

How to Care for your Plaster Cast

Your cast is designed to protect and support your bone while it heals. This type of cast **must be kept completely dry** at all times, as moisture can cause skin irritation, infection, or damage to the cast structure.

Hygiene and Bathing instructions:

✓ DO:

- Cover the cast completely with a waterproof cast protector or thick plastic bag before any exposure to water (e.g., showering or bathing).
- Secure the top tightly with waterproof tape or a rubber band above the cast (not over the cast itself) to prevent water from running inside.
- Keep your limb out of direct water spray or submersion.
- If water accidentally gets on the cast, pat dry immediately with a towel and use a cool hairdryer to remove moisture from the edges.

✗ DO NOT:

- Submerge your cast in water (e.g., baths, swimming pools, hot tubs).
- Use plastic wrap or shopping bags alone – these are not fully waterproof.
- Let water run down your arm/leg toward the cast.
- Use hot air to dry the cast – it may cause burns or damage the padding.

Skin and Comfort Tips

DO:

- Keep the skin around the cast edges clean and dry.
- If the skin becomes itchy, tap gently on the outside of the cast or use a cool hairdryer.
- Check for redness, sores, or irritation around the cast edges every day.
- Elevate the casted limb above heart level for the first few days to reduce swelling.
- Wiggle fingers or toes frequently to maintain circulation.

✗ DO NOT:

- Insert objects (e.g., pens, coat hangers, cotton swabs) into the cast to scratch – this can damage your skin and lead to infection.
- Use lotions, creams, or powders inside or near the cast.
- Attempt to cut, trim, or remove the cast yourself.

Managing Swelling and Discomfort

- Apply ice in a plastic bag wrapped in a towel over the cast for 15–20 minutes every 2–3 hours for the first few days.
- Take pain relief as advised (e.g., paracetamol or ibuprofen).
- Keep the limb elevated on pillows when resting or sleeping to reduce swelling
- Check the skin around the edges of the cast daily for redness, rashes, or blisters
- Keep small objects and food away from the cast – **do not insert anything inside to relieve itching**

If your limb swells and the cast feels tight, elevate it and apply ice (in a bag over the cast) for 15–20 minutes

Call the Fracture Clinic or Seek Help If:

- Your fingers or toes become numb, tingly, cold, blue, or pale
- There's a foul smell coming from the cast (after the first few days)
- Your cast lining remains wet for more than 4–6 hours after drying attempts
- You have increasing pain or swelling under the cast
- You develop blisters, open wounds, or rash near the cast edges
- The cast cracks, breaks, or becomes loose

Follow-Up:

Attend all scheduled fracture clinic appointments

- Your cast may be removed in clinic once healing is complete (usually 4–8 weeks)
- Rehabilitation or physiotherapy may be advised once the cast is off