How to care for a plaster of Paris cast

Information for patient’s parents & carers

**Paediatric Orthopaedic services**

This document can be provided in different languages and formats.

For more information please contact:

Paediatric Orthopaedic Department
C/o Children’s Outpatients East
Nottingham Children’s Hospital
QMC campus
Tel: 0115 924 9924 ext. 68426/61210

This leaflet is aimed at children treated in a plaster of Paris plaster, and the parents and carers of children who have had an application of a plaster of Paris cast for a broken bone/soft tissue injury, or following an operation.

**How to care for a plaster of Paris cast**

Your child has a plaster cast. This is to hold the bones still while the break heals.

- The plaster will take 2 to 3 days to dry out. During this period, an arm plaster should be supported by a sling. The plaster should not be covered, even at night, until it is dry.
- Your child should be encouraged to move his fingers or toes often.
- It is common for the arm or leg to itch under the plaster. Keeping cool can help reduce itching.
- It should not be written on until it is dry. Felt tip pen may be used. Always keep the plaster dry.
- When washing, the cast should be covered with a waterproof covering to prevent it getting wet.
- When your child is resting, his/her arm or leg should be raised. You can do this by resting it on pillows. Please do not place the pillow directly under the heel of the cast as this may cause a pressure sore to develop on the heel.
- **Do not put anything down the plaster to scratch.**
Contact us if any of the following happen:

- The cast is too tight
- The fingers or toes become swollen, have lost feeling or change colour.
- The area under the cast is painful and feels hot in one particular area as it is possible to get a sore or blister under the cast.
- If the skin on the affected limb becomes sore or broken
- There is an odd smell from the cast.
- Your child has pushed any items down the cast e.g. pencils/beads.
- The cast becomes soft or cracked
- The cast gets wet. **Do not** dry with a hairdryer.

You will need to check the cast and the arm or leg frequently for swelling, discolouration, tingling, pins & needles for the first few days.

Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment please speak to a member of staff or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

**Freephone (QMC Campus):** 0800 183 0204
**From a mobile or abroad:** 0115 924 9924 ext 65412 or 62301
**E-mail:** pals@nuh.nhs.uk
**Letter:** NUH NHS Trust, c/o PALS, Freepost NEA 14614, Nottingham NG7 1BR

www.nuh.nhs.uk

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email patientinformation@nuh.nhs.uk or phone 0115 924 9924 ext. 67184.

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.