



## CAST CARE INSTRUCTIONS

### WHAT DOES HAVING A CAST MEAN FOR ME?

- Depending on your injury or reason for needing a cast, how it will affect your life can vary greatly. The type of cast that you receive is the first step in determining what you can and cannot do with your cast.

### TYPES OF CASTING AVAILABLE

- NON-WATERPROOF (TRADITIONAL)
  - If you have received a cast that is **not waterproof**, or **plaster** you will need to place a waterproof bag or covering over the cast when you shower or bathe and keep it out of the water completely, as water will damage the cast and cause significant problems.
- WATERPROOF (GORTEx)
  - If you have received a **waterproof** cast, you will be able to shower with your cast on, although you should not have the cast totally immersed in water for an extended period of time (longer than 10-15 minutes) as it might make you uncomfortable and compromise the cast.
  - The waterproof cast usually dries well on its own as the liner is designed to assist with water evaporation from the skin. You can use a blow dryer or a fan to dry out the cast if necessary, making sure that the heat setting is as low as possible to avoid burning the skin. Keep the skin as dry as possible underneath the cast on a normal basis.

### HOW WILL MY CAST AFFECT MY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

- Depending on what body part your cast is on, it might limit your ability to engage in physical activity such as sports.
- If you have a leg cast you will **not** be able to run or do activity on your feet such as basketball, soccer or football.
- If you have an arm or wrist cast, you might be able to complete activity where you do not need to use your arms or hands, after the fracture is stable enough to complete such activity, which **will be determined by our doctors**.
- Some activities that might allow your participation with a **padded cast** on your arm include soccer and football. **The doctor will inform you if you are allowed to participate in sports while wearing a cast.** This padding can be done by you, or by your Athletic Trainer, must cover the entire cast, and must be done with ½ inch thick foam. In order to play sports with a padded cast, a medical note is required from one of our doctors.
- Although having a cast might slow you down, it does not have to take you out of physical activity completely. Your doctor will inform you if you are able to participate in sports. If you are unable to engage in sports you may still be able to work out or exercise body parts not affected by the cast. For example, if you have a leg cast you will not be able to do leg presses, but you can work out your abdomen, back, shoulders and arms.
- Make sure to exercise your fingers or toes by moving them every ½ hour you are awake to prevent excess stiffness.

### HOW DO I CARE FOR MY CAST PROPERLY?

- Initially when a cast is put on, it might feel tight. If this occurs you can relieve some discomfort by elevating the body part above the heart, applying ice to the cast, and allowing swelling to drain out of the area towards the heart.
- If the cast continues to feel tight after elevation, your toes or fingers feel cold, or you have an increase in swelling, the cast may be too tight. In this instance, please call our office immediately.
- If any fever, drainage, bad odor or the development of stains on the cast should be reported to the office immediately.
- If the cast loosens because of a decrease in swelling, breaks or cracks, or you feel pain in the area of the fracture, contact our office immediately for possible repairs or replacement.
- It is important that you do not injure or puncture the skin underneath your cast, as injury to this area might not be recognized because of the cast. If the skin itches underneath your cast, **do not** relieve the itch with anything sharp. If you puncture or scrape the skin, an infection could occur and be potentially dangerous to you. You may scratch underneath your cast with something without sharp edges such as a **q-tip**, or the **eraser end of a pencil**.
- In addition, **do not** attempt to cut your cast or remove any part of it. All the portions of your cast are there for a reason, to keep your injury safe so it can heal properly. Any compromise to this purpose could significantly slow or harm the healing process. Our doctors are not responsible for issues arising with your injury if you remove the cast yourself.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE**

**248-373-7286**