

CAST CARE

- Keep the cast dry. If the cast gets soaked with water, it is ruined, and a new cast must be applied over the next day or two to avoid skin irritation or breakdown. Your injured child should stay away from pool areas as the temptation of water is strong, and nearby children can often times foil your best efforts. There are devices on the market to keep casts dry; most of these do not work well. These devices -- or alternatively a newspaper plastic bag and rubber band -- may be worn for showers *only*; however, the arm should *still* be held up and out of the shower to avoid leaking.
- Cold may be applied to the cast to alleviate pain and swelling. An ice pack wrapped in a towel or alternatively ice in a sealed Ziploc bag wrapped in a towel is usually effective. Remember you do not want any moisture to seep into the cast.
- Do not stick anything down the cast. Items are often lost in a cast, and this will necessitate removing the cast to prevent any skin irritation or breakdown.
- Do not stick longer items down the cast to scratch an itch. This can cause inadvertent injury to the skin and in some cases cause an infection. If you do have an itch, you may try using a blow dryer on a **cool** setting.
- Do not expose the inside of your cast to dirt, sand, or powder.
- Do not remove or revise the cast yourself.
- For the first several days after a new cast is applied, it will likely feel snug. It is usually beneficial to elevate the injured extremity higher than your heart. The easiest way to achieve this is to lie down, place two pillows on your chest, and rest your hand and wrist on the pillows.
- Feel free to have people sign or decorate your cast with markers or stickers. Silver or Gold Sharpie markers are commercially available and work well for darker colored casts.

COMMON CAST PROBLEMS

- You may notice some **swelling** in the fingers or any portion of the hand which is not covered by the cast. Swelling may even occur several days after the cast has been applied. There are several steps you can take to minimize swelling: elevate the hand and wrist as described above, move the fingers (if allowed) to improve venous return and help with joint motion, apply ice to the swollen area as described above, and keep the room temperature low.
- If you experience new **numbness and tingling** of the fingers which persists despite attempts to decrease swelling, call the office for further instructions.
- If you feel the cast is **digging into your skin** in a specific area, call the office for further evaluation.
- If your cast feels **too tight**, this may represent some temporary swelling. First attempt to decrease the swelling as discussed above. If the tightness persists call the office for further instructions.

- If your cast feels **too loose**, do not try to “test it out.” Do not shuck the cast back and forth. Try to take it easy with your injured extremity. All casts will loosen somewhat over time; this does not necessarily mean the cast is ineffective. If the loosening seems excessive call the office.