



Going Home with Your Cast

Please read this handout before you go home with your new cast. It tells you how to care for your cast and your skin, and when to call your doctor.

Your Cast

A fiberglass cast is 3 times stronger than plaster, but much lighter. It creates heat as it dries, and it usually dries within 1 hour.

Cast Care

- **Keep your cast dry.** If the padding under a fiberglass cast gets wet, your skin can get irritated and sores may form.
 - When showering, bathing, or in wet weather, cover your cast with a plastic bag to keep it dry.
 - If your cast does get wet, do **not** put any weight on it. Please call your doctor and ask for a cast change.
- **Do not paint or varnish your cast.** The cast needs to breathe so that your skin beneath it does not get irritated.

Skin Care

- Check your skin around your cast every day to make sure there is no irritation. Wash your skin around your cast and your fingers or toes, but do **not** get the cast wet. Dry well.
- If you use hand lotion, make sure it does not build up under the edges of your cast.
- Your skin under your cast may itch. Do **not** push anything inside your cast to scratch. This may wrinkle the padding and irritate your skin. You could also lose part of your scratcher inside your cast, which could cause a sore or start a serious infection. If your itching is very bad, your doctor can prescribe medicine to help.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Weekdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.:

Call the Hand Center at
206-598-4263

Or

Call the Bone and Joint
Center at 206-598-4288

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206-598-6190 and ask for the Hand Fellow or Orthopaedist on call to be paged. Your call will be returned.

For more information, visit the Hand Center online at www.uwhand.com.

When to Call the Doctor

Your cast will stay the same size as when it was made, and it should not cause you any pain. But, your arm or leg under your cast may swell. If your cast starts to feel too tight, lie down and raise your arm or leg with the cast above the level of your heart. If this does not help within 30 minutes, call your doctor.

Also call your doctor if:

- You have pain under or around the edges of your cast.
- Your limb below or above your cast swells, feels cold to the touch, or is pale or bluish. This means that your cast is affecting your circulation.
- You have a burning feeling under your cast or a feeling of “pins and needles” in your fingers or toes that won’t go away.
- Your cast gets wet.
- Your cast cracks, gets soft, or gets too loose.

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