

Cast Care



Care at home

Rest for the first few days

In the first few days after discharge from hospital, keep your child's injured limb **raised above the level of their heart** and encourage them to **move their fingers or toes** as much as possible.

This will help to reduce the chance of further swelling and assist with pain relief.

Avoid drawing on the cast, resting it on hard surfaces or walking on it during the first 2 days while the cast is drying (unless otherwise instructed).

Moving around

Always use the sling, crutches, wheelchair or walking aids while moving around, as instructed.

Raise the arm or leg on pillows when they are sitting or lying down.

Keep away from direct heat

Allow the cast to dry naturally and keep it away from things such as hair dryers, electric blankets, hot water bottles and heaters.

Direct heat can damage the cast and cause burns.

Keep the cast dry

When bathing, make sure that the cast is totally protected with a plastic bag and well sealed at the top with tape and flannel.

Never immerse the limb in the bath or allow water to be directly applied to the plastic bag as it may leak into the cast.

Protect the cast from sand

Sand is very uncomfortable if it gets inside the cast.



Don't itch!

Do not allow your child to scratch or push objects under the cast (e.g. chopsticks, rulers) as they may cause a scratch or pressure sore which can become infected.

Distraction is the best way to deal with itchiness.



What to watch for

Excessive Pain

Pain in the area of the fracture or operation site is normal for the first few days. Paracetamol can be given up to every four hours, a **maximum of four times in 24 hours**. Follow the instructions on the label or the amount your doctor has prescribed.

Your child should be able to fully bend and stretch their fingers or toes without excessive pain.

Swelling or pale, cold fingers/toes

Watch for increased swelling or any changes in colour to the fingers/toes.

If your child experiences swelling or poor blood supply, encourage them to rest, raise the limb above the level of the heart and move their fingers or toes.



Swelling

Your fingers/toes may be red, warm to the touch and swollen



Poor blood supply

Your fingers/toes may appear pale or bluish in colour, cool to touch, tingling or numb

Follow Up

You will be contacted about your appointment time at the **Fracture Clinic Orthopaedic Outpatients**, Level 3, Starship Childrens Hospital. Your appointment could take several hours

Who to contact

If you **have not** visited Starship Outpatient Fracture Clinic for your child's follow-up appointment and you are concerned:

Please visit the Starship Childrens Emergency Department as soon as possible for urgent review if your child:

- Has increasing pain or swelling that is not relieved by use of recommended pain relief and raising the limb above the level of the heart.
- Has tingling, numb or blue fingers or toes.

Please visit the Starship Childrens Emergency Department as soon as possible for review if:

- The cast becomes wet, soft, cracked or loose.

If you **have** visited Starship Outpatient Fracture Clinic for your child's follow-up appointment and you are concerned:

If you have any questions or experience any problems, please contact us.

Clinic Hours (8.30am–5.00pm)

Please call and leave a message for the Paediatric Orthopaedic Outpatient Clinic Nurses on:
(09) 307 4949 ext 22537

After Clinic Hours

Please visit:
Starship Childrens Emergency Department, Level 2
Starship Childrens Hospital

For more information, see our cast care video online at starship.org.nz/orthoinfo