



General Cast Care

- Keep the cast as clean and dry as possible. A wet cast may soften and crack. If the cast gets wet, a hair dryer on a cool setting can be used to dry the edges of the cast. If the cast gets soaked it will need to be removed and replaced.
- Do **NOT** use oil or lotion around the edges of the cast, it will soften the skin, which could lead to irritation or skin breakdown.
- Care should be taken to keep small things (crumbs of food, bobby pins, coins, small toys, pencil erasers, etc.) from falling inside the cast. They can cause irritation or skin breakdown which can lead to infection.
- Do **NOT** use powder inside the cast as it may cake and irritate the skin.
- Do **NOT** remove the cast unless your doctor tells you to do so.
- Never permit a child in a cast to ride in a boat.
- Some children complain of itching under the cast. Do **NOT** put anything inside the cast to scratch. To help with the itching you can rub the skin around the cast edges with your fingertips {no nails} or you can rub the opposite arm/leg. Tapping the cast or sitting the child in front of a fan can help as well. Additionally, you can blow air from a hair dryer on the cool setting down the cast.



Arm Casts

For the first 48 to 72 hours after surgery/casting, your child's arm should be elevated with the elbow higher than the heart and the hand higher than the elbow. This will help prevent swelling. A Carter Pillow or Texas Sling may be used to elevate your child's arm. The sling is slipped over the cast like a sock and then attached to a nail on the wall, upper bunk bed, or the headboard of the bed so that the elbow is level with the shoulder and the hand is pointed up in the air. As always, monitor for extreme pain when you move the fingers. If this is the case, you may need to call your doctor for possible loosening or cast removal. After 48-72 hours, your child may use a sling for support. If you notice that your child's hand or fingers begin to swell after the arm has been down in the sling, have them sit down and elevate the arm to reduce swelling.

Leg Casts

For the first 48 to 72 hours after surgery/casting, your child's leg should be elevated with the foot higher than the heart to help prevent and alleviate swelling. A Texas Sling may be provided to help keep the leg elevated. The sling is slipped over the cast like a sock and then attached to a nail on the wall or headboard of the bed to keep the leg elevated above the level of the heart. As always, check your child's toes for extreme pain when you move the toes. If this is the case, you may need to call your doctor for possible loosening or cast removal. You will want to keep pressure off the heels when the child is lying down to prevent sores from forming under the cast. When your child is lying down, keep the leg elevated on a small pillow or rolled towel with the heel slightly over the edge of the pillow/towel. For side lying, a thin pillow may be placed between the legs for comfort. To protect the leg cast from soiling and wear, you may cover it with a tube sock.

Remember: if your child has a walking cast, always make sure they wear the cast shoe provided to avoid slipping on floors and avoid cast breakdown

Daily Skin Care

- Give a sponge bath, washing all areas of the skin that are not under the cast. Take special care not to get the cast wet. You may bathe your child in a shallow bath with the cast covered with a plastic bag and kept out of the tub. The plastic bag will protect against splashing but will not help if the cast is submerged.
- Check skin condition around the edges of the cast several times a day. Look inside the cast as far as possible using a flashlight.
- Check the odor of the cast daily at the ends. If you notice a new musty or foul odor it could indicate an infection and you would need to notify your doctor.



Checking Sensation/Circulatory Status

- Check for **MOVEMENT**. Your child should be able to move/wiggle their fingers/toes in the cast as they did before the cast was applied. If there are complaints of pain with movement, then it may indicate the cast needs to be loosened or removed. Call your doctor.
- Check for **SENSATION**. Your child should be able to distinguish which toe or finger is being touched if they could do so previously. Ask your child if they feel any numbness or tingling. A small child will move their toes/fingers spontaneously when touched or lightly pinched.
- Check for **CIRCULATION**. The color should be pink. Compare extremity to the opposite side.
 - To check for circulation, gently squeeze the fingernail or toenail. It will become white with pressure and should turn pink again as soon as you release the pressure. A very pale, bluish, or deep red color could indicate a problem with circulation and your doctor should be notified.
- Check the **TEMPERATURE** of the arm/leg. Compare it to the opposite side. If the extremity is unusually warm, it may be due to being covered for a long time. Uncover it and recheck it in an hour. If the extremity is cool, cover and recheck it in an hour.
- Notify your doctor if the temperature is not similar to the opposite arm/leg.
- Check for **SWELLING**. If swelling is present, elevate the hand/foot higher than the heart for several hours.

Activity

- Your child may not participate in organized sports or physical education.
- Your child is limited to ground level play only, no bikes, rollerblades, skateboards, playscapes, trampolines, wheeled or ball toys, etc.

Remember to Call Your Doctor if:

- The arm or leg under the cast is:
 - Numb or tingling
 - Blue, pale or cold Red, puffy or hot
 - Has less movement of fingers/toes than before
- Your child begins to complain of increased pain from under the cast.
- The cast becomes too loose and slips/moves up and down easily.
- The cast has slipped and less of the fingers/toes are showing than when the cast was originally placed on the child.
- There are areas of redness that do not improve with position change or there are areas of broken skin.
- You notice any drainage coming from the cast.
- You notice any foul odor coming from under the cast.
- Your child cannot feel you touch his/her fingers or toes which are extending out of the cast.
- The cast is submerged under water.
- An object is in the cast. (food, toys, coins, etc.)
- Your child has extreme pain when you move his/her fingers or toes. This can be a symptom of compartment syndrome where the swelling can cause damage to the tissue, muscles and/or nerves. This is very rare and the pain is extreme and not relieved with elevation or pain medicine.

If you have any problems or questions concerning the care of your child while they are in the cast, please call us at (512) 478-8116.