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## PATIENT INFORMATION – PLASTER CASTS

A plaster cast has been applied which will hold your fracture in position until it has healed. Plaster casts are made up of bandage and a hard covering (usually plaster of Paris).

### Once home:

- Keep your arm or leg raised whilst wearing the cast for as long as possible in the first few days. This will help to reduce the swelling and allow the cast to dry.

### Caring for your plaster

- Do not get it wet. You can use a plastic bag to cover the cast when having a bath or shower. Make it as water tight as possible by using sticky tape or a rubber band to seal the bag at the top and bottom. You may be able to buy special covers for plaster casts to help keep them dry. Available to buy in your local pharmacy\*.
- Always remove the bag/cover as soon as you can to avoid causing sweating, which could also damage the cast.

### Do's and Don'ts

- do exercise any joints that aren't covered by the cast – such as your elbow, knee, fingers or toes – to help improve your circulation
- do avoid getting small objects, powders and sprays inside your cast, as they could irritate your skin
- do use crutches or a sling, as advised by your health professional
- do use painkillers if you experience any pain
- don't try to alter the length or position of your cast
- don't lift anything heavy or drive until the cast has been removed
- don't push anything down your plaster cast if it is itching
- **Do not drive** with any limb in plaster

## **PLASTER CASTS CONT.**

You can usually return to school or work with a cast, but you should avoid strenuous activities that may damage the broken bone or cast.

### **You must seek healthcare advice immediately if:**

- The pain gets any worse or your fingers or toes feel swollen or tingly
- The plaster cast still feels too tight even after keeping it elevated for 24 hours
- You have coldness in fingers or toes
- Your fingers or toes turn blue
- Your fingers or toes are numb
- Limb swelling or a tight cast
- Your cast is too loose, cracked or broken
- The skin underneath or around the edge of the cast feels sore
- There is an unpleasant smell or discharge coming from the cast

### **How long will I be in plaster?**

The plaster usually needs to stay on between 4-12 weeks depending on the type of fracture.

#### **Further Advice/Instructions**

Please use this section to give the patient specific information e.g. follow up appointments or after care advice.

### **\*Local Services**

The NHS Direct Wales website allows you to search for local services in your area, such as Pharmacy and Sexual Health Clinics.

[www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/)

Choose the service you require and follow the guidance on how to search.

## PLASTER CASTS CONT.



If you become unwell or are injured, choose the right NHS service to make sure you get the best treatment. The Choose Well campaign explains what each NHS service does, and when it should be used.

Choosing well means that you and your family will get the best treatment. It also allows busy NHS services to help the people who need them most.

If you are unsure about which option to choose, please call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47 or visit the Choose Well website at [www.choosewellwales.org.uk](http://www.choosewellwales.org.uk)

This information has been produced based on previous information leaflets and the evidence available at the time of publication. It has been clinically reviewed however if you notice anything that needs updating or amending please contact [ppi.team@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:ppi.team@wales.nhs.uk)

If you require this information in another language or format please ask a member of staff.

For further advice or information contact NHS Direct Wales 0845 46 47  
[www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk)