see persistent redness, broken skin or sores, call your doctor.
- **To relieve itching** under the cast, blow cool air into it with a hair dryer. DO NOT shake powder into the cast or stick any objects into it.
- **Keep your fingers and toes clean.**
- **Do not cover the cast with plastic bags** for any extended period of time. Your skin needs to breathe.

Physical Activities

Your doctor will discuss with you any physical limitations while you have a cast. Check with him or her about returning to work or school.

When you use your casted arm or leg, it may swell and cause pain. Remember to elevate the arm or leg and wiggle your fingers or toes periodically to relieve swelling.

If your medical provider allows you to play sports in your cast, please note this is not considered "normal wear and tear." Most insurance companies will not cover the cost of replacing a cast damaged this way.

