



Arm Cast Care

It is important to elevate the arm to prevent and reduce swelling.

- Hand should rest higher than the elbow and the heart.

A sling may be recommended, but usually only for a short time.

- Make sure the elbow rests all the way in the back of the sling.



Elevating the arm with a pillow



Scan the QR code to watch *Proper Arm Elevation During Casting*,

or go to the YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/MyChartScottishRiteforChildren>

Find the **Fracture Clinic** section.

What to watch for	How to look or feel	What to do	When to call
Swelling in hand or fingers	Look at end of cast to see if there is space between cast and skin Compare hand and fingers on healthy arm to hand and fingers on arm with cast	Elevate or raise hand above the 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 finger 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 finger can move and can feel when touched Notice numbness or tingling, such as "feeling pins or needles"	Elevate or raise hand above heart	Unable to feel or move fingers or continued numbness
Temperature change	Fingers on both hands should be similar or only a little different in temperature	Take temperature.	Fingers 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.

©2023 Scottish Rite for Children



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 hand 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 fingers may get puffy. Raise your arm above your heart and wiggle your fingers.
- 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.
- **If your cast is waterproof, it must be dry** when removed during a clinic visit.

