



Leg Cast Care

Two types of leg casts include walking and non-walking.

- For a walking cast, you must wear a cast shoe when walking.
- For a non-walking cast, crutches, a wheelchair or a walker will be ordered to help you move around.

Keep pressure off the heel when resting to avoid pressure sores.

- Place pillows under the calf, not directly under the heel.
- The heel should be floating in the air.



Proper elevation of a leg cast with heel floating

It is important to elevate the leg throughout the day and night to prevent and reduce swelling.

- Foot should rest higher than the knee and the heart.

You may cover the toes with a sock to keep the cast clean.

- Remove the sock frequently to check for blood flow and feeling in the toes.

What to watch for	How to look or feel	What to do	When to call
Swelling in toes or foot	Look at end of cast to see if there is space between cast and skin Compare foot and toes on healthy leg to foot and toes on leg with cast	Elevate or raise foot above heart	If swelling does not improve with elevation
Pain	Try to find out what hurts when uncomfortable	Give medication as recommended by provider	Pain worsens or does not improve with medication
Circulation (Blood Flow)	Gently squeeze big toe on side with cast -- area will become white and should return to pink within 4 seconds	Change position to improve blood flow	Pale or blue color, or if pink color does not return within 4 seconds of being squeezed
Loss of feeling or movement	Check to see if each toe can move and can feel when touched Notice numbness or tingling, such as "feeling pins or needles"	Elevate or raise foot above heart	Unable to feel or move toes or continued numbness
Temperature change	Toes on both feet should be similar or only a little different in temperature	Take temperature	Toes are much colder on one side or temperature more than 100°
Skin changes	Look at skin around edges of cast	Change position to reduce pressure	Open, cracked or cut skin around cast edges
Odor	Smell area around cast A "dirty sock" smell is normal	Keep skin near cast clean with soap on a damp washcloth	Odors that are concerning

This material is for educational use.

Discuss any questions and concerns with your health care provider.

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What to watch for	How to look or feel	What to do	When to call
Poor fit	Look at cast to watch for slipping or increasing tightness caused by swelling	Elevate or raise foot above heart	Swelling does not improve, or cast slipped too much
Wet cast	Feel cast for dampness after wet activities	Avoid getting cast wet	If cast is wet
Broken cast	Look at and feel cast for changes in shape or hardness	Limit activity until cast is replaced or repaired	Any changes to shape or hardness of cast

Cast Care for Kids

Casts are needed for many different reasons and are used to protect bones while bones heal.

Here are some questions kids may have about their cast:

Will I feel different after I get my cast?

- It may feel tight, and your toes may get puffy. Raise your leg above your heart and wiggle your toes.
- It may feel itchy. **Do not stick anything inside your cast.** Try these tips:
 - Use a metal spoon to tap on the outside of your cast.
 - Use a hair dryer on the cold setting.
- You will not be able to move the parts of your body that are inside the cast.

How can I take care of my cast?

- **Do not get your cast wet.** Cover your cast with a plastic bag when you take a bath or shower.
- Avoid picking at the material inside your cast.
- Tell an adult if anything feels or looks different with your cast.

