

Patient Information

Care of Plaster Cast

Fracture & Orthopaedic Unit

How to take care of my plaster cast

- Limbs in plaster should be elevated as much as possible, especially for the first few days.
- Keep the cast dry. You can use a cast protector (available to buy see separate leaflet) to keep it dry if you are bathing or showering. Do not leave it on too long as it may restrict circulation and may cause condensation inside the bag.
- Keep the cast clean. Stay away from sand and dirt.
- Avoid denting the cast. Rest your affected limb on a pillow or cushion.

What should I avoid to prevent any serious problems?

- Do not try to remove or cut your plaster.
- Do not put anything down your plaster to scratch.
- Do not remove padding.
- Do not put talcum powder, scent, or deodorant inside your cast.
- Do not apply heat to your cast.
- Do not cover the cast with a plastic bag in wet weather as it may cause condensation inside the bag.

Exercise whilst in a plaster cast

Shoulder, elbow and hand exercises

These exercises should be done at least 6 times every morning, noon and evening to prevent stiffness:-

1. Raise your arm above your head (if necessary help it with the other hand)
2. Touch the back of your neck with your hand
3. Touch the small of your back with your hand
4. Straighten and bend your elbow

If your elbow is in a cast you may not be able to do 2, 3 or 4

Hand exercises

These exercises should be done for at least 10 times during the day and evening to prevent stiffness:-

1. Make a tight fist with your fingers and thumb, relax it then make a fist again
2. Spread your fingers and thumb wide apart, relax and then spread them again

Do not allow your hand to hang down for any length of time, as it may become swollen and painful. Lift your hand to heart level when you are sitting or lying. If you have been given a sling, wear it for 24-48 hours unless you have been told otherwise. However, do not forget to remove the sling to do the above exercises.

Exercises for the lower limbs

These exercises should be done at least six times every morning, noon and evening to prevent stiffness:- (depending upon the extent of your cast, you may not be able to exercise all of your leg joints)

1. Bend your toes and then straighten them
2. Exercise your ankle by pointing your toes away from you then pulling your foot towards you.
3. Rotate your ankle, drawing a circle with your foot.
4. Bend and straighten your knee
5. Move your leg out to the side & back, to keep your hip mobile
6. Press your knee into the back of your cast or a pillow and feel your thigh muscles tighten. If your ankle is free, pull your toes towards you at the same time.

Do not allow your leg to hang down for any length of time as it may become swollen and painful. Raise it to heart level when you are sitting. Your heart is in the middle of your chest

If you are **concerned about your plaster cast**

You must return to the hospital where your cast was applied if your plaster cracks or becomes loose or soft or if you experience any of the following:-

- Swelling of the fingers or toes,
- Increased pain in the limb,
- Blueness of the fingers or toes (*not bruising*),
- Pins and needles or coldness in your fingers or toes,
- Inability to move your fingers or toes

Contact the doctor or your hospital immediately if you experience any of the following:-

- You have pain in the calf
- You have pain in the chest, or shortness of breath

The contact numbers are:-

Royal Gwent Hospital (RGH)

- Plaster room - Tel:- 01633 - 234409 (mon – fri 09.00 – 17.00)
Reception - Tel:- 01633 - 234395 (mon – fri 09.00 – 17.00)
- Sisters Office - Tel:- 01633 - 234402/7 (mon – fri 09.00 – 17.00)
- MIU - Tel:- 01633 - 234056/4058 (24hrs a day)

Nevill Hall Hospital (NNH)

- Plaster room - Tel:- 01873 – 732092 (mon – fri 09.00 – 17.00)
- MIU - Tel:- 01873 - 732073 (24hrs a day)

Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF)

- Sisters Office - Tel:- 01443 802473 (mon – fri 09.00 – 17.00)
Out-patient's
- MIU - Tel:- 01443 802336/ 802337 (24 hrs a day)
- Plaster Room - [Tel:- 01443 802317](tel:01443802317)

**“This document is available in Welsh /
Mae’r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**