

## Patient Factsheet

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# Caring for your cast

## How do I look after my cast?

It is important to let the case fully dry. Arm plaster casts can take up to 24 hours to dry and leg plaster casts can take up to 48 hours. Fibreglass casts only take 20 minutes to dry.

Do not dry the cast by a heater or with a hair dryer as you can burn yourself. Rest the cast on something soft while it is drying, such as a pillow or in a sling.

If you have a leg cast, do not walk on it until you have been told to by the doctor and have been fitted with a cast shoe.

Try to not chip, crush, cut, or break your cast.

Avoid getting the cast wet (unless you have a waterproof cast). This can weaken or destroy the cast and can damage your skin. For bathing and showering, wrap a towel around your plaster and cover it with a well-sealed plastic bag. A waterproof liner can be purchased depending on your injury.

## How do I look after myself?

The cast will help reduce the pain, but you may still need pain medication. Take any medications as instructed by your GP.

There may be swelling for the first few days so keep your casted limb elevated. If you have a hand or arm cast, see [exercises for your arm and hand](#). If you have a leg cast, move your toes.

Even if itchy, do not put anything down your cast. This can damage the skin or push the padding further down into the cast causing it to bunch up and put pressure on your skin.

You should avoid playing sport while you are in an arm or leg cast.

## When should I go back to my GP?

You should go back to see your GP if:

- Your plaster feels too tight or too loose, or it is rubbing
- Your plaster is broken, cracked, or soft
- Your plaster gets wet or damp
- You have dropped any object down inside your cast
- You experience prolonged numbness or tingling, like pins and needles in your fingers and toes, or you can't move them
- Your fingers or toes go blue, or white, or feel cold
- You have increased swelling or pain in the arm or leg with the cast
- You have a burning sensation under the cast
- You have symptoms of infection such as a fever, unusual pain or a foul odour from the cast

## Crutches

**If you have a leg cast, you may need crutches.**

**Even if you don't need your crutches to walk, bring them to your medical appointments.**

**You may need to use them for a while when your cast comes off until your ankle loosens up and you can walk confidently.**



*Adapted from Mackay HealthPathways*

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

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