

MATTHEW S. COHEN, MD FAAP  
PATIENT INSTRUCTION SHEET

**INSTRUCTIONS AFTER CAST APPLICATION**

Your child has had a cast applied so his/her broken bone or injured ligaments will heal. The following suggestions will help you to care for the cast. If you child has been given a “walking cast” the doctor will give you instructions for care of the cast.

1. **WHEN YOUR CHILD’S CAST IS NEW**

- **DO NOT** cover the cast with bedclothes until the cast is thoroughly dry. Covering the cast can prevent drying.
  - **DO NOT** rest the wet cast on hard surfaces or sharp edges. This will cause dents in the cast that can cause pressure sores.
  - Keep the cast elevated on pillows for the first 24-48 hours. This will reduce your child’s swelling and pain.
  - Have your child move his/her toes or fingers as much as possible.
2. You may be asked to bring your child back to the orthopedist or Emergency Department for a “cast check.”
3. Watch for these signs and report to your doctor or return to the Emergency Department:
- If toenails or fingernails become blue or very pale, accompanied by pain, tingling or tightness, elevate the cast and ask your child to wiggle the toes or fingers.
  - If your child feels numb or cold, or has a tingling sensation under the cast, follow the same procedure. This symptom is frequent but should not be ignored.
  - If your child feels localized pain in one spot under the cast for no apparent reason, mark the exact spot with a pencil so you can show it to the doctor. It may mean the development of a sore or blister.

4. **WHEN YOUR CHILD’S CAST IS DRY:**

- Have your child use his/her crutches as instructed.
- Have your child move about as normally as possible and do any prescribed exercises regularly.
- Protect toes in the cast from the cold by use of a sock.
- **DO NOT** get the cast wet. Be careful of wet surfaces, rain, puddles, and bathing.
- **DO NOT** remove cotton padding.
- **DO NOT** use plastic or rubber boots over a cast for more than a few minutes as this will cause condensation and will we the cast.
- Have the cast checked if it breaks. **DO NOT** trim or fix the cast yourself.
- **DO NOT** poke things into the cast for scratching; this may cause infection. If itching is unbearable (this is rare), report it to the doctor.
- Warn children not to poke cotton balls, keys, crayons, money, etc. into the cast. These may be “lost” in the cast and cause localized pressure resulting in sores.

If you have any questions, please call.