

# Cast and Splint Care

A cast or splint is used to support and protect an injury. Casts or splints stop the injured part of your body from moving so that it can heal faster and in the right position. How long you need to wear your cast or splint depends on the injury you have.

There are many types of casts or splints:

- A cast will be made of fiberglass or plaster. There is a soft layer beneath the hard outer layer that protects your skin.
- A splint can be made of plaster which forms the shape of half a cast, or a piece of metal with soft padding. A splint will be held in place with tape or a large bandage wrap.



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## When to Get Help

### Go to the nearest Emergency Department or Urgent Care Centre if:

- You have severe, increasing pain or if your pain is not well controlled with pain medicine.
- Your fingers or toes turn blue or grey.
- You feel numbness or tingling in your fingers or toes.
- Your cast feels very tight and/or you have severe swelling.
- You cannot move your fingers or toes.
- Your skin underneath the cast is stinging or burning.

### To Learn More:

- Ask your health care provider.
- Use HealthLinkBC: call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing) or go online to [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca)

### Recommended Follow-Up

- Follow up in \_\_\_ days.

Name of Provider

Reason

Date/Time

Location

Contact Info

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## How to Care for Yourself at Home

### Swelling

It is normal to have some swelling from your injury for 2-3 days. This may cause your cast or splint to feel a bit tight or snug. There are things you can do at home to help with swelling.

- Elevate your injured arm or leg above the level of your heart for the first 1-3 days. Support them with pillows or rolled up towels.
- Apply ice or a cold compress to your injury for the first 1-3 days. Do this for 15 minutes every hour while you are awake. Wrap the ice well to avoid getting your cast wet and to avoid making direct contact with your skin.
- Gently exercise your uninjured fingers or toes by moving or wiggling them slowly to prevent stiffness.

### Weight Bearing

Depending on the type of cast/splint you have, you may not be able to put weight on your injury (e.g., standing or walking) for a few days. Follow instructions you were given by the doctor.

#### PLASTER CAST

Do not put weight on it for 3 days.

#### FIBERGLASS CAST

It is okay to put weight on the cast right away.

#### PLASTER SPLINT

Avoid putting weight on it for 1-3 days.

### Keep Your Cast or Splint Dry

Avoid getting your cast or splint wet in the shower, bath, or pool.

- Wrap your cast or splint in a towel, place a plastic bag over the towel, and wrap tape around the open end of the bag to prevent water from getting in.

## Cast and Splint Care Discharge Instructions - continued

## Notes:

If your fiberglass cast or splint ...

- Gets wet on the outside, wipe it off.
- Gets wet inside, use cold air from a hair dryer to dry it.
  - + Cracks, arrange to see your family doctor or go to a walk-in clinic.
- If your plaster cast or splint gets wet, soft or cracks, see your family doctor or a walk-in clinic.

Caring for your cast and splint:

- Do not trim or reshape your cast.
- Do not bend your metal splint.
  - + Do not hit your cast or splint against hard surfaces.
  - + Avoid getting dirt or sand inside your splint or casts.

Caring for your skin:

- It is common for skin underneath your cast to feel itchy.
- You can blow cool air from a hair dryer into the cast.
- **DO NOT:**
  - + Put powders or lotions under your cast.
  - + Put objects like coat hangers or pencils inside your cast.
  - + Pull the padding out from your splint or cast.
- If skin around your cast becomes red or irritated, talk to your family doctor, or go to a walk-in clinic. Use a soft piece of material (like cotton pads, small towels) to protect your skin while you wait to see them.

## CAST REMOVAL

- Do NOT remove your cast yourself.
- You may be asked to have another x-ray to see if everything is healing properly.
- Your doctor will let you know approximately when your cast will be removed and where this should be done.

## Cast and Splint Care Discharge Instructions - continued

### HOW TO ELEVATE YOUR INJURY



### Notes:

### Additional Information

- How to care for your cast (video):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKlrDB5oytY>

### Tell Us What You Think!

Have feedback about this document? Use the form at:  
[bit.ly/pdsfeedback](http://bit.ly/pdsfeedback)



Images used with permission from “Cast Care Following Surgery or Orthopedic Treatment” (June 2012) by Providence Health Care.

Find this information sheet on the ECBC website:

[https://emergencycarebc.ca/clinical\\_resource/patient-information-sheet/cast-and-splint-care/](https://emergencycarebc.ca/clinical_resource/patient-information-sheet/cast-and-splint-care/)

The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team. This information does not replace the advice given to you by your health care provider.

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Provincial Health Services Authority

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