



Patient Information

LIVING WITH A CAST

St. John Hospital
Vanderhoof, BC

250-567-2211

LIVING WITH A CAST

Plaster casts take approximately 24 to 48 hours to dry properly. Leave cast uncovered until thoroughly dry.

Fibreglass casts do not require drying time.

Instructions

1. If your leg is casted, the doctor will let you know whether you can walk on it or if you must use crutches. Do not walk on the cast until it is dry.
2. Do not get cast wet.
3. If you are unable to move your fingers or toes, contact your doctor.
4. Do not trim cast on your own nor attempt to "pad" any area under the cast. If it is painful, see your doctor.
5. If the cast cracks, breaks, or becomes very loose, contact your doctor.

6. Feeling warm under the cast (particularly if it is fibreglass) is natural.
7. Do not attempt to scratch under cast with sharp objects as this may cause skin damage. To relieve itching, use a hand held dryer on "cool" and aim at problem area.
8. Bring your crutches or walker with you for cast changes or cast removal.

Circulation

If fingers or toes become bluish or painful, elevate limb and exercise. If this does not provide relief, contact your family doctor or the Emergency Department

Movement

A little swelling of the casted limb is normal. To prevent swelling, elevate the limb until swelling has gone down and then resume normal activity.

Exercise

Do the appropriate movements listed below several times an hour during waking hours.

1. Arm Cast

- ▶ Exercise by alternately touching thumb to each finger. Finish by making a "fist."
- ▶ With hand of casted arm resting palm down on chair arm, extend fingers upward.
- ▶ For shoulder exercise, raise arm to shoulder height -- using unaffected hand to assist if necessary -- then lower.

2. Leg Cast

- ▶ Exercise ankle when sitting by turning foot clockwise and then counter clockwise.
- ▶ Lift toes toward the ceiling and then towards floor.
- ▶ Wiggle your toes