

Cast Care



Types of Casts:

There are three main types of casts used at Ortho MD. Fiberglass, Plaster, and Waterproof.

- 1) Fiberglass is the most commonly used material. It is applied quickly, dries quickly, and comes in a variety of colors. The outside of fiberglass is waterproof (however the padding underneath is not, so you shouldn't get this cast wet.)
- 2) Plaster is used much less than the fiberglass and only comes in white. If plaster gets wet, it will fall apart, so patients should make sure no water touches the cast.
- 3) Waterproof casts are made of fiberglass and a synthetic waterproof padding. This type of cast is able to get fully wet, however you should be careful; the cast should be dried thoroughly after bathing/swimming. Also, you don't want to get sand, dirt, or salt water inside the cast, so if you're going to the beach, you may want to cover the cast with a bag.

Tips for Cast Care:

- 1) Always keep the cast clean and dry.
- 2) Cover the cast with a plastic bag or cast cover when bathing.
- 3) If a fiberglass cast gets damp, dry it (and make sure it dries completely.) Because a fiberglass cast allows air through it, a hairdryer (on the cool setting) will help.
- 4) If the cast gets wet enough that the skin gets wet under the cast and won't dry, please call the office to have the cast replaced. If the skin is wet for a long period of time, it may break down and an infection may occur.
- 5) If your skin itches underneath the cast, don't slip anything inside the cast, since it may damage your skin and you can get an infection. Instead, try tapping the cast or blowing air from a hairdryer down into the cast.
- 6) Keep dirt, sand, and powder/deodorant away from the inside of your cast.
- 7) Do not pull the padding out of your cast.
- 8) If the doctor allows walking on a leg cast, be sure to wear a cast shoe (if the doctor prescribes one). This will keep the cast from wearing out on the bottom and has a tread to keep people from slipping.
- 9) Inspect the cast regularly. If the skin around the cast becomes red or raw, contact the office.

How a cast is removed:

- 1) Do not try to remove the cast on your own.
- 2) When it is time to remove the cast, the doctor's medical assistant will take it off with a cast saw.
 - a. A cast saw is a specialized saw made just for taking off casts. It has a flat and rounded metal blade that has teeth and vibrates back and forth at a high rate of speed.
 - b. The cast saw is made to vibrate and cut through the cast but not to cut the skin underneath.
- 3) After the cast is removed, the underlying body part may look different than the uninjured side.
 - a. The skin may be pale or a different color.
 - b. The injured part may look smaller/thinner than the other side due to atrophy (a weakening of the muscles.)
 - c. If the cast was over a joint, the joint is likely to be stiff. It will take some time to regain the normal range of motion.

Please contact the office if you have any questions or problems with the cast.

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