Cast or Splint Care At Home

You will be going home with a cast or splint. The following is a list of suggestions and information for you when taking care of the cast or splint.

- Raise the injured part **above the level of your heart** with the use of pillows or cushions. Do this whether you are sitting or lying down. This is most important for the first 48 hours, but may be necessary for longer, depending on your injury. Mild swelling of the exposed fingers and/or toes below the cast is not unusual.
- Keep the cast or splint uncovered during the drying period. It usually takes 24 to 48 hours to dry if made of plaster – a fiberglass cast will dry in less than an hour. Do not bear weight on a walking cast until your caregiver gives you permission. Do not rest the cast on anything harder than a pillow for the first 24 hours.
- Keep your cast or splint clean. Soiled casts may be wiped with a moistened cloth.
- Plaster or fiberglass casts or splints should **never** be allowed to become wet. Moist skin may become infected. Cover the cast or splint with a plastic bag when bathing/showering or when out in rain or snow.
- Do not place any foreign objects under your cast or splint. Scratching your skin leads to more itching and may cause infection. Inform your caregiver if you do get something stuck under your cast.
- **DO NOT REMOVE** padding from inside your cast.
- Exercise all joints next to the injury that are not immobilized by the cast or splint. For example, if you have a long leg cast, exercise the hip joint and toes. If you have an arm cast or splint, exercise the shoulder, elbow, thumb and fingers.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your cast or splint cracks.
- Your cast or splint is too tight.
- Your cast becomes wet.
- A foul odor comes from inside your cast.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop swelling or inability to move your fingers or toes.
- You develop tingling or numbness in your arm, leg, fingers or toes.
- Your arm, leg, fingers or toes turn blue or cold.
- You develop severe pain in the area of your injury.
- You develop any difficulty with your breathing or have shortness of breath.
- You develop chest pain.

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