Taking Care of a Cast

Follow our tips for taking care of your cast to stay comfortable during your recovery!

From the American Society for Surgery of the Hand

Why a Cast?

Casts are used to protect injured bones and soft tissues. They completely encircle your limb and have a hard outer shell with a soft layer underneath that serves as padding on your skin. Casts are made with plaster or fiberglass, which make them hard on the outside.

Fiberglass is lighter, more durable, and “breathes” better than plaster. Plaster is less expensive and sometimes shapes better than fiberglass. Some casts are waterproof, but not all.

TIPS

Keep your cast dry.
Use a plastic bag to cover your cast while showering, but still keep your arm elevated.

Do not keep the cast constantly covered, or moisture will build up.

Do not let dirt or sand get inside your cast.

Do not stick objects inside the cast for itching. It could injure your skin.

Never attempt to trim the cast yourself if there are rough edges.

Contact your doctor if...

1. Pain worsens
2. Hand or fingers become numb
3. Skin is burning or stinging
4. Hand is excessively swelling
5. Fingers can’t move

In some cases, a cast may need to be changed. It may be too tight or too loose, sometimes due to swelling. It may also crack or develop a soft spot.

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